

19 Top-Rated Day Trips from London

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While London has enough attractions of its own to keep any tourist busy, so many wonderful places lie all around it that you're certain to be tempted to take at least one day trip while you're here. Some of these are as close as the magnificent palace of Hampton Court, but you can travel farther in a day - all the way to Paris, in fact, thanks to high-speed trains. Within easy reach from London are the beautiful and historic towns of Bath and Oxford, the soaring cathedral at Canterbury, and the castles of Leeds and Warwick. Legendary Windsor Castle is close, and not far beyond is the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Stonehenge, one of the [top attractions in England](#).

Plan your adventures with this **list of the best day trips from London**:

1. Stonehenge



Stonehenge

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High on the list of England's top tourist attractions, Stonehenge has mystified scholars, scientists, and historians for centuries. The giant stones that rise from the Salisbury Plain have been here for at least four millennia. Before circling the megaliths, spend some time in the visitor center to learn about the stones and the people who built

them, through beautifully conceived audio-visual exhibits and more than 250 ancient artifacts. The **UNESCO World Heritage site** also includes authentic replicas of Neolithic houses illustrating everyday Neolithic life. An easy way to get to Stonehenge is on a 6.5-hour [London to Stonehenge Shuttle Bus and Independent Day Trip](#), which includes admission tickets to see the stones and all the related exhibits, plus a complimentary audio-guide.

Location: Shrewton, Wiltshire

Official site: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

2. Hampton Court Palace



Hampton Court Palace

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Perhaps the most interesting of Britain's royal palaces, Hampton Court lies southwest of London on the north bank of the Thames. The Great Hall and other parts of the palace date from Henry VIII's time (five of his six wives lived here as Queen, and the ghosts of two of them are said to still haunt the palace). It was also where Elizabeth I learned of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Features of interest include the Clock

Court with its astronomical clock (1540), the State Apartments (including the **Haunted Gallery**), the Chapel, the King's Apartments and the Tudor tennis court. Visitors should also explore the Privy Garden, the Pond Garden, the Elizabethan Knot Garden, the Broad Walk, and the Wilderness, especially in **mid-May when in full bloom**. One of the other popular things to do, particularly for children, is wandering through the palace's famous **maze**. Hampton Court is easy to reach by a 45-minute train ride from Victoria Station.

Location: East Molesey, Surrey

Read More:

[Visiting Hampton Court Palace: 10 Top Attractions, Tips & Tours](#)

3. Windsor Castle



Windsor Castle

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The summer home of the British Royal Family, Windsor Castle is also the longest-occupied royal residence in Europe. Inside its walls is **St. George's Chapel**, begun by Edward IV in 1474 and among the finest examples of the English Perpendicular Gothic style. In its vaults and sacristy are the tombs of several monarchs. The highlight of a

visit is a tour of the **State Apartments**, where the Queen's Gallery and the Dining Hall each have magnificently painted ceilings and wood carvings. The palace's art collection includes works by Michelangelo, Rubens, Leonardo da Vinci, Canaletto, and Rembrandt. **Queen Mary's Dollhouse** and the beautiful gardens are other highlights of the castle complex. Windsor Castle is easy to combine with other nearby attractions on a [Stonehenge, Windsor Castle, and Bath from London](#) tour by luxury coach. The tour includes visits to both St. George's Chapel and the State Apartments, with an expert tour guide to point out the most important features and fill in the castle's history.

Address: Windsor Castle, Windsor, Berkshire

Official site: <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/windsorcastle>

4. Oxford and the Cotswolds



One of Europe's oldest and most beautiful university towns, Oxford is easy to reach by direct train from London. While its main draw for tourists is the university, the town itself is an attractive one, with parks and gardens, the historic Covered Market, and **Christ Church Cathedral**. Highlights of the university are the **Bodleian Library** and **Christ Church College**, which gained new attention when it was featured in several Harry Potter movies.

