



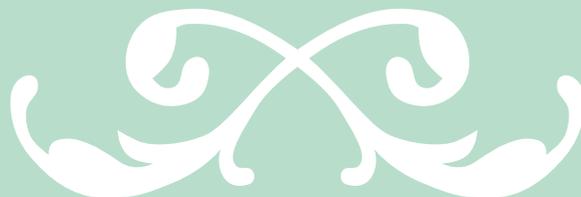
SECRET GARDEN TEA TOURS

A TEA TOUR OF
NEW ENGLAND



FAQ

Frequently Asked
Questions



FAQ

Most of the questions you have regarding your tour can be answered by reading through this material; however, the terms and conditions of your travel arrangements are controlled by the 'Tour Contract'. Knowing as much as you can beforehand will enable you to enjoy your tour experience to the fullest. For these reasons, it is necessary that you read the FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS and the TOUR CONTRACT sections prior to making reservations.

When should I reserve my spot on this trip?

Our tours are limited to 12 participants, so we suggest sending in your application and initial payment as soon as you have decided to join us.

What is the difference between a double and a twin room?

A 'double' room consists of one double, queen or king bed. A 'twin' room has two separate beds, which may be standard twin size, standard double size or queen size. The Secret Garden can request 'twin' or 'double' accommodations, but at some hotels there will not be any choice or participants may not receive their preferred choice due to limited availability. Twin rooms will be given to single travelers sharing a room first and then to tour participants who are traveling together.

Can I join the tour if I do not have a roommate?

Yes. We will have other single travelers on the trip, so we will pair all singles with a roommate of the same sex. In some locations, single rooms are available at a premium price. If you would prefer a single room when available, indicate this on your tour reservation application and we will email you the price and availability for the trip you have requested.

How are rooms assigned?

The location, view, and size of the rooms may vary. In most cases the establishment will make the assignments based on a rooming list we send prior to arrival at the hotel. In other cases, we will assign the rooms randomly, based on room types requested.

What can I expect for breakfast?

While some accommodations may serve a continental breakfast, in most cases breakfasts will be buffet style with a selection of rolls, toast, butter, jam, and a couple of hot items. In some locations, you will order off a menu.

What can I expect for lunch?

Lunches will typically be "on the go", with each person purchasing or packing their own. We recommend keeping a snack bars and bottled water in your day pack, but generally, there will be places to grab a quick bite. After a hearty breakfast, most folks don't need more than a light snack to keep them going until our afternoon tea time.

What can I expect at afternoon tea?

Our afternoon tea times will be varied; some days we'll partake of a homey meal in a cozy tea room, and other days we'll enjoy an elegant meal in a fancy department store or hotel dining room, and in remote locations, we will likely have a "picnic" tea that we'll put together as a group. In some establishments, champagne or other beverages will be offered, and billed to you separately if you partake.

What about dinner?

There are 3 dinners included in the tour price; a welcome dinner cruise, a dinner train, and dinner at a lobster shack in Maine. All other evening meals are on your own. You may wish to have a snack in your room to rest and relax, or go out alone or in the company of others in our group.

May I request Vegetarian, Gluten-free, or Diabetic Meals?

Any dietary requirements remain entirely your own responsibility. Do let us know on your tour reservation application, so that we're aware of your needs. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are commonly available. The Secret Garden expressly disclaims any responsibility or liability in connection with dietary requirements.

Is this a Non-Smoking tour?

Yes. There will be no smoking during all group activities. We request non-smoking rooms for all tour participants where possible. In fact, many hotels have converted to only non-smoking rooms and charge a substantial penalty to guests who smoke in a non-smoking room. The Secret Garden expressly disclaims any responsibility or liability in connection with smoking or non-smoking requirements.

What about transporting luggage?

You will need to have your luggage packed and outside your door each time we leave a hotel. We (your tour leaders) or a bellhop will move your luggage to and from your doorway to the vehicle.

Are tips included?

Bell hops, bus drivers, tour guides, etc. who help out our whole group will be tipped by the tour leaders. You can however, express your appreciation to any service personnel who are extra helpful or friendly, or who provide a special or unexpected service with a gratuity.

Tipping is included for all meals that are pre-arranged by The Secret Garden. During independent meals, the general rule at restaurants is 15% to 20% depending on level of service. In hotels, the housekeeping staff always appreciates a token dollar or two each day that they provide service to your room.

What is the pace of the tour and how much walking is involved?

The pace of the tour is considered "ACTIVE". A fair amount of walking is required to experience all the sights. Tour participants will commonly walk over a mile per day, although not all at one time. If you are concerned about your physical condition, please consult your family physician as to whether the tour is suitable for you and consider the following guidelines:

Physical Condition Guidelines

- 1) These tours are a good fit for travelers who are able to comfortably walk a ½ mile in 15 minutes (without shortness of breath or physical discomfort).
- 2) If you are not keeping up with the rest of the group, the tour manager will suggest you take a cab to the next venue at your own expense. and forfeit any sightseeing that requires walking as a group. In case you are separated from the group during sightseeing time, it will be your own responsibility to position yourself at the designated meeting point at the agreed time. If you have to take a taxi to do so, it will be at your own expense.
- 3) Tour and hotel personnel will not be available to lift or otherwise physically assist tour participants at any time. If you require any type of assistance, you must bring a capable travel companion who can comfortably help you keep up with the pace of the tour.

