

# THE POND HOPPER



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TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL TO THE U.K. & IRELAND FOR INDEPENDENT AND GROUP TRAVELERS

SUMMER 2010

## Castles! Castles! Castles!

**“**One of my favorite comedians, Eddie Izzard, made an interesting comment in his Emmy award winning stand up comedy show, *Dressed to Kill*, when making reference to how the British live. “We’ve all got a castle each. We’re up to here with (e x p l e t i v e) castles...we just long for a bungalow!” If you get the chance, enjoy the hilarity on YouTube.com: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6hijqO8H0> (warning PG-13)



Eddie Izzard

retreated after her husband’s death, thus dubbing her ‘The Widow of Windsor.’ So distraught was she that, for 40 years after his untimely death (at age 42), the Victoria had Albert’s clothes laid out for him, as if he were expected presently.

**9. Hampton Court Palace** - The Knights Hospitallers of St. John Jerusalem acquired the manor of Hampton in 1236 and used the site as a grange - a centre for their agricultural estates - where produce was stored and accounts kept. Hampton Court, however, is more commonly associated with King Henry VIII. Henry contributed to much of the

upgrade of the Palace and by the time he finished his building works in about 1540, the palace was one of the most modern, sophisticated and magnificent in all of England. It was here that Catherine Howard, Henry’s ill-fated fifth wife, is said to still haunt the hallways. After being accused of adultery, Catherine momentarily escaped the grips of palace guards, and, running to Henry, she cried out and pleaded for her life (to no avail). Hampton Court Palace also boasts a 315-year-old, hedge-lined maze - still in use by visitors from around the world today.

**8. Edinburgh Castle** - Perched on an extinct volcano, this instantly recognizable fortress

*(continued on page 2)*



*Alnwick Castle in Northumberland, England - one of Britain’s most beautiful castles. We definitely recommend a visit. (Scenes from the ‘Harry Potter’ and many other movies have been filmed here.)*

## Ireland Bids You 1,000 Welcomes: Céad míle fáilte!

Ireland is one of those places we associate with far-away, mystical beauty. And for good reason, too. Ireland’s splendor is unsurpassed.

*So, why visit Ireland now?*



*Hook Head Lighthouse, Co. Wexford, Ireland*

The Euro is at a fantastic rate compared to the Dollar (both U.S. and Canadian). Presently, the Euro is at \$1.23 (USD). So, the time to book is definitely *now!*

If not now, then when? We always put off those things we mentally place in the “dream” column. Why put it off any longer?

Need more reasons? How about: *Castles, Golfing, Hiking, Horseback Riding, Delicious Local Food, Shopping, Pubs, Music, Theatre, Cathedrals, Unimaginable Scenery, Hospitality, New Friends*

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And let’s face it...as Americans, we are definitely ‘castle-deprived.’ So, if it’s a peek into the royal life you crave, you’ll hit the “castle jackpot” in Britain.

The Travel Channel recently aired their top ten picks for British Castles. And, although we may not agree with the order, for the most part, we concur with the selection.

**10. Windsor Castle** - Touted as the largest inhabited castle in the world and second home to HM Queen Elizabeth II, Windsor Castle is approximately 1,000 years old (originally serving as a fortress), and is a ‘must-see’ for any London visitor. Located about 20 miles west of London, Windsor can be easily reached by train. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made Windsor Castle their principal royal residence and it was at Windsor where the queen

## Castles... (continued)

*(continued from page 1)*

is a powerful national symbol and part of Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. Originating in 1130 (with rebuilds in both 1356 and 1574), the castle has been owned by both the Scots and the English throughout history. Today, the castle's great cannon, Mons Meg, is fired daily at 1pm and has done so since 1861.

**7. St. Michael's Mount** - Located in the most southwestern county of England, Cornwall's St. Michael's Mount stands atop its own tidal island - visitors may be able to walk to the mount, but may need to row back. Legend states that over the rocky ledge on the western side of the island, an ancient stone chair stands at the entrance to the castle where a vision of the Archangel St. Michael appeared to a group of fishermen in the year 495 (hence the name, St. Michael's Mount). Drenched in spiritual energy and religious roots, St. Michael's Mount has been an important pilgrimage destination throughout the ages.

**6. Stirling Castle** - Most commonly associated with William Wallace, Stirling Castle is located approximately 40 miles northwest of Edinburgh. The castle is a great symbol of Scottish independence and a source of enduring national pride. Stirling's long, turbulent history is associated with great figures from Scotland's past, including Wallace, Robert the Bruce and Mary Queen of Scots. History buffs - don't miss this one!

