



**STAY ♥ SAFE**

-  Suggested Route
-  Alternative Route
-  Accessible Route  
(suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs)

**Start**

1

12

3

11

2

4

9

5

8

6

7

10

13



Please remain with your family and friends, keeping a safe distance apart (2m where possible) from other guests.



# Self Guided Alton Towers Garden Tour

**Please Note:** These gardens have steep and rocky areas. Please keep to the paths at all times. Some areas are unsuitable for pushchairs, wheelchairs and those with reduced mobility. For pathways suitable for wheelchairs please refer to the map.

Alton Towers Resort, the UK's number one theme park, consists of 500 acres of superbly landscaped grounds with original and spectacular gardens complementing the extraordinary collection of rides and entertainments. Leaving the enormously popular amusements aside there is much for the visitor to enjoy in the extravagant gardens created by the 15th Earl of Shrewsbury and his nephew John Talbot, the 16th Earl, in the 18th and 19th centuries

The amazing Chinese Pagoda Fountain, the Bath Fountain with its pond containing the figure of Triton blowing water through a conch shell, the gilded domes, plate glass and galvanised iron structure of the enormous Grand Conservatories contrast with the quaint Swiss Cottage and the restful Le Refuge. Scattered throughout the gardens is a fine collection of statuary, much of it with classical allusions designed to add to the cultural and artistic ambience.

Much restoration is currently going on in the gardens in an effort to stay true to the Earl's vision. It is interesting to remember that at the time of planting, the trees that you see now were just saplings, and it is thanks to the artistic talents of the 15th Earl that we can enjoy the magnificent gardens as they appear today.

For information, the water that supplies the various features, lakes, cascades and fountains comes from natural springs in the nearby Weaver Hills and so their flow is dependent on natural water levels.

You will notice on this tour most of the garden buildings are on the left side of the valley. The reason for this is that the principle carriage-drive ran along the top of the ridge, and visitors were treated to a magnificent view of the gardens below before the house came into sight. All designed to impress!

1

To begin your tour the **scalloped wall** will be on your right. Follow this pathway through the iron gates and on the left you will see the **Quarry Green House** or **Orangery**, beyond these features is "**Stonehenge**", so called because of the large stones used to build it. It bears no resemblance to its namesake!

2

Should you wish to see Stonehenge continue along this pathway taking a left at the fork then retrace your steps back to the Orangery to continue with this tour.



### 3

At the far side of the orangery take the stone steps to the right-hand side. These will lead you down to the **Lion Fountain**. Follow the pathway down the next set of steps and take a left and head down towards the **Conservatories**.



### 4

The **Conservatories** were completed in 1824, the garden Conservatory has seven glazed domes, and pineapple finials. The central dome is topped by an earl's coronet.

In 1834 the 16th Earl managed to grow bananas (in those days considered an exotic fruit) at Alton and sent one to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth together with detailed instructions on how to eat it!



### 5

At the end of the path is a **domed stone structure** – ideal for cooling off in hot weather or sheltering from the rain! Through the window is a delightful view of the Yew Arches. From here head down the steps behind the domed structure and head through the Yew Arches.

From this point onwards you have a choice:



### 6 & 7

If you wish to see the **Screw Fountain** and **Prospect Tower**, simply walk forward and take the ascending stone steps to your left. Beyond the tree at the top of the steps is the Screw Fountain. Continuing along this pathway to the right and ascending the steps to the left will lead you towards the Prospect Tower.

Once at the prospect tower you will be able to take in some of the most breath-taking views on offer within the gardens.

Following your visit to the Prospect Tower descend via the stone steps behind tower. At the bottom of these step take the left pathway before turning right at the stone steps. At the fork take the lower path which will lead you down to the final Yew arch to re-join the tour.



## 8 & 9

Take the steps down from the final Yew arch where you will find **Le Refuge, Bath Fountain and The Colonnade**. In the mid-1800s it was considered beneficial to the health to take cold baths throughout the year.

A Coadstone statue of a triton blowing into a conch shell originally topped the fountain. To the right of the Bath Fountain is Le Refuge – with a chimney vent on one side of the door and an air-vent on the other – which was used before and after the bath.

From this point descend the next two flights of steps at the bottom of which you will see to your right the **Bandstand**.



## 10

To continue with this tour, turn left continuing down this pathway until you reach the stone steps on your right which will bring you to the **Pagoda Fountain** completed in the 1830s.

The recently completed restoration of the Grade II\* Listed (Chinese) Pagoda Fountain at Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire. The 3-month restoration involved specialist surface blasting, iron work restoration and painting.

The (Chinese) Pagoda Fountain was completed c. 1832, designed by Robert Abraham. It is a three storey, octagonal shaped, painted cast iron structure with Chinese hanging lamp bells, on an octagonal White Hollington sandstone base. The cast-iron structure was modelled on the To-ho pagoda in Canton, Southern China and made by the Coalbrookdale Iron Company. From the point of the Pagoda continue along the pathway. At this point again you have a choice:



## 11

You are now climbing the side of the **Rock Garden**. Note the Royal Ferns along the water's edge.





## 12

From this point we are heading towards the **Choragic Monument**, erected by the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury in memory of his uncle, Charles Talbot, the 15th Earl, who transformed the gardens from a barren wasteland, inhabited only by rabbits, into the magnificent gardens we see today and “made the desert smile”.

There are two routes available. Either continue along the pathway to the right, alternatively cross the steppingstones located to your left and continue along this route.

The box hedge at the foot of the monument is in the shape of the letter “S”, the pattern for which was taken from one of the fireplaces in the house. Originally, the area surrounding the “S”, now covered in gravel, would have been filled with “grog” – a by-product of the pottery industry.

At the monument continue under the white bridge and left towards our **grand historic house**.



## 13

Follow the right-most pathway down towards **The Swiss Cottage**.

The Swiss Cottage was originally built to house the Earl’s blind harpist, Edward Jervis who was commissioned to entertain his guests who took leisurely strolls in the gardens.

A visit to the Swiss Cottage is worth the trip should you wish to take in some stunning panoramic views of the gardens allowing you to see the majority of main features mentioned within this tour.

Following your visit to the Swiss Cottage retrace your steps back to end your tour.