Close to Oxford are the Cotswolds, a beautiful region of rolling landscapes and picturesque villages. The Cotswolds have been named an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty due to the rare limestone grassland habitats and old growth woodlands, but for most visitors, the region's appeal is in its charming villages and towns, such as Burton-on-Water, Castle Combe, and Chipping Norton. An easy way to visit this beautiful region is on the [Oxford, Cotswolds, Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle Day Trip from London](#), a 10-hour excursion by motor coach with a guided walking tour of Oxford, including visits to Bodleian Library and Christ Church College.

Read More:

[12 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Oxford](#)

5. Leeds Castle



Leeds Castle

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Often named as the loveliest castle in the world, Leeds Castle certainly has one of the most spectacular settings, surrounded by water, its stone towers reflected from almost every angle. The first castle was built here in 1089, and Leeds became a favorite royal residence of King Edward I in the late 13th century. Later, it was the home of Catherine

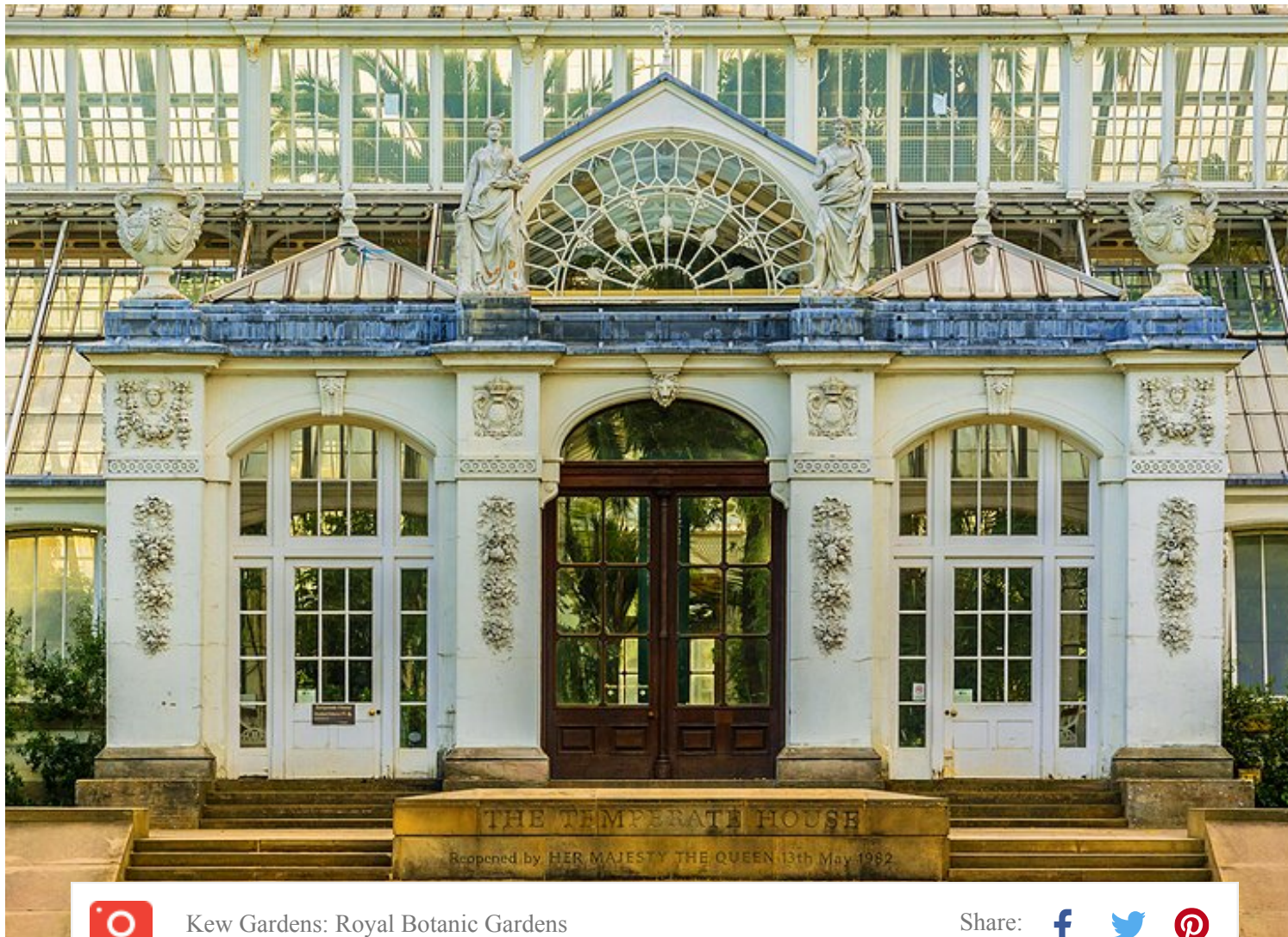
of Aragon, first wife of Henry VIII. It continued as a country house through Jacobean and Georgian eras, finally as the retreat of an Anglo-American heiress and her fashionable friends in the 1920s. You'll see reminders of all these eras and lives in the lavish rooms and in the Gatehouse Museum. The gardens are known for the yew hedge maze. You can explore Leeds Castle on a private guided tour before the castle is open to the public and have time to stroll in the gardens as part of the [Leeds Castle, Cliffs of Dover, and Canterbury Day Trip from London with Guided Cathedral Tour](#).

