



British Literary Tour With OLLI Southern Maine

11 days | 14 days with The Lakes District extension | Sep 30 2026—Oct 10 2026

Embark on a captivating journey through the United Kingdom, where history and literature intertwine to create an unforgettable experience. Begin in the bustling streets of London, where the echoes of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Woolf still resonate, and visit iconic sites like the Globe Theatre and Westminster Abbey. Wander through the elegant city of Bath, immortalized by Jane Austen's novels, and explore its Georgian architecture and Roman baths. Make a stop in the charming village of Chawton, where you can visit the home of Jane Austen. Venture into the historic city of Oxford, renowned for its prestigious university and its inspiration for countless literary works. Conclude your journey by returning to London, where the rich historical tapestry of these iconic locations comes full circle.



Your tour package includes

- 9 nights in handpicked hotels
- Breakfast daily
- 4 dinners with beer or wine
- 7 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

- Buckingham Palace
- The Globe Theatre
- Westminster Abbey
- Churchill War Rooms
- Chawton Village
- Bath
- Stratford-upon-Avon
- Oxford University
- Stratford-upon-Avon
- Winchester Cathedral
- The British Library
- Charles Dickens Museum

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least two hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with few hills and stairs.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/english-lit-2026-olli-s-maine> | 1-800-438-7672

British Literary Tour With OLLI Southern Maine

11 days | 14 days with The Lakes District extension

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to London today.

London → 4 nights

Day 2: Arrival in London

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to England! After touching down at London Heathrow Airport—the second-busiest international passenger terminal in the world—transfer to your hotel and unwind. Later in the evening, meet up with your Tour Director and fellow travelers, and get to know one another over a welcome dinner.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of London & the Globe Theatre

Included meals: breakfast

Join a local guide for a panoramic tour of London's regal landmarks, soaking in centuries of history and culture along the way.

- Pass stately Trafalgar Square—a popular public plaza surrounded by museums, galleries, and historic buildings—and St. Paul's Cathedral. Sit atop Ludgate Hill at the highest point of the City of London neighborhood, this Baroque Anglican church dates back to the 17th century and has hosted state funerals and royal jubilees over the years.
- See Westminster Abbey, one of London's four UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Since its consecration in 1065, it's seen 16 royal weddings and the coronation of 40 monarchs, and serves as the final resting place of 18 British rulers.
- Catch a glimpse of skyline icons like the Elizabeth Tower (the clock tower known as Big Ben) and the London Eye observation wheel. Then, take some time to marvel at the Tower of London: a historic castle that has functioned as a royal palace and prison, and is now home to the Crown Jewels.
- Stop by Buckingham Palace—the official residence of the ruling monarch—where you might catch the Changing of the Guard ceremony.

Spend the afternoon inside the world-renowned Globe Theatre, where many of Shakespeare's plays were performed. You'll join a local guide for a tour and interactive lecture of the theatre followed by free time to explore the theatre.

Day 4: Westminster Abbey, afternoon tea & the Churchill War Rooms

Included meals: breakfast, light lunch

Visit Westminster Abbey, the famous Gothic church near the Houses of Parliament. With a local guide leading the way, you'll discover Westminster's storied history. Learn about its service as a coronation church for the monarchy since 1066 and resting place of many important Britons, from Queen Elizabeth I to Isaac Newton and Charles Dickens. Then, sit down for afternoon tea where you will enjoy the classic English tradition accompanied by specialties like finger sandwiches, scones and clotted cream, and pastries.

Spend the afternoon exploring the Churchill War Rooms, an underground complex that served as the nerve center of Britain's war effort during World War II. As you navigate the labyrinth of historic rooms and corridors, you'll uncover the stories of the men and women who worked tirelessly to guide the nation through its darkest hours. Discover the Cabinet Room, where crucial decisions were made, and the Map Room, which remains exactly as it was left in 1945.

Bath → 2 nights

Day 5: Bath via Chawton

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Leave the bustling streets of London behind and embark on a picturesque journey to the historic city of Bath. Along the way, make a delightful stop in the charming village of Chawton, renowned for its connection to one of England's most beloved authors, Jane Austen. Here, you can visit the quaint cottage where Austen spent the last eight years of her life, penning some of her most famous works, including "Pride and Prejudice" and "Emma."

