

TOUR TIMES



A publication from Mary Valentine Tours August 2023

Wales Tour Announced: May 21-28, 2024



Dear Reader,

Our next tour takes us to new locations. For eight days in May we'll travel through southern Wales and a bit of England.

After a quick stay in London where we'll pop into the state rooms and sail to Greenwich, our luxury coach will take us to beautiful Wales where our visits will range from an historic coal mine to a castle, as well as a famous cathedral. We'll stay in Wales' largest city and its smallest city and check out poet Dylan Thomas' home. We'll spend some time at the Royal Mint where the UK's new money featuring the face of King Charles is being produced.

Teatime will find us sampling Welsh cakes, Welsh soda bread, and other local favorites. We'll dine a wide range of extraordinary restaurants. Nights will be spent in 4- and 5-star hotels, including one that began its life as a windmill.

Back in England, no tour of ours would be complete without a stopover at The Pig Near Bath, as well as tea, scones, and great conversation at Persephone Books.

On the next page you'll find a day-to-day schedule to give you a picture of what to expect. I'll send you updated schedules periodically. Give me a call if you have any questions. I look forward to your joining us.

Mary

WANT TO JOIN US? It's easy.

Cost per person: \$6450. This covers hotels for eight nights; eight breakfasts; seven dinners; one afternoon tea; group taxis in London; a luxury coach in the countryside; tickets and entry fees to 15-20 venues. Not covered: airfare, airport transfers, lunches, incidentals, and tips for our driver. Group size: 7-10.

To reserve a spot, send a non-refundable \$500 deposit to Mary Valentine now. An installment of \$3000.00 is due no later than February 1, 2024. The balance (\$2950) is due no later than April 1, 2024.

Send payments to:
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The Welsh flag

Day by Day May Tour Schedule

Day 1: In the morning, we'll sail from London's Westminster Bridge to Greenwich where we tour the Old Naval College and view its spectacular Painted Ceiling. Then we'll stop at the Prime Meridian. In the afternoon, we'll visit the Garden Museum and take a walking tour of Chelsea in Bloom where shops compete for the most beautiful floral decorations.



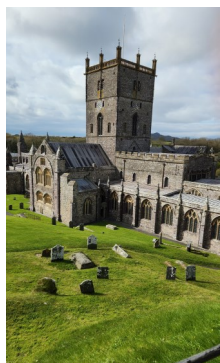
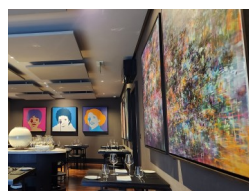
Day 2: Our schedule includes a visit to the State Rooms (either Buckingham Palace or Kensington Palace), as well as the special exhibit at the recently reopened National Portrait Gallery. An early dinner at the Portrait Restaurant will be followed by a candlelight concert at St.- Martin-in-the-Fields.



Day 3: Our coach picks us up and soon we're in Wales. Stops include Tintern Abbey and the Big Pit Coal Mine.



Day 4: Day 4 will find us in Cardiff, the capitol of Wales, where we'll visit Parliament, the Docks, the Welsh Assembly, and the performing Arts Concert Hall. Then we're on to St. Davids, the smallest city in Wales, where we'll spend three nights at a 5-star hotel which is noted for its fabulous restaurant and modern art collection.



Day 5: Stops will include the Chapel of St. Non, poet Dylan Thomas' home, the Baked Bean Museum (!), and a scenic coastal drive.

Day 6: We spend the morning exploring St. Davids, including stops for a tour at the Cathedral and St. Davids Castle. St. Davids is filled with opportunities for walks as well as shopping.

Day 7: We leave St. Davids and stop at the Royal Mint which is producing the UK's new money featuring King Charles. We'll then check into the five-star Pig Near Bath for one night.

Day 8: Following a Bridgerton/Queen Charlotte walking tour of Bath, we'll stop at Persephone for tea, scones and lively conversation before heading for London where we'll dine at London's Frontline Restaurant and end our tour.



CAN YOU SPEAK LIKE A LOCAL?

Below are some commonly used phrases in the United Kingdom. Match them up with the definitions/explanations in the right-hand column.

- _____1. Bob’s your uncle

_____2. Taking the Mickey

_____3. Chuffed

_____4. Dodgy

_____5. Cheers

_____6. Knackered

_____7. Gutted

_____8. Taking a punt

_____9. Having a kip

_____10. Having a chinwag
- A. Exhausted

B. Catching up on gossip

C. Making change from dollars to pounds

D. Taking a chance, a gamble

E. Deeply disappointed

F. No problem. Job done

G. Really pleased

H. Goodby; you’re welcome; thanks

I. That’s dad’s brother.

J. Pulling your leg

K. Playing rugby

L. Power nap

M. Shaving

N. Suspicious or shady



What Makes Our Tours Special?