Traveling from the city on a comfortable coach, you'll have state-of-the-art headphones throughout the tour, so you can easily hear the expert guide's commentary throughout the day.

Location: Maidstone, Kent

Official site: <https://www.leeds-castle.com>

6. Kew Gardens: Royal Botanic Gardens



Kew Gardens: Royal Botanic Gardens

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Officially called the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Gardens is situated in southwest London on the south bank of the Thames. Numerous plants are grown here, and the **Herbarium** alone contains a collection of over seven million dried plants while the

Library has more than 50,000 volumes of botanical literature. The gardens were laid out in 1759 and became government property in 1841. In 1897, Queen Victoria added Queen's Cottage and the adjoining woodland. **Free tours** are available, and a **river cruise down the Thames** is a great way to get to this spectacular 300-acre garden with its many musical and cultural events.

Address: Kew, Richmond, Surrey

Official site: <http://www.kew.org/>

Read More:

[Exploring the Top Attractions of London's Kew Gardens](#)

7. Bath



The name of this beautiful city gives a clue to its origins and its most famous site: the remarkable 2,000-year-old Roman Baths built around the city's natural hot springs. But Bath continued to be a spa town long after the Romans left, and became a center for fashionable, wealthy English in the Georgian and Regency periods. Several attractions recall that era immortalized by Bath's most famous resident, Jane Austen. Recapture her world at the Jane Austen Centre and learn about Regency fashions at the Fashion Museum, located in the stunning and historic Assembly Rooms. Be sure to see the

Pulteney Bridge over the River Avon, lined with shops and said to be patterned after the Ponte Vecchio, one of the [top attractions in Florence](#), Italy. You can visit this UNESCO World Heritage city as part of an 11-hour [Stonehenge, Windsor Castle, and Bath from London](#) tour, accompanied by a guide who will explain the history as you explore the famous Roman Baths.

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[16 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Bath](#)

8. Canterbury



Canterbury

Share:



A beautiful medieval city in its own right, Canterbury is best known for the soaring [Canterbury Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#). Home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, this cathedral has been the center of English Christianity since St. Augustine, its first bishop, converted the Anglo Saxons here in 597. The cathedral was

the site of the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170, an event memorialized in TS Elliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. Along with strolling the charming streets of medieval houses, step outside the city walls to visit the remains of St. Augustine's Abbey and the graves of St. Augustine and King Ethelbert. You can tour Canterbury Cathedral with an expert guide on the [Leeds Castle, Cliffs of Dover and Canterbury Day Trip from London with Guided Cathedral Tour](#), a 10-hour excursion from the city by comfortable coach that also includes two more of in southern England's outstanding sights.

Read More:

[12 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Canterbury](#)

9. Paris



Paris

Share:



With an early morning departure by the fast Eurostar train, you can be across the Channel for a full day's sightseeing in magical Paris. In one day, you can reasonably expect to see several of the top tourist attractions, including the [Eiffel Tower](#), [Notre Dame](#), the magnificent 45-foot-tall stained glass windows of Ste-Chapelle, and even spend time admiring the [highlights of the Louvre](#) or the Impressionist collections at the

Musée d'Orsay. Alternatively, you could spend the day exploring the charming streets and attractions of the Left Bank, browsing in boutiques, pausing in cafes to absorb the Parisian atmosphere, and taking a leisurely cruise on the Seine for views of Paris landmarks. You can combine several of these without having to find your own way around the city, on a [Guided Day Trip to Paris from London Including River Cruise](#). This hassle-free trip includes train transport; admission to both the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower; and a guided tour of Paris that includes sights like the Champs-Élysées, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Trocadéro, before a scenic cruise along the Seine river.

