



# Tour Information



## Great Castles of South-East England





The tour starts and finishes at **Orida Hotel, Maidstone**

ORIDA Maidstone Hotel,

Bearsted Road,

Maidstone ME14 5AA

Email: [reservations.maidstone@oridahotels.com](mailto:reservations.maidstone@oridahotels.com)

Tel: 01622 734 322

**Please note that transport to the hotel is not included in the price of the tour.**



## Transport

The following routes have been provided by the hotel:

**From the South:** Merge onto M11, take M25 towards M20. Keep right & merge to M25 & continue to A282. Take A206, keep left onto M2. Take J3 to A229 & M20 slip road to Dover. Exit M20 J7 & at RBout take 3rd exit onto A249. A249 through 2 more RBouts. Hotel on left.

**From the West:** Merge onto A335, leave at J12 onto M3. M3 to Basingstoke, merge onto M25. Fork right onto M26, exit to M20. Exit M20 J7 & at RBout take 3rd exit onto A249. A249 through 2 more RBouts. Hotel on left.

**From the North:** Merge onto A13 towards Lnd EC. Exit at J30 onto A282 & merge onto M25. Merge onto M20. Exit M20 J7 & at RBout take 3rd exit onto A249. A249 through 2 more RBouts. Hotel on left.

**From the East:** Join M23 SPUR at roundabout exit onto M23. Leave M23 at J8 to M25. At J5 take right lane to M26. continue on to M26. Leave M20 at J7 & at RBout take 3rd exit onto A249. continue on A249 through 2 more RBouts. Hotel on left.

**From Gatwick:** Join M23 SPUR at roundabout exit onto M23. Leave M23 at J8 to M25. At J5 take right lane to M26. continue on to M20. Take exit 7 from M20 Continue on A249 to your destination in Maidstone. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto A249. At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Bearsted Rd/A249. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit and stay on Bearsted Rd/A249. Then the hotel entrance will be on the left.

**From Dover:** Follow A20 to M20 in Folkestone. Follow M20 to A249. Take exit 7 from M20. Continue on A249 to your destination in Maidstone. At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto A249. the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Bearsted Rd/A249. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit and stay on Bearsted Rd/A249. Turn 1st left and the Orida Hotel will be on the right

**From the Dartford Tunnel:** Head south-west on Queen Elizabeth II Bridge/A282 and continue to follow A282 (Toll road parts of this road may be closed at certain times or on certain days) Take M20 to A249. Take exit 7 from M20. Keep right to continue on M25, follow signs for Dover/M20/Channel Tnl/M23. At junction 3, exit onto M20 towards Dover/Channel Tunnel/Maidstone. At junction 7, take the A249 exit to Maidstone. Continue on A249 to your destination in Maidstone. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit onto A249. At the roundabout, take the 2nd exit onto Bearsted Rd/A249. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit and stay on Bearsted Rd/A249. Turn 1st left The Orida Hotel will be on the right.

**Travelling by rail:** The nearest train station is **Maidstone East** which is served by the South Eastern line.



## Accommodation

### Orida Hotel, Maidstone

Contemporary four-star hotel located on the outskirts of Maidstone. Facilities here include leisure centre with indoor pool, bar and restaurant. Bedrooms are comfortable with all modern amenities including en-suite bathroom, TV, telephone, free wifi and hairdryer.

**Car parking:** Car parking is available at the hotel at £5 per day, payable directly at the hotel.

For more information, additional details can be found on the website: [Hotel Website](#)

### Check-in and departure from the hotel

You can check in from 15.00. The tour will start in the evening when the Tour Manager, will meet you at approximately 18:00 for the welcome reception, along with our expert guide Marc Morris.

On the last day of the tour, the tour will not finish until approximately 17.00 – 17.30 so you should check with your tour manager, or the hotel reception, where luggage should be stored until your departure.

## Extra nights

If you have booked to stay an extra night at the hotel, this is on a bed and breakfast basis and check out from the hotel is at 11:00.

## Special requests

If you haven't already done so, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

## Dining

On the first night of your stay, a private dinner with wine is provided. During the second evening of the tour, dinner is provided at the hotel restaurant. Breakfast on each day of your stay is included in the price. All other meals other than these stated are not included.

If you have booked to stay an extra night, dinner is not included on your final evening.



## Places Visited

The invading Normans brought the concept of the castle to England in 1066, and it was following the conquest that much castle construction began. Being on the front lines of England against attack from Europe, both Kent and Sussex have many spectacular castles built throughout the ages, to both defend and display power. Our tour explores five of these, each demonstrating different characteristics and styles, whilst putting them into the historical and social context of when they were built.