May I bring a wheelchair or other walking assistance device?

Participants who use a cane, walker, wheelchair or any other walking assistance device, or are considering the use of a walking assistance device while they travel, should not take this tour. If this applies to you and you still decide to make a reservation request, please note the following:

- 1) A cane, walker or similar walking assistance device, are simply not practical or safe on the tour due to vehicle entrances, uneven sidewalks, and cobblestone streets. You will need to leave it home and bring a wheelchair.
- 2) You must bring your own manual, folding wheelchair. Motorized wheelchairs are too large for us to maneuver through tight spaces and using public transportation.
- 3) You must bring a capable travel companion who can push the wheelchair and assist you in any other way necessary to comfortably help you keep up with the pace of the tour.
- 4) At time of reservation you must request to bring a wheelchair. This request must be in writing and must be signed by both you and your traveling companion. Such requests will be subject to our approval.
- 5) You must be able to manage the steps of the passenger van independent of any assistance. Laws do not require passenger vans to be equipped with ramps/lifts, or hotels to offer provisions for the physically challenged. Please do not expect these facilities on our tour. Many of our accommodations have no ground floor rooms available, so expect to climb stairs on your own power.

6) The Secret Garden does not recommend this tour for passengers who require the use of a cane, walker, wheelchair or other walking assistance device.

No credits or refunds will apply for missed sightseeing and any additional costs incurred to keep up with the tour or to return home early will be the tour participant's sole responsibility. Please also refer to the 'Physical Condition Guidelines'.

May I bring oxygen or other medical devices?

Due to the active pace of the tour, clients dependent on oxygen assistance devices should not take these tours. CPAP and other medical devices must fit within the 'Baggage Allowances'. Under no circumstance does The Secret Garden, the airlines, the motor coach company, the tour managers, the hotels, or any other service provider accept any responsibility or liability in connection with medical conditions, medical supportive devices, or any electronic devices.

Will any credit be available for unused tour participation?

Tour prices are based on full group utilization of the hotel rooms and services. Therefore, no credit or refund will apply for unused tour nights or services. You may leave the tour at any place on the itinerary after communicating your plans to the tour manager. You may rejoin the tour at one of the overnight hotels.

What if I need to leave the tour and return home early?

Air tickets are subject to change fees and you may need to purchase a non-restrictive, one-way air ticket for a different flight itinerary. If you must return early for any physical/medical reason, make sure you obtain a statement from the attending physician/hospital. If you have purchased travel insurance, this documentation will be required to make a claim and it may help reduce airline change fees. The Secret Garden recommends purchasing travel insurance with trip interruption coverage.

What happens if I arrive late at a meeting place?

At each stop, write down the meeting time and landmark near your meeting point so that you do not forget and can ask for assistance if you get lost. (Or use your camera or phone to take a picture). In the event that you cannot arrive at a meeting point on time, call your tour leader, and then proceed to the next location or the hotel using a taxi, train, or bus, at your own expense. Always carry a copy of our schedule with you! Be sure to call us, so that we know what is going on.

How much money should I plan to spend after I join the tour?

That is entirely up to you; by eating simply and not attending any evening shows, you could spend as little as \$15 a day for dinner, postcards and small souvenirs. If you budget \$50 per day, you'll have more than enough for several nice meals out and a couple of optional evening events. Of course, the shopping is a whole different matter! We'll be going to some awfully tempting places for tea lovers, so you might wish to set up a separate shopping budget to avoid overspending at the antique shops and markets!

How much luggage can I bring?

One medium sized suitcase. For our day trips, there will be space under the seats for your day bag (tote with your purse, water bottle, camera, tablet, sweater or jacket, etc.)

What is the weather like in the New England in October?

Autumn in New England can be quite cool. The average temperature ranges from the freezing for to the low 60's and rain is always a possibility. Bring along a warm jacket and plan to dress in layers, so you'll be comfortable no matter what the day brings.

What should I pack?

We suggest traveling as light as possible. You can always wash out a few things in your hotel sink and hang it to dry overnight. We also recommend selecting a color scheme so that all of your clothes mix and match. This way, if you spill on your shirt, you don't need to change slacks also. Some of the tea rooms we'll visit have a dress code, which means no jeans or tennis shoes allowed. In fact, jeans are heavy and dry slowly, so we suggest leaving them home and opting for casual slacks instead. Of course, sturdy, comfortable shoes are a must.

Here's our recommended list of apparel:

- 2 pairs of pants
- 5 shirts, various sleeve lengths
- 5 pairs of underwear
- 1 pair of shoes
- 1 scarf (to dress up a more casual outfit and for extra warmth)
- 1 pair pajama's or nightgown
- 1 dressy skirt (for dancing!)
- 1 cardigan sweater
- 5 pairs of socks
- 1 rainproof jacket with hood

What else should I bring?

Documents, and photo copies of each:

Passport or driver's license

Airline tickets

Insurance details (health and travel)

Toiletries

Medicines (original bottles w/label)

Glasses/contacts

Address list for sending postcards

Day pack (tote bag for essentials)

A small notebook and attached pen

Electronics

Camera

Cel phone

Chargers and/or batteries