Read More:

[28 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Paris](#)

10. Highclere Castle



Highclere Castle © Haley Blackmore / photo modified

Share:



Until the hit British TV series *Downton Abbey* was filmed here, very few people had heard of the stunning English manor house of Highclere Castle. Now its opulent halls, the Red Stairs, the music room, the sumptuous saloon, and even the bedrooms are a familiar sight to audiences all over the world. The castle is open to visitors, both for

seasonal public viewings and for special tours for smaller groups, themed around food, gardens, or the filming of *Downton Abbey*. Not far from Highclere are several other locations that fans will recognize as settings, including the Cotswolds village of Bampton, featured as Downton village. You can tour Highclere Castle with a knowledgeable guide who will fill you in on insider tales from the filming on a [Downton Abbey and Highclere Castle Tour from London](#). After a comfortable coach ride from the city, you'll not only tour the castle and have time to explore its famed gardens, but you'll continue on to visit several other filming locations, including Cogges Manor Farm and the church used as the scene of Lady Mary's wedding.

Address: Highclere Park, Newbury

Official site: <https://www.highclerecastle.co.uk>

11. Harry Potter Warner Bros Studio



Harry Potter Warner Bros Studio

Share:



The studio where the Harry Potter films were produced is filled with original sets, costumes, and props used in re-creating the world inhabited by J.K. Rowling's

characters. Visitors can step into the Great Hall and Diagon Alley, see the actual Hogwarts Express on Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, and stand in the Forbidden Forest. The actual costumes are on display, along with props, including the hundreds of potion jars lining the walls of the classroom, each with its own individually designed labels and spooky contents, from shrunken heads to dried animal bones. Exhibits explain how magical creatures were crafted and brought to life, and how special and visual effects made Harry and other characters fly. The studios are near Oxford, where many of the scenes were shot. You can experience the studio and visit locations, such as Bodleian Library, Christ Church College, and other university buildings used in the films, on the [Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter and Oxford Day Trip from London](#).

Address: Studio Tour Drive, Leavesden

12. Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle



Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle

Share:



The Elizabethan market town of Stratford-upon-Avon is known primarily as the **birthplace of William Shakespeare**. But even without this famous poet and its importance as a stage and research center for his works, Stratford-upon-Avon is worth visiting for its charming half-timbered homes and the historic Stratford-upon-Avon Canal. Most tourists come here, however, to follow in the footsteps of Shakespeare,

visiting his well-preserved birthplace and several other homes of those associated with him. About a mile from the town center is the lovely thatched cottage of Shakespeare's wife, Anne Hathaway, with its cottage garden.

Close to Stratford-upon-Avon is the medieval Warwick Castle, with its impressive ramparts. You can tour the huge castle complex, from the top of its towers to the dungeons, and watch jousting matches or demonstrations of falconry and other medieval skills. The castle and Shakespeare's birthplace are easy to combine with two other highlights of this part of England on the [Oxford, Cotswolds, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Warwick Castle Day Trip from London](#). After traveling from the city by coach, you'll have plenty of time to tour the castle and explore the Shakespeare sights.

Read More:

[12 Top-Rated Tourist Attractions in Stratford-upon-Avon](#)

13. Hatfield House



Hatfield House

Share:



This imposing Jacobean manor house is surrounded by beautiful parkland and was designed at the beginning of the 17th century for the Earl of Salisbury (the home remains in the family today). The magnificent interior contains valuable period furniture, paintings and 17th century tapestries in one of the largest and most

impressive Jacobean mansions in England. In addition to the house, the spectacular gardens and park encompass **Hatfield Park Farm** - complete with animals, a fun miniature train, play areas and a restaurant.