### Rochester Castle

Founded in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest, Rochester boasts the tallest twelfth-century keep in Europe, soaring to a height of 125ft. Built to guard the crossing of the River Medway, it was besieged by King John in 1215, partially collapsed and later rebuilt. Surrounding the keep is the bailey, which would have been filled with buildings in the mid-13th century but is now occupied by the Castle Gardens.

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/rochester-castle/>

### Rochester Cathedral

Built in the twelfth century, Rochester Cathedral is the mother church of the Anglican Diocese of Rochester, and seat of the Bishop of Rochester, the second oldest bishopric in England after that of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The heritage of the Diocese and its people is reflected in the Cathedral, its archives and collections. The cathedral, built in the Norman style is a Grade I listed building.

[Rochester Cathedral](#)

## Dover Castle

Commanding the shortest sea crossing between England and the continent, Dover Castle has a long and immensely eventful history. Known as the 'key to England', this great fortress has played a crucial role in the defence of the realm for over nine centuries, a span equalled only by the Tower of London and Windsor Castle. The chalk of Castle Hill has been shaped and reshaped over the centuries into massive earthworks, ditches and mounds. Imposing walls and towers have been raised and networks of tunnels excavated beneath them. Henry II began the building of the present castle in the 1180s, and ever since its buildings and defences have been adapted to meet the changing demands of weapons and warfare. Within the walls of the medieval castle stands a much older building, dating from a time when Britain was an outpost of the Roman Empire. The Romans built a lighthouse here after they invaded in AD 43, to guide ships into the harbour. The Dover pharos is now one of only three Roman lighthouses to survive from the whole of the former Roman Empire. It is also the most complete standing Roman building in England.

*(NB Due to limitations of time, this tour does not include Dover's WWII tunnels.)*

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle/history-and-stories/>

## Eynsford Castle

Eynsford Castle is a rare survival of an early Norman 'enclosure castle', founded shortly after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The impressive curtain wall was built between 1085 and 1087, probably by William de Eynsford I. In 1130 the wall was heightened, and a gate-tower built to strengthen the castle defences. A hall, which provided accommodation for the Eynsford family, and associated buildings were also erected inside the castle walls about this time. These buildings were reconstructed in about 1250, following a fire. The castle was later the subject of a hotly disputed inheritance, which reached a climax in 1312 when one of the claimants broke in and vandalised it. Soon afterwards the castle was abandoned, and by the 18th century many of the buildings had fallen into disrepair.

[Eynsford Castle](#)

## Tonbridge Castle

Perhaps Kent's most authentic medieval castle, Tonbridge Castle stands guard over the market town of Tonbridge. The Normans choose Tonbridge as a place of fortification because of its location. Looking over the river Medway, it guarded the road from Hastings to London. We first hear about this castle in 1088. Yet, it is likely that Richard FitzGilbert built it soon after the invasion of 1066. Tonbridge, which boasts one of the largest mottes in England, as well as a splendid thirteenth-century gatehouse, the model for similar examples built by the English during the conquest of Wales. The castle offers breathtaking views across the town.

[Tonbridge Castle](#)

## Bodiam Castle

Bodiam Castle was built by Sir Edward Dallingridge, an infamous knight during the time of King Richard II, in 1385. It was constructed shortly after the Peasants' Revolt and during the Hundred Years' War. Sir Edward Dallingridge was given permission by King Richard II to fortify his existing mansion 'for the defence of the country and the resistance to our enemies', and he chose a spot close to the River Rother, to best protect his lands against the threat of the invading French. Whilst the outside of the Castle displayed many defensive features, the interior contained many modern-day luxuries such as ample numbers of toilets and fireplaces. Thus, it was as much of a stately home as it was a fortress.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiam-castle>

## Your Speaker

Your speaker, Dr Marc Morris, Marc is a medieval historian and broadcaster best known for his TV series on British castles. In 2008 he published a bestselling biography of Edward I, "A Great and Terrible King", to widespread critical acclaim and his new book "The Norman Conquest" is every bit as engagingly written.



**Marc will give the following talk during the tour:**

*'An Introduction to Castles'*

## Practical Information

**Tour manager** - Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

**Tipping** – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.

**Grading** – This tour has been graded as **Moderate**: Walking between sites, lots of standing for viewing.



## Insurance

Although this is a UK holiday please note that, should you cancel your holiday, the amount paid is non-refundable. For this reason, you may wish to take out insurance just in case an unforeseen event caused you to have to cancel the tour. As well as covering cancellations, your travel insurance will also cover your baggage and personal belongings in case they are lost or stolen.



## Emergencies

**Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:**

020 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

07841 023807 or 07831 133079

**PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.**

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