After soaking in the literary history, continue your journey to Bath, where you'll have a free afternoon to get settled in before gathering together for tonight's included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 6: Sightseeing tour of Bath

Included meals: breakfast

Bath has the unique honor of being a double UNESCO World Heritage Site: first named to the list in 1987 for its mix of Roman remains and Georgian aesthetics, then again in 2021 as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. Dive right into its highlights today, with your Tour Director in the lead.

- Pass a host of famous places, including the Royal Crescent—one of England's eminent examples of Palladian architecture—and the Circus. And no visit to Bath would be complete without entering its namesake attraction: the Roman Baths that have stood since the first century A.D.
- Enjoy free time for lunch and shopping, or enter the Bath Abbey on your own. Founded in the seventh century and expanded in the English Gothic fashion, it's a stone's throw from the Roman Baths and a worthwhile visit for any architecture aficionado.

Once you've recharged, join an optional excursion and head further into the city to visit the home-turned-museum of a certain author—and Bath's most famous resident. Alternatively, spend some free time indulging at a modern-day spa, fed by the same thermal waters that soothed the Romans thousands of years ago.

+ Literary Bath & Afternoon Tea

Oxford → 2 nights

Day 7: Oxford via Stratford-upon-Avon

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Drive through the countryside to Stratford-upon-Avon, the town of playwright and poet William Shakespeare's birth. Here, you'll step inside the Shakespeare family home to tour the grounds, hear about the dramatist's family life, and take in a bit of theater.

You'll also make a brief photo stop at Anne Hathaway's cottage. Shakespeare's wife and her relationship with her famous husband is shrouded in mystery and controversy, see if you can get to the bottom of it in her former home, which has been lovingly restored. Its thatched roof and creeping vines and gardens are right out of a storybook.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/english-lit-2026-olli-s-maine> | 1-800-438-7672

Continue on to the city of Oxford. Freshen up in your hotel room, then reconvene in the evening for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Oxford

Included meals: breakfast

Beyond the oldest university in the English-speaking world, you'll find buildings of every English architectural style in Oxford—even dating as far back as the late Anglo-Saxon period. Spend the first half of your day following a local guide on a walking tour of the city, admiring its spire-studded skyline as you go. Then, tread the campuses of New College and Christ Church, constituent schools of the University of Oxford and educational institutions that trace their roots back as far as 1379. Learn about their academic heritage and legacy, and come to know how the latter simultaneously serves as a cathedral and place of higher learning. (An extra fun fact: Oxford University was used as a filming location for the *Harry Potter* franchise, as well as other movies!) Once you finish, board your bus for an optional trip to Blenheim Palace—birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill—or spend a free afternoon in Oxford.

Please note: The New College closes during the academic year. If it's closed, your group will visit a different campus instead.

+ Blenheim Palace & Lunch

London → 2 nights

Day 9: London via Winchester

Included meals: breakfast

Travel back to London today, with a delightful stop in the historic city of Winchester along the way. With your Tour Director, embark on a brief walking tour of Upper Winchester.

- Start at the serene Abbey Gardens and make your way towards the magnificent Winchester Cathedral. Here, you'll enter for a guided tour of the Cathedral, Treasury, and Crypt, uncovering centuries of history and architectural splendor.
- Stroll along the historic High Street to Westgate, the Great Hall, and the legendary Round Table, the site of Winchester's Castle and King Charles II's Royal Palace.

Continue back to London where you'll have free time for the rest of the day to relax, or pick back up where you left off and continue exploring on your own.

Day 10: The British Library & the Charles Dickens Museum

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Spend your morning delving into the literary treasures of London, starting with a visit to the British Library and followed by a trip to the Charles Dickens Museum.

- Begin with a comprehensive tour of the British Library, where you'll explore the Viewing Gallery and Reading Room. Gain fascinating insights into how books are stored, accessed, and delivered within this vast repository of knowledge.
- Afterward, take a leisurely 15-minute walk down Museum Mile to the nearby Charles Dickens Museum where you'll set off on a self-guided tour of this charming house, which holds rare editions, manuscripts, and personal items belonging to the beloved author.

Tonight, celebrate your trip with your fellow travelers at a farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 11: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

+ The Lakes District extension

The Lake District isn't just a place to visit—it's a destination to experience. Extend your journey into the literary treasure troves of northern England with visits to sites like the Brontë Parsonage Museum and Dove Cottage. Whether you're tracing the footsteps of the Brontë sisters or immersing yourself in the world of William Wordsworth, this extension promises a deeper dive into the rich literary heritage of the region.