**5. Caernarfon Castle** - Located in North Wales, mighty Caernarfon is possibly the most famous of the Welsh castles. Its sheer scale and commanding presence set it apart from the rest. Begun in 1283 as the definitive chapter in Edward I's conquest of Wales, Caernarfon was constructed not only as a military stronghold but also as a seat of government and royal palace. The castle was designed to echo the walls of Constantinople, the imperial power of Rome and the dream castle, 'the fairest that ever man saw,' of Welsh myth and legend. After all these years Caernarfon's immense strength remains unchanged.

**4. Leeds Castle** - Set in 500 acres of beautiful parkland, a visit to Leeds Castle in the county of Kent (known as the

garden of England) is full of discovery. Passing into royal hands in 1278, Leeds became part of the Queen of England's dower - the settlement widowed queens received upon the death of their husbands. Over the course of 150 years it was held by six mediaeval queens: Eleanor of Castile;



*A couple relaxes at Leeds Castle in Kent*

Margaret of France; Isabella of France, Joan of Navarre; Anne of Bohemia and Catherine de Valois. During the reign of the Tudors, Henry VIII visited frequently, notably with his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, and their entire court on the way to the tournament of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, which took place in France in 1520. Henry's son, King Edward VI, granted the castle to one of Henry's courtiers for his services. Surrounded by a stunning moat, a visit to Leeds is a great day out from nearby London.

**3. Tintagel Castle** - Back to England's southwest, Tintagel is most commonly associated with King Arthur. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the 12th century, claimed that the castle at Tintagel Head was where King Uther Pendragon seduced Queen Igraine of Cornwall, while her husband Gorlois was under siege at Dimilioc. King Arthur was thus conceived, and Tennyson made the castle his birthplace. In later Arthurian legend, the castle's main role was as the chief castle of King Mark of Cornwall, the uncle of Sir Tristan and husband of Iseult. They famously engaged in a secret affair behind his back. Don't forget to visit 'Merlin's Cave,' a nearby cave named after the Arthurian wizard.

**2. Warwick Castle** - Pronounced *WORR-ik*, this mediaeval castle is located just north of Stratford-upon-Avon, which makes for a great day out from The Bard's birthplace. Sitting on a bend on the River

Avon, the castle dates back to 1068 in the days of William the Conqueror. It was used as a fortification until the early 17th century, when Sir Fulke Greville (who is said to haunt the Watergate Tower to this day) converted it to a country house. It was owned by the Greville family, who became earls of Warwick in 1759, until 1978. Be advised that Warwick Castle has been commercialized quite a bit (it is under management of The Tussauds Group) to entice visitors, but for families, a summer day at Warwick may be just the ticket. (Despite its history and beauty, Across the Pond Vacations disagrees with The Travel Channel's choice that Warwick is considered the 2nd best castle in Britain.)

**1. HM Tower of London** - The Tower is definitely one of our favorite places in London. Centrally located, the Tower of London dates back almost 1,000 years and has something of a gruesome history, including the execution of King Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn (accused, perhaps falsely, of adultery, incest and treason). The Tower is reputedly quite haunted, as a Yeoman Warder (Beefeater) will undoubtedly inform you as you are guided on a historical tour through part of The Tower. Executions, infidelity, political ambush, debauchery - the Tower has it all! For a particularly memorable experience, you can write directly to The Tower requesting admission to The Ceremony of the Keys, the traditional locking up of the Tower of London which has taken place on each and every night, without fail, for at least 700 years.

Two castles, in particular, that we feel warrant mentioning are [Alnwick Castle](#), located in Northumberland, England, and [Glamis Castle](#) in Angus, Scotland. (Click on the links for more information on each.)

So, which of the castles will you visit? Perhaps you'd like to see them all. We can help design a tour to see one, two, or even all of the castles we've listed here, and more. Just give us a call at:

**310-791-6101**

*or e-mail*

**[info@atpvacations.com](mailto:info@atpvacations.com)**

*We look forward to making all your "royal" dreams come true!*

# AND NOW... FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

~ John Cleese, *Monty Python*

## Auntie Mabel's Corner



Hello to you, my darling poppets! Auntie Mabel here again.

I'd like to invite you, *especially*, to come and visit me in my homeland of England for a very special event, the **London 2012 Olympics!**

It may not surprise you to learn that your Auntie Mabel was, herself, quite an athlete back in the day. That's right, my poppets, yours truly competed in the early 1900's and won medals in the caber-toss and horseless carriage pull. (And let me tell you, it was no easy feat with those corsets and high heels!) Oh my, but that was a lifetime ago!

Well, as you can imagine, today's Olympics are far superior! In the summer of 2012, athletes from around the world will converge on England's capital to compete and join in the camaraderie that tears down borders and unites us all as one.

Special packages are being put together for visitors just like you. And my good friends at Across the Pond Vacations, who have access to Olympic travel packages, can tailor-make a one-of-a-kind trip for you that will bring you wonderful memories for a lifetime!

Call Across the Pond Vacations soon so that you don't miss out on this unique opportunity. And when you're there, stop by my little cottage, and we'll have a cuppa!