“I look for off-the-beaten-track locations and events. In the last few years, for example, we’ve spent a day at cooking school making Cornish pasties; spent a day on the moors tracing the steps of the Bronte sisters who wrote some of the greatest novels in English literature; gone underground in one of the tin mines seen in Poldark; visited locations from Bridgerton; and played croquet on the lawn at



Thomas Hardy’s home.”

Mary Valentine

Answers on the page 4.

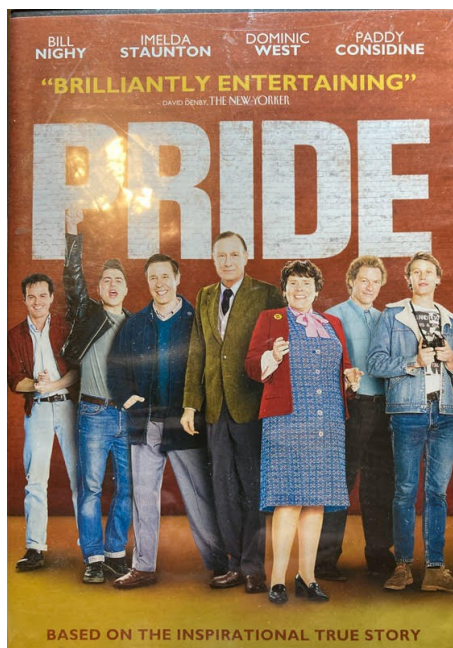
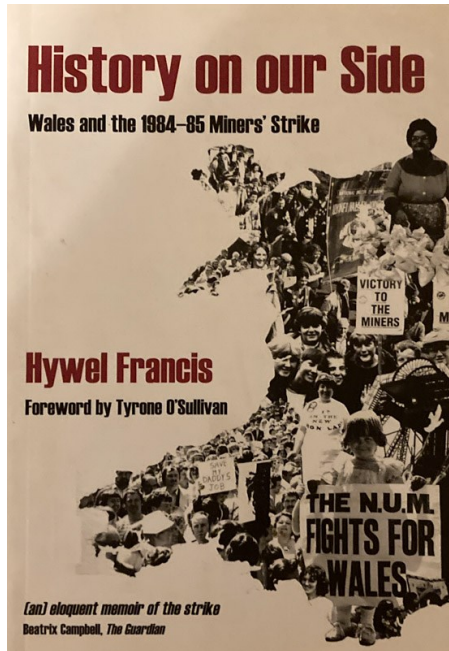
Packing Suggestions for May Travel to the UK



General consensus these days is that the fewer bags you carry, the better. Here are some suggestions for those who travel with a carry-on only. These come from the Lady from London blog.

- *A scarf and an umbrella for sudden weather changes
- *A light jacket or raincoat
- *Flats for comfort while walking and climbing steps
- *A tote bag that hooks over the handle of your small roller bag
- *An extra pair of shoes
- *Four or five tops and three pairs of trousers
- *Changes of underwear
- *Small size toiletries, including shampoo that can also be used for doing laundry

Wales-related Book and Film Recommendations



Answers to the quiz on page 3:

1F; 2J; 3G; 4N; 5H, 6A, 7E, 8D, 9L, 10B

Passport Alert: Renewal is taking longer than ever.



Now that more people have decided to travel again, demand for renewed or replacement passports is at an all time high. Hence, it’s important to dig out your passports and check expiration dates long before you make any reservations or arrangements to travel abroad. Some countries and airlines deny entry if your passport expires in less than six months.

According to the State Department, the current average wait time for a routine passport renewal runs 10-13 weeks, whereas expedited renewals are averaging 7-9 weeks and cost the applicant an additional \$60.00.



High Tea vs. Afternoon Tea: What’s the difference?

According to Tea Time Magazine, high tea and afternoon tea are not the same.

High tea is not a fancy tea, as many people assume. High tea often includes meat, fish, and egg dishes, as well as breads and desserts, and is offered in the early evening. Think of it as a light meal served with tea. High tea gets its name from its tendency to be served at a high table, like a dining table or high counter, at dinner time.

Afternoon tea usually consists of scones, finger sandwiches with the crusts removed, fancy pastries, chocolates, and sometimes, fruit. It is often served on beautiful china.



In our next issue: HOW TO TAKE BETTER TRAVEL PHOTOS