Official site: www.hatfield-house.co.uk

14. Chessington World of Adventures Resort



Chessington World of Adventures Resort Jeremy Thompson / photo modified

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After all that historic sightseeing, Chessington World of Adventures is a great place to unwind, particularly for those traveling with kids. One of Britain's biggest theme parks, Chessington features numerous thrilling roller coasters and rides in its several themed

areas, which include the Market Square, Mystic East, Pirates Cove, Transylvania, and Land of the Dragons. Chessington is also famous for its **zoo** (it's how the park began in 1931), today split into areas including the Children's Zoo, the Sea Life Centre, and AMAZU Treetop Adventure.

Location: Leatherhead Rd, Chessington, Surrey

Official site: www.chessington.com

15. RHS Garden Wisley



RHS Garden Wisley

Share:



The Royal Horticultural Society's showpiece garden, the 350-acre RHS Garden Wisley, showcases the widest range of gardening styles and techniques in the world. Among its nearly two dozen different gardens are a walled garden, alpine meadow, cottage garden, rose garden, mixed borders, and a Bonsai Walk. The Glasshouse features plants from tropical, moist temperate, and dry temperate habitats. The

woodland garden, Battleston Hill, is its most beautiful in the spring, when its winding paths are bordered in blooming camellias, magnolias, rhododendrons, and azaleas. One of the oldest, constructed between 1910 and 1912, is the naturalistic Rock Garden, showcasing alpine plants with dwarf conifers. The newest, opened in 2017, is the Exotic Garden, filled with palms, ginger, banana plants, and large vibrant tropical blossoms you might not expect to see flourishing outdoors in northern European latitudes.

Location: Woking, Surrey

Official site: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/Gardens/Wisley>

16. Syon House and Conservatory



Syon House and Conservatory

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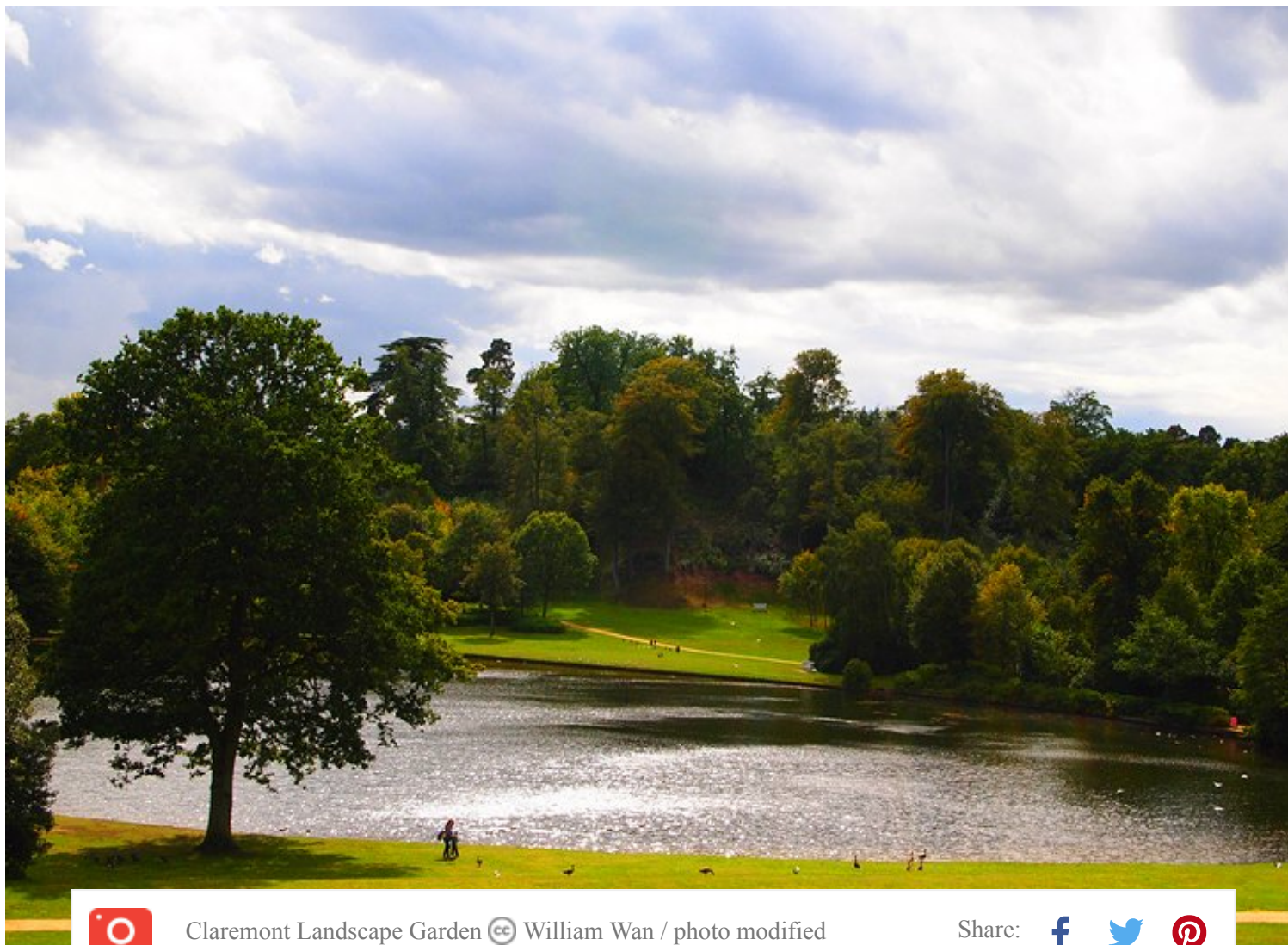
Originally a 15th century monastery, Syon House in Brentford was one of the architectural jewels on the periphery of London - especially from the point of view of its interior, redesigned in the 18th century by architect Robert Adam. As well as its imposing columns and statues, valuable paintings and fine silken wall coverings, Syon House is noted for its 54-acre park and gardens, which include the magnificent **Great**

