



Exploring London



The last time we did a Study Tour to **London** was 2013 - we decided that it was time to go back again (largely because of requests from our frequent travelers). Our December 27, 2019 through January 2, 2020 tour will be one week in length, but at the same time it will be a comprehensive tour of London with a tour manager accompanying us each day and night (please see the daily itinerary). We will also take the train to **Canterbury** for a day visit to the town and make our own pilgrimage to historic **Canterbury Cathedral**. A private bus will take our group to the town of **Windsor** for a day visit that will include visits inside the Queen's favorite residence (**Windsor Castle**) as well as the historic **St. George's Chapel**, scene of both royal weddings and burials over the centuries. New Year's Eve will find us enjoying the fireworks display on the **South Bank of the Thames River** and a farewell dinner on the evening of January 1, 2020.

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Design & Layout by Debbie Bowen*

Itinerary Overview

**Day 1 - Friday,
December 27, 2019**
Flight to London

**Day 2 - Saturday,
December 28, 2019**
Arrive London - Bus Tour (Harrods, Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Downing Street)

**Day 3 - Sunday,
December 29, 2019**
Big Ben, Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey

**Day 4 - Monday,
December 30, 2019**
Canterbury

**Day 5 - Tuesday,
December 31, 2019**
Windsor

**Day 6 - Wednesday,
January 1, 2020**
Tower of London & Crown Jewels

**Day 7 - Thursday,
January 2, 2020**
Depart London



Exploring London

December 27, 2019 - January 2, 2020

We hope that you will consider joining us on this comprehensive tour to celebrate the beginning of a New Year! By the way, most of the large department stores in London will have huge mark-downs on merchandise right after Christmas!



DAY 1 December 27, 2019 **Flight to London**

- Today you depart from Charlotte on your overnight flight to **London**.

DAY 2 December 28, 2019 **Arrive London - Bus Tour**

- You arrive in London this morning and will be met by your tour manager and private bus. You then transfer into the center of the city for an introductory bus tour including **Harrods, Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben,**

Trafalgar Square and Downing Street.

- There will be time to have lunch in the **Covent Garden** area and explore its lively market place.
- In the afternoon you check into your hotel with time to relax and in the evening you will enjoy a welcome dinner.

DAY 3 December 29, 2019 **Big Ben, Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey**

- This morning your tour manager will accompany you to the **Westminster** district where you will be able to see **Big Ben** and the **Houses of Parliament**. Big Ben is the name given to the bell, while the tower is actually known as the **Elizabeth Tower**, and although you cannot go inside, you can see from the outside



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the **Houses of Parliament** and **Westminster Hall** where Charles I was tried in 1649 after the English Civil War. You also visit **Westminster Abbey**, the traditional site of coronation for British monarchs.



Indeed, since the coronation of William the Conqueror in 1066, all British monarchs have been crowned here. Burials of the monarchs also take place here including Queen Elizabeth 1 who is buried next to her half sister Mary Queen of Scots. Other notable burials include Sir Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin and Stephen Hawking. In **Poets Corner** there are memorials to Shakespeare, Jane Austen, the Bronte Sisters and other literary greats.

- After time for lunch your Tour Manger will escort you along Whitehall to see **10 Downing Street**, where British Prime Ministers traditionally reside. At the end of Whitehall you reach **Trafalgar Square**. **Trafalgar Square** and **Nelson's Column** commemorate



the famous naval victory over the French and Spanish fleets off the coast of Spain in 1805, during the Napoleonic Wars, when Admiral Nelson died on the deck of HMS Victory. It is perhaps the most famous square in London.

- The afternoon will be free for your own sightseeing. At **Trafalgar Square** you have the option to visit the **National Gallery** which contains one of the greatest collections of art in the world including works by renaissance masters such as Titian, Raphael and Michelangelo, as well as Canaletto, the Dutch Masters and Turner. Van Gogh's Sunflowers is one of the collection highlights.
- This evening your Tour Manger will escort you on an optional walking tour to see the nightlife of **London's West End** including **Leicester Square**, **Piccadilly Circus** and **China Town**.



DAY 4 December 30, 2019 Canterbury

- This morning you travel by train to the town of **Canterbury** in the county of Kent. **Canterbury Cathedral** is one of the oldest and most famous Christian churches in England and the Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of the worldwide Anglican Church. The Cathedral as you see it today dates from 1070 and was altered and enlarged over the next four



centuries. Thomas Beckett was murdered here in 1170 and it subsequently became a place of pilgrimage. Despite significant damage during the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the English Civil War, it survived to become one of England's most treasured landmarks. Canterbury itself is a pleasant town to explore and the huge **Westgate** is the largest surviving city gate in England, dating from 1380.

- In the afternoon you return to London by train.

DAY 5 December 31, 2019 Windsor

- This morning you travel by private bus to **Windsor Castle**, the ancestral castle of the British Royal Family. Situated to the west of London, the castle was, from the fifteenth century, always a haven for the monarch in times of civil unrest or plague. It survived the Civil War of the mid seventeenth century and

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was restored after the interregnum. After a period of decline during the period of the Stuarts, the new Hanoverian rulers took to Windsor and for George III in particular it was his preferred home as it gave him the chance to indulge in his favourite country pursuits.