Lakes District → 3 nights

Day 11: Train to Manchester & transfer to the Lakes District

Included meals: breakfast

Embark on a scenic train journey from London to

Manchester, traversing the picturesque English countryside. As the train glides through charming villages and past historic landmarks, you'll witness the beauty of rolling hills and lush landscapes.

Upon arriving in Manchester, continue your adventure by bus to the enchanting Lake District. Known for its stunning lakes, rugged mountains, and quaint towns, the Lake District offers a serene escape into nature's splendor.

Please note: Porterage isn't included on the train ride from London to Manchester. Travelers must be comfortable lifting and carrying their bags over steps, onto platforms, and into storage.

Day 12: Dove Cottage, Wordsworth Museum & Lake Windermere cruise

Included meals: breakfast

Step into another century as you experience William Wordsworth's life at Dove Cottage. Wordsworth and his family lived in this humble Lake District cottage from 1799 to 1808. Today, Dove Cottage has been brought back to life and the sights, sounds, and smells evoke memories of over 200 years ago. Little moments taken from the Wordsworths' poems, journals, and letters have been recreated, telling the story of their life here.

- Visit Dove Cottage, where the Wordsworth family lived from 1799 to 1808. The cottage has been meticulously restored to reflect the period, immersing you in the sights, sounds, and smells of over 200 years ago.
- Explore the Wordsworth Museum, which houses a fascinating collection of manuscripts, letters, and personal items that provide insight into the poet's life and work.

End with a cruise along Lake Windermere, England's largest lake. Listen to fascinating commentary on the history, attractions, and points of interest surrounding Windermere, offering a unique perspective on this beautiful region.

Day 13: Brontë Parsonage Museum & Haworth Village

Included meals: breakfast

Immerse yourself in the world of the Brontë sisters with a visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, the family home and museum maintained by the Brontë Society in honor of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. Discover the kind of place Haworth would have been in the time of the Brontës, and the impact it might have had on their writing.

- Explore the Brontë Parsonage Museum, where the Brontë family lived. The museum offers a glimpse into the lives of the famous sisters, with exhibits showcasing their personal belongings, manuscripts, and letters.
- Walk through the village of Haworth, revealing what it was like in the Brontës' day. The cobbled streets and historic buildings transport you back to the 19th century, providing a sense of the environment that inspired novels like "Jane Eyre," "Wuthering Heights," and "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall."
- Visit St. Michael and All Angels Church next door, where most of the Brontës are buried. The churchyard and its surroundings offer a poignant connection to the family's history.
- End your day at the infamous Black Bull, a historic pub frequented by the Brontë family. Enjoy the atmosphere and imagine the conversations that might have taken place within its walls.

Finally, join your fellow group members for a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip.

Flight Home

Day 14: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Manchester airport for your flight home.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/english-lit-2026-olli-s-maine> | 1-800-438-7672

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/english-lit-2026-olli-s-maine> | 1-800-438-7672

Day 6: Literary Bath & Afternoon Tea

From \$129.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (3 hours, departs in the afternoon)

World-famous for novels that defied gender norms and detailed iconic characters, author Jane Austen was Bath's most famous resident. Make your way to the Jane Austen Centre, where you'll enjoy a presentation delivered by a costumed guide. Then, explore this beautifully decorated Georgian townhouse on your own, learning more about the Regency era and how it informed Austen's work. Once finished, you'll sit down for a cuppa in the Regency Tea Room, paired with a light lunch. Turn the page on your visit by heading to Persephone Books, an independent publisher that reprints neglected authors—most of whom are women from the mid-20th century. Peruse its collection of novels, short stories, and more (and maybe grab a book for your return flight) before going back to your hotel.

Day 8: Blenheim Palace & Lunch

From \$169.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4.5 hours, departs in the afternoon, includes lunch)

Start this excursion with an included lunch at a local pub before leaving Oxford for the gorgeous grounds of Blenheim Palace. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, this Baroque-style residence was the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill; while there, you'll learn about the events that shaped the former prime minister's personal and political life. Go from the home's lavish state rooms, bedecked with works of art, to the Churchill Exhibition, before ending your time at Blenheim with a stroll through a portion of its 2,000 acres of gardens and water terraces.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.