Conservatory built in the 1920s. Two other excellent museums in Brentford are the **Kew Bridge Steam Museum** with its working steam engines, and the **Musical Museum at Kew Bridge** with its fine collection of automated musical instruments.

Location: London Rd, Brentford, Middlesex

Official site: www.syonpark.co.uk

17. Claremont Landscape Garden



Claremont Landscape Garden © William Wan / photo modified

Share:



This lovely 300-year old National Trust property features a serpentine lake, an island with a pavilion, a turf amphitheater, and numerous pleasant viewpoints and vistas. Located within easy reach of London, these grounds are where many of England's

best-known gardeners have left their mark, most notably **Capability Brown**. Other highlights include a grotto, Camellia Terrace, Belvedere Tower and a café. There's also the Victorian **Thatched Cottage**, a great place for younger kids to play and dress up in period costumes.

Location: Portsmouth Rd, Esher, Surrey

Official site: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/claremont-landscape-garden>

18. Brooklands Museum



Brooklands Museum

Share:



The Brooklands Museum in Weybridge is one of Surrey's most popular museums and is home to the only **Concorde** in the southeast with public access. Brooklands opened as a racetrack in 1907 and is now famous as the birthplace of British motorsport and aviation. The museum contains the Malcolm Campbell Workshop, a racing car

collection, a Wellington bomber rescued from Loch Ness and an aircraft collection spanning 85 years. Another excellent display of aircraft can be seen at the **De Havilland Aircraft Museum** in London Colney, Hertfordshire. The oldest aviation museum in Britain, the museum has three historic Mosquito fighter-bombers as well as a variety of jet fighters.

Location: Brookland Rd, Weybridge

Official site: www.brooklandsmuseum.com

19. Osterley Park and House



Osterley Park and House

Share:



This National Trust property located near Heathrow Airport is a stunning 18th century Georgian villa set in 140 acres of parkland with an interior designed by Robert Adam. Once the home of Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange and described in his time as the "palace of palaces", the house is preserved exactly as it would have

looked in the 1780s, complete with colorful formal gardens, roses and vegetables beds, as well as a lovely summer house with lemon trees and scented shrubs.

Location: Jersey Rd, Isleworth, Middlesex

Official site: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park-and-house>

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