

OSCAR WILDE TOURS

Gay London / Gay Paris *August 14-22, 2017*

London and Paris...Europe's two greatest metropolises, capitals of history, art, literature, fashion—and for centuries the centers of great empires that spanned the globe. And now, thanks to Oscar Wilde Tours, revealed as capitals of gay culture that are home to our hidden history.

Come along for a daring new look at these magnificent cities. Over eight days we will introduce you to gay history as you've never seen it before: from James I, Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf, to King Henri III, Jean Cocteau, Marcel Proust and Yves St Laurent, London and Paris are veritable encyclopedias of gay history and culture. And we'll even touch on famous gay American expats, such as Gertrude Stein and James Baldwin. With superb accommodations, ravishing meals and expert guides versed in gay history, you're about to embark on a journey of a lifetime...



Monday, August 14 **Day 1** After resting from your international flight, you'll meet Professor Lear and our Gay London guide for an afternoon's walk. We start with a tour of England's quintessential monument, Westminster Abbey—England's coronation church since 1066 and a great center of gay history, replete with memorials and histories of gay kings, authors, actors and so many more. We then proceed to late afternoon tea at one of London's most famous tearooms—a favorite of Oscar Wilde's. With a lovely selection of teas and three courses of sandwiches, warm scones with clotted cream, and cakes you'll be immersed in the greatest British culinary tradition of all.

Tuesday, August 15 **Day 2** We spend today on further exploration of London. The morning begins with a stroll down London's famous shopping street, Piccadilly, where we discover many connections with Oscar Wilde. Our stroll ends at the National Portrait Gallery, where we will enjoy Professor Lear's special Gay Secrets tour, covering the remarkable number of gay personalities of display, from King James I and his boyfriend to David Hockney and Ian McKellen. We have lunch at the gallery's top-floor dining room, with one of London's loveliest views. After lunch, we stroll through London's gayest neighborhood, Soho, on our way to the British Museum, where we stop to see, among other things, the Warren Cup—probably the most scandalously gay piece in any major museum and the most expensive item ever purchased by the Museum. Our tour concludes with a stroll around Bloomsbury's famous residential squares, where the Bloomsbury group famously “lived in squares and loved in triangles.”

Wednesday, August 16 **Day 3** Today we head into the countryside in Sussex to visit Charleston Farmhouse, a group retreat for the Bloomsbury Group, where Virginia Woolf and her friends carried on their complex lives while revolutionizing the arts in Britain. After lunch at an excellent country pub, we drive into Brighton, Britain's main seaside resort and one of the country's main gay centers since the 19th century. We take the local “Piers and Queers” tour and visit the fabulous Royal Pavilion—which does not have a gay history but is still one of the queeniest buildings on earth. We return to London for a free evening (but ask if you like about staying in Brighton for the evening).

Thursday, August 17 **Day 4** Another excursion occupies our morning: we go by train to visit Bletchley Park, the top-secret research center where the great mathematician Alan Turing (subject of *The Imitation Game*) invented the computer and broke Nazi Germany's military codes. After having helped save the Western world, Turing was repaid by being arrested for cruising in 1952, when homosexuality was still illegal—and in 2009 received a posthumous apology from the Prime Minister for “the appalling way he was treated.” We then return to London for a free afternoon and evening—your time to explore other museums, the city's great shopping and London's many famous restaurants.

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- Friday, August 18* **Day 5** Today we take the famous Chunnel train to Paris and begin our explorations of Europe's other great capital. After lunch in one of Paris' most charming street markets, we explore our hotel's neighborhood, the Left Bank, from the top of Montparnasse to the Seine. This is Paris' great bohemian neighborhood, and as we meander, we see sites from literary, artistic, and gay history, from Gertrude Stein's studio, to the café where James Baldwin wrote *Giovanni's Room*, to the hotel where Oscar Wilde died. The evening is free, and with our hotel in the middle of the Left Bank, you won't have any trouble finding places to eat...
- Saturday, August 19* **Day 6** We start our morning by crossing the Seine to visit the other half of Paris. We begin in the world's great monumental cemetery, Père Lachaise, where we see the graves of many famous people, some gay (Oscar Wilde, Proust, Gertrude Stein), some not (Abélard and Héloïse, Chopin), and some...about whom we're just not sure (Jim Morrison). After a typical French lunch, we tour the Marais, one of Paris' most interesting neighborhoods, including everything from the city's best collection of 17th century palaces to its traditional Jewish ghetto and the city's main gayborhood, where we end our afternoon with a drink. Evening free.
- Sunday, August 20* **Day 7** The Valley of the Loire, south of Paris, beckons today: one of the most beautiful parts of the country, where the kings of France built the world's most fantastic collection of castles. We visit two castles with gay connections: Clos Lucé, where the great gay genius Leonardo Da Vinci spent his last three years, and Chenonceau, a favorite of France's gayest king, Henri III—as well as a line-up of other fascinating people, including Catherine de Médicis, her husband's mistress Diane de Poitiers, and her daughter-in-law Mary Queen of Scots. We will have lunch at the castle's superb restaurant before our tour, and then return to Paris for another free evening of exploring the city's magnificent restaurants and nightlife.
- Monday, August 21* **Day 8** Back in Paris, we spend the morning visiting one of the world's greatest art museums, the Musée du Louvre. We view its famous masterpieces with a special concentration on the Museum's astonishingly rich collection of gay-themed works—from its statues of the Roman emperor Hadrian's boyfriend Antinous, to portraits of all of France's gay kings, to a rich collection of homoerotic works from the Napoleonic period. The tour is a true eye-opener, covering thousands of years of gay history in one place. As in London, we leave your last afternoon free for your own explorations—of the city's wonderful museums, architecture, bistros and boutiques. Our evening is rounded out with a farewell dinner at one of Paris' great bistros—where Barack and Michelle Obama had dinner on their trip to Paris. It's a great place to toast the two great cities we have visited and the new friendships you have made on the tour!
- Tuesday, August 22* **Day 9** Our tour ends this morning with breakfast in Paris, but we are happy to arrange your return trip to London or other travel plans. Please let us know about your return to the US, especially if you are leaving today.

Take our 3 day Amsterdam extension, and enjoy another of Europe's great gay cities

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HOTELS

LONDON-The Chesterfield Mayfair

Set in the heart of London's most chic neighborhood, Mayfair, around the corner from Berkeley Square and Bond St., the Chesterfield occupies a row of townhouses with a fascinating history of aristocrats and parliamentarians. Today's hotel is a model of old-fashioned British charm and hospitality.

PARIS-Hotel Pont Royal

In the heart of the St. Germain neighborhood, steps away from Paris' most famous cafés, the Pont Royal has a fascinating history, starting in the '20s when Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald held court in its bar. Today it is a hotel of quiet grace and elegance, and an ideal center for your visit to Paris.