Until we speak again, my darling poppets, stay well and be good to your aunties.

# London



# Britain™ *You're invited* 2012

## Free Money? Yes Please!

### *Can We Interest You in \$100?*

**Refer a friend to Across the Pond Vacations by December 31st. If they book their British and/or Irish vacation with us, we'll send you \$100!**

*Offer valid through December 31, 2009. Booking must take place (and non-refundable deposit received from client) by December 31, 2010. Referral fee of \$100 paid to referrer if party traveling consists of at least 2 people. \$100.00 is maximum payable amount to referrer, regardless of maximum party size or incidents of referral. Only one referral fee paid per household.*

## WE LOVE OUR CLIENTS... AND IT SEEMS TO BE MUTUAL!



"The trip you planned for us was incredible! You thought of things we would never have thought to do ourselves, like staying overnight in a castle and horseback riding through the English Countryside. Truly, your services were invaluable. Thank you!"

~ Kathy G., Virginia

"Across the Pond Vacations was the best! Our vacation was fabulous!"  
~ Daria M., Pennsylvania

"All I can say is a HUGE THANK YOU - I had the most amazing time. All of your information, advice, and the way you planned everything was beyond superb. Your planning allowed me to have the trip of a lifetime."

~ Lori P., New York



I would certainly not have had time to arrange everything nearly as well, or clearly, with any meaningful idea of what I was doing. Having you as a knowledgeable contact for questions prior to the trip was very helpful. You have been great to work with. Thank you for helping us with our first, but certainly not our last, visit to the U.K.

~ Christina S., Virginia



"You are an amazing trip organizer! You listened to our interests and arranged lovely and varied places to stay in the evening, from the elegant castle to the 4-star hotel to the lovely, garden-filled B&B's in the countryside. We would love to go back!"

~ Peter & Marilyn S., Maryland

# SEASONAL HIGHLIGHT TOUR

## Simply London - You'll Love It!

### Out and About In One of Europe's Hippest Capital Cities

Although this travel itinerary may focus "simply" on London, there's nothing simple about it. London is one of the most exciting and fascinating cities in the world! Travel any time - just call us! After all (in the words of Austin Powers), "It's swinging London, baby, yeah!"

#### Your Tour Price Includes:

- Airport transfer via London black taxicab from Heathrow airport to London's City Centre
- Seven (7) nights in a 4-1/2 star hotel in a well located area of the city
- English breakfast, daily
- Six days to see over 55 of the top sites in London \*



- Six days of unlimited travel on the London Underground, Buses, Trams, Docklands Light Rail and Over-ground Trains within zones 1 - 6
- Afternoon Tea (a full cream tea) at Fortnum & Mason (located in famous Piccadilly Circus)
- Excellent seats to your choice of a top London West End theatrical production
- Return airport transfer via London black taxicab to Heathrow

\* London attractions include: Apsley House, Banqueting House, Benjamin Franklin House, Britain at War Experience, British Music Experience, Cartoon Museum, Chelsea Cinema, Chelsea FC Stadium Tour, Chelsea Physic Garden, Chislehurst Caves, Churchill Museum & Cabinet War Rooms, City Cruises, The Courtauld Gallery, Curzon Mayfair Cinema, Curzon Soho Cinema, Eltham Palace, Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art, Eton College, Fan Museum, Firepower Royal Artillery Museum, Foundling Museum,

Guards Museum, Hampton Court Palace, Handel House Museum, Household Cavalry Museum, HMS Belfast, Jason's Canal Boat Trip, Jewel Tower, Kensington Palace, Kew Gardens, London Bicycle Tour Co., London Bridge Experience and London Tombs, London Canal Museum, London Motor Museum, London Legends Walk, London Transport Museum, London Wetland Centre, London Zoo, Lord's Cricket Ground, Monument, Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising, Museum of Rugby, National Gallery, National Theatre Backstage Tours, Pollocks Toy Museum, Queen's Gallery, Queens Ice & Bowl, Renoir Cinema, Royal Albert Hall, Royal Mews, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Tour & Exhibition, St Paul's Cathedral, Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Tower Bridge Exhibition, Tower of London, Wellington Arch, Wernher Collection at Ranger's House, Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, Wimbledon Tour Experience, Windsor Castle

**9 days starting from  
\$1,715/per person**

**\*\* SALE ENDS DEC. 31<sup>ST</sup> 2010 \*\***

**For additional information, please visit:**

**[www.atpvacations.com](http://www.atpvacations.com)**

**or call 310-791-6101**

The "fine print": Land only, per person price from \$1,715, based on double occupancy. Rates may change due to time of year and/or local events. Single and/or triple occupancy per room will change rate.

\*\* Hotel listed in tour description indicates first choice. Equivalent hotel of same star quality and location supplied if first choice unavailable.



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