

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs &  
Highland Landscapes

2026

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

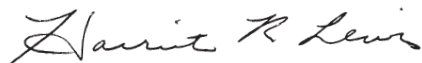
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis

Chair

Overseas Adventure Travel

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Highland cattle, Oban

## Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes

### Small Group Adventure

**Scotland:** Glasgow, Oban, Inverness, Dundee, St. Andrews, Edinburgh

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

**15 days starting from \$5,795**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/sco2026pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/sco2026pricing)

Rolling hills dotted with castles. Churches overlooking picturesque lochs. Cobbled streets winding through charming villages. The cities of Dundee, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, all blending the historic and the modern. This is Scotland—rich in history, legend, and atmosphere. Get an intimate glimpse into the country and meet the locals that call Scotland home along the way.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 13 nights accommodation
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation
- 26 meals—13 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 8 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 7 small group activities
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes**



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Glasgow, Scotland
2-4	Glasgow
5-7	Oban
8-9	Inverness
10-11	Aberdeen
12-14	Edinburgh
15	Return to U.S.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris

PRE-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$3,495**

The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions

POST-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$2,995**

Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England

POST-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$1,995**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Nairn** before your Scottish Hebrides pre-trip extension from **\$290** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Glasgow** before your main adventure from **\$260** per room, per night

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderate

**Pacing:** 5 locations in 13 days

**Physical requirements:** Must be able to walk approximately 3 miles unassisted each day and participate in 6-8 hours of daily physical activities

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 7-16 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/sco](http://www.oattravel.com/sco)

## SCOTLAND: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Learn about Scotland's famously woolly native animals during *A Day in the Life* of a family owned and operated Highland cattle farm. Plus, enjoy a traditional Scottish meal with a family in Glasgow during a **Home-Hosted Dinner**.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** You'll discuss the **Controversial Topic** of Scotland's continued fight for independence amidst Brexit from the perspective of a member of the country's pro-independence party.

# Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 6 nights in *The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris*

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Arrive Inverness, Scotland • Overland to Nairn

**Day 3** Overland to Portree, Isle of Skye

**Day 4** Portree • Isle of Skye tour

**Day 5** Outer Hebrides • Isles of Harris and Lewis

**Day 6** Stornoway • Weaving demonstration • Callanish Standing Stones

**Day 7** Stornoway • Meet *guga* hunter • Visit Lews Castle grounds

**Day 8** Fly to Glasgow • Join main trip

#### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Evening:** You depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Glasgow, Scotland.

#### **Day 2** Arrive in Glasgow, Scotland

- Destination: Glasgow
- Accommodations: Apex City of Glasgow Hotel or similar

**Morning:** You'll arrive in the lively city of Glasgow in the late morning or early afternoon, depending on your specific flight arrangements. Upon arrival, an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your hotel transfer.

When we arrive to our hotel, we'll check in, and meet up with our Trip Experience Leader and those travelers who took our *The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Glasgow before the main adventure. You'll have some free time to settle in and unpack.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide you with recommendations.

**Afternoon:** We'll gather for an orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity, after which you'll have some free time to rest or explore Glasgow on your own.

**Dinner:** On your own. Perhaps you'll seek out one of Scotland's classic dishes: *haggis*.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to retire to your room for the night to rest, or to experience Glasgow's nightlife. You might like to find a local pub where you can grab a pint with your fellow travelers.

### **Day 3 Explore Glasgow • Grand Circle Foundation visit: Soul Food Sisters**

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City of Glasgow Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin our day with a panoramic tour of Glasgow, including the West End and the Glasgow Cathedral. The Necropolis is a Victorian-era cemetery, spanning 37 acres on a hill adjacent to the Glasgow Cathedral that features monuments designed by major architects and sculptors, and is the final resting place of 50,000 people.

Then, we'll head to lunch at Soul Food Sisters, an organization supported in part by **Grand Circle Foundation**.

#### **Grand Circle Foundation**

##### **Soul Food Sisters**

Partner since: **2024**

Soul Food Sisters is a group