

Travel Tips

HIGHLAND HERITAGE & SCOTTISH CASTLES

UNITED KINGDOM – INCLUDING ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

****Please check your own country's international travel advice as well as the airline requirements before travel.****

US guests please see Travel State website; <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/UnitedKingdom.html>

Passports

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of stay. It is advised to have 1 blank page in your passport. Please be sure to fill out the "Emergency Next of Kin" section in your passport

Visas

Citizens of the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and European citizens may enter the United Kingdom for up to 6 months for tourist purposes without a visa. All other nationalities must check the visa entry requirements before your departure. You need sufficient funds and a return airline ticket.

****Starting January 8, 2025, U.S. citizens traveling to the United Kingdom for short visits, tourism, or business, including those just passing through UK airports, will need an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) if they do not have a UK visa or legal residency in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. This requirement applies to all parts of the UK, including Northern Ireland. The ETA is similar to the U.S. ESTA system and acts as a pre-clearance for travel. This change is part of the UK's move towards a digital border system.**

An Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA):

May take up to three working days to process.
Costs £10 (\$12.75).

- Is required for travelers of all ages.
- Is valid for two years or the remaining period of validity on a passport, whichever is shorter; and does not require travel details.
- One does not need an ETA if they already have a visa, an exempt vignette, or have a British or Irish passport. Other nationalities that ordinarily require a visa to visit the UK will continue to do so and should not obtain an ETA.
- For more information – and to apply for an ETA – go to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>.
- N.B. Please note, visa and entry requirements, regulations and restrictions can vary on a regular basis. Please ensure you check in good time prior to travel the current requirements applicable to you.

Travel Insurance

All passengers must have valid travel insurance before traveling, including health and cancellation insurance. Please ensure you have a copy of your insurer's 24-hour emergency telephone number and your policy number.

Medical Conditions and Personal Medication

Please advise us prior to travel if you have any medical conditions requiring special attention during your trip. If you have a specific medical condition, it is wise to carry the relevant doctor's prescription with you.

Important:

- Pack a sufficient supply of any medications you are taking, copies of the prescriptions and the telephone/fax numbers of your doctor
- Please note, some countries require that prescription drugs be carried in their original container, with the label clearly visible. In the event of you losing your medication, a qualified pharmacist should be able to source a replacement.

- Travelling with CPAP or other Medical Machines

Please inform The Big Journey Company that you are travelling with such a device as early as possible, and well before you travel. Please note, if you require distilled or ionised water, you must inform The Big Journey Company of this at the time of booking, so we are able to make preparations with our ground agents. There may be an additional charge for this.

LUGGAGE

What to Pack and Wear

We recommend comfortable clothes and comfortable walking shoes for this tour. Feel free to include a few smart-casual outfits for dinner if you wish, however there is usually no formal dress code. The weather is always changeable in the UK, no matter what time of year you travel. Here we say that there is no bad weather- only bad clothing. It is best to be prepared for every eventuality, so make sure you pack a waterproof jacket in case of rain and a fleece/hoodie for cooler days. Layers are good in the summer months and a hat is usually required in winter. Umbrellas are always useful in the UK, though we often have wind to accompany the rain!

At some times of the year, the midges can make travel in Scotland quite unpleasant without such precautions. Don't forget your camera, with charger/spare batteries and memory cards.

Luggage Allowances

International airlines have strict policies about the size and weight of checked in baggage and carry-on luggage. Prior to your departure, please contact your airline or visit their website for specific luggage requirements, as size and weight limitations vary according to the airline and destination.

LANGUAGE

The main language of the United Kingdom is English. There are a number of regional languages – Scottish Gaelic in Scotland, Welsh in Wales and Irish Gaelic in Northern Ireland. In most urban centres, a huge variety of other languages from across the world are commonly spoken.

WEATHER

The United Kingdom is a great destination to visit at any time of the year. The weather forecast is always changeable. Weather in Spring and Summer is usually quite mild, with long and light days- be prepared for the sunshine but also for some rain. Autumn usually consists of milder days creeping into October as the countryside turns a glorious colour. Winters tend to be significantly colder. The weather is generally cooler and wetter the further north you travel.

ELECTRICITY

In the United Kingdom, the standard voltage is 220-240V. You will require a UK plug adapter (three square pins), and/or converter depending on which electrical appliances you bring with you. Please note, this UK uses different plugs and voltage to the rest of continental Europe.

MOBILES & INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Mobile coverage is widely available across the UK, be sure to check with your mobile provider for coverage and rates, as data roaming can be extremely expensive.

MONEY

- **Currency**

The currency of the United Kingdom is the Pound Sterling (£GBP). Debit and credit cards are widely accepted, even for small transactions. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, you may receive notes from Bank of Scotland or Ulster Bank, which are legal tender but not always accepted in England.

Cash is less commonly used, and many transactions are contactless, especially on public transport like London buses. It's advisable to carry a small amount of cash, as ATMs are more common in cities than rural areas.

- **Gratuities**

After feedback from previous guests, we offer a group tipping package for this tour, more information on this will be shared in the

'Pre-Tour Emails'.

WATER

The tap water in UK is generally of excellent quality. Unless otherwise advised, you can drink the local tap water. Bottled water can be bought at supermarkets, kiosks and many shops. It is good practise to bring your own reusable water bottle to keep plastic waste to a minimum on tour.

SAFETY & SECURITY

As visitors, tourists may be more vulnerable to petty crimes like pickpocketing and scams, so we recommend staying aware and taking simple precautions.

RELIGION

Christianity is the official religion of the UK, with the queen the head of the Church of England. There is a huge variety of Christian churches in the UK. The UK also has large Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish communities.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The UK offers photo opportunities one after another. You will return with many photos that can never be repeated. Remember to pack your camera, along with the charger, spare batteries and a spare memory card. It is always polite to ask permission when taking photographs of others. Please note any signs informing you that photography is not permitted in certain locations.

ARRIVAL IN THE UK

Please note, standard hotel check-in is around 3pm. Should you arrive earlier than this, your room may not be available upon arrival. For those arriving early morning, we do everything we can to work with the hotel to get you an earlier check-in subject to availability.

For tours including arrival airport transfers, proceed through to the arrivals hall after collecting your luggage. There will be a representative holding a sign with your name welcome you and transfer you to your hotel. Please advise your flight details no later than six weeks prior to travel.

If you have any other questions that we have not covered here; then please send us an e-mail to:
info@thebigjourneycompany.com

Disclaimer: The above information is provided as a guideline only. The Big Journey Company assumes no liability for any errors or omissions in this document.

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