- The tour includes the sumptuous **State Apartments** which have been lavishly restored after the terrible fire of 1992. One of the other highlights is **St. Georges Chapel**. Dating to the fourteenth century, the Chapel is the burial place for several Monarchs including Henry VIII and his third wife, Jane Seymour. Also buried here are Charles I who was executed in 1649, along with more recent Royals including both George V and George VI. The Chapel has also been used for a number of Royal Weddings, most recently and notably that of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle.
- **Windsor** is a pleasant town, situated by the **River Thames**, and time should be allowed to explore outside of the Castle. There are also many excellent opportunities for lunch.
- In the afternoon you return by private bus to your hotel and in the evening there will be a farewell dinner at a city restaurant.
- Today is **New Year's Eve** and you

will have the option of traveling to the city center to try to see the fireworks which take place at the turn of Midnight, alongside the **River Thames**.

DAY 6

January 1, 2020

Tower of London & Crown Jewels

- This morning your Tour Manager you walk across **Tower Bridge**, the famous bridge that can open like a drawbridge to let passing ships through. Here you visit the **Tower of London**. Over the centuries many famous people have been imprisoned and even executed here, among them Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII. You can also see the **Royal Crown Jewels**.
- After lunch there will be an optional walking tour led by your Tour Manger which will include **London**



Bridge and Borough Market. **Borough Market** is one of the most famous and traditional of the old covered London markets and during the day its varied food stalls provide a fantastic choice of food and drink. Right outside the market is **The Shard**, the highest building in London at a height of 1,020 feet.



You walk along the **River Thames**, passing **Shakespeare's Globe Theater**. This is a reconstruction of the original theatre which stood on a spot close to this site. The project of actor Sam Wannamaker, the theater features regular productions of the Bard's plays throughout the year. From here you continue to the **South Bank** where you have the chance to take a trip on the **London Eye**.

DAY 7

January 2, 2020

Depart London

- There will be time this morning for any final souvenir shopping you wish to do in the **Kensington** area before you transfer by private bus to the airport for your homeward flight, arriving home later today



What IS Included in the Tour Package

- Round trip flights from Charlotte Airport to London including airport taxes and fuel surcharges
- Accommodation at the 4-star Copthorne Tara Hotel Kensington, in twin rooms with en-suite bathrooms
- Breakfasts at your hotel
- Three course welcome and farewell dinner including one drink per person
- Professional tour manager/guide to remain with you throughout the tour
- Transportation by private bus for airport transfers in London
- Full day private bus to visit Windsor
- Round trip train tickets from London to Canterbury
- Admissions to Windsor Castle, Canterbury Cathedral, Tower of London and Westminster Abbey
- 100% Financial Protection through our Travel Trust Association License

What is NOT included in the Tour Package

- Valid passport (Visas are not currently required for US citizens).
- Admissions for visits not mentioned above
- Travel Insurance.
- Tips for restaurants, guides and drivers.
- Single room supplements.
- Cost of Gaston College registration.



All-Inclusive Tour Price

Land and air package: **\$3,479 per person**, double-occupancy hotel and cabin with transportation and fees (based on 18 paying tour members).



Reservation Form
Explore London

December 27, 2019 - January 2, 2020

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, DETATCH AND SEND TO
GASTON COLLEGE STUDY TOURS AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

**Send a \$500 (per person) deposit by check or credit card
(credit card payments can be made at 704.922.6435).
Deposits must be received on or before September 13, 2019
to Bob Blanton at the address below.**

Full name (as it appears on your passport):

Current address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email: _____

Valid passport number (for airlines): _____

Expiration date: _____

Note: Many foreign countries now require that your passport be valid at least 6 months after you end your visit. Make sure yours will meet this requirement.

I wish to room with: _____

I require a private room at additional cost: _____

Special dietary/health needs (for hotels/airlines): _____

- I am covered by my own health/hospitalization insurance policy while overseas. You must provide proof of coverage.
- I plan to purchase additional health/hospitalization insurance (on my own). Trip Mate is our preferred company.

Bob Blanton, Study Tours Director
Box 76, Gaston College
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Opportunities For Life

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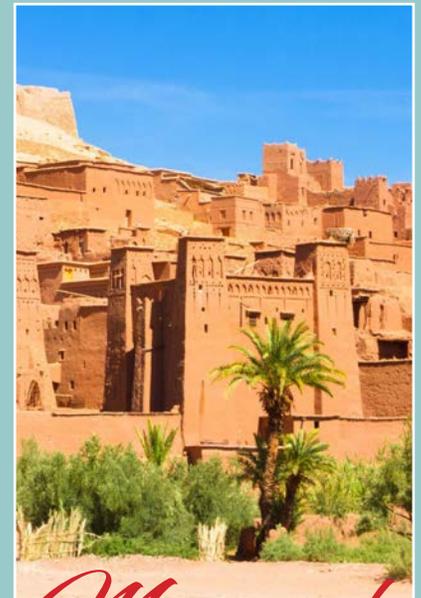
Reservations

Explore London
December 27, 2019 -
January 2, 2020

All prices based upon a minimum of 18 paying participants (prices are valid at the time of this printing, but are subject to change). Tours are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. *Checks should be made payable to Gaston College Study Tours, and payment should be sent directly to Bob Blanton, Gaston College Study Tours, Box 76, Gaston College, 201 Highway 321 South, Dallas, NC 28034.*

**Final Payment Deadline
September 25, 2019**

Coming
SPRING 2020



Morocco!