

Chawton House



Group Visits Guide

Chawton House, near Alton in Hampshire, was known to Jane Austen as the 'Great House', as it was owned by her brother Edward. Jane lived in a cottage on his estate and would stroll up to 'dawdle away' many an hour in the grand Elizabethan manor and its picturesque gardens.

Today, the House, Gardens and Parkland are home to many treasures: an extensive collection of early women's writing; Austen heirlooms, such as the dining table at which Jane would have enjoyed family meals; and historic landscape features including a wilderness and a ha-ha. Whether your group's interests lie in Jane Austen and women's writing or historic houses and gardens, there is something for every visitor to Chawton House.



Tours...



Garden Tour (1 hour, 15 minutes)

Discover the beautiful gardens of Chawton House and learn the history of their transformation from the formal layout of the 17th century through to the restored English landscape style of the late 18th century. Your walk will take you from a pleasant garden terrace to a walled garden where you will hear the story of the Elizabeth Blackwell herb garden, then through the rambling wilderness to see the avenue of limes and the hidden ha-ha, and admire the changing views of the house and the landscape that so inspired Jane Austen.

House History Tour (1 hour, 15 minutes)

Learn how the estate has evolved over the years, was saved from Cromwell's destruction by a toddler, and in the following centuries provided a secure home for Jane Austen in one of its cottages. Discover the many captivating secrets of the 'Great House': spot the superstitious anti-witch marks on the 16th century fireplace; uncover a message in a bottle from a Victorian squire; search a painting for hidden Regency graffiti; and explore a fascinating collection of early women's writing in the library.

Curator's Tour (1 hour, 15 minutes)

Find out more about the unique collection of early women's writing held in the library at Chawton House by exploring the books, objects and their stories with one of Chawton House's curatorial team. There are two exhibitions at Chawton House each year and a number of smaller displays, with recent exhibitions including *Quills and Characters* (2023) and *Treasures of Chawton House* (2023-4). Curator's tours will change according to the current exhibition, but will focus on the literary treasures of the house.

Catering...

TEA, COFFEE & BISCUITS £4PP

PICNIC BOX £10PP

Quiche & salad | cake & bottled water

SANDWICH BUFFET £12PP

Example selection: chicken & avocado, | ham hock & mustard mayo | egg mayo & cress | cream cheese & cucumber | served with crisps & fruit juice

CREAM TEA, SAVOURY OR SWEET £6.50PP

Freshly-baked scone, butter, clotted cream & strawberry jam | served with tea

Vegetarian & vegan options are available. Please let us know allergies/dietary requirements at least 1 week in advance.



Dining Locations:

We can accommodate groups of 12 (Billiards Room), 10 (Smoking Room), 8 (Maids' Sitting Room), or a group of 30 across all three rooms. During the summer months, groups are welcome to picnic in the grounds.

Please note, we cannot accommodate groups in the Old Kitchen Tearoom. Refreshments must be pre-booked.

Prices...

CHOICE OF HOUSE TOUR £15PP

INCLUDES ENTRY TO HOUSE AND GARDENS

SELF-GUIDED TOUR OF HOUSE & GARDENS £12.50PP

EARLY BIRD PACKAGE £18PP

Guided tour of choice + tea & coffee on arrival, 10am start

LIT LOVERS PACKAGE £40PP

A bespoke literary tour of the house for 2-6 people, including a viewing of a selection of our rare books and Afternoon Tea. The perfect gift for the bibliophile in your life.

If you'd rather Chawton House came to you, we offer in-person talks or virtual tours, so please get in touch to discuss your requirements. See our website What's On pages for themed, exhibition, or evening tours. For educational groups & rates, please visit our website.

How to Book...

To book, please email hire@chawtonhouse.org with your requirements (tour & catering choices, date, time & estimated numbers). We require a 25% non-refundable deposit to secure your booking, with full payment due 1 week before your visit, upon confirmation of numbers & dietary requirements.

Availability:

Monday-Friday all year round

10% discount on tours January-March & November (excludes catering)

We hope you enjoy your time with us!



Parking:

We can accommodate minibuses in our car park with prior notice. There is also disabled parking available. However, for larger coaches, we ask that the coach driver drop visitors off at the entrance of the drive to Chawton House. The turning point is tight, but it is possible. Coaches are not permitted to come up the drive to the turning circle. Coach and car parking is available on the local road, leading off the main entrance drive.

For further information and to book, visit
<https://chawtonhouse.org/visit/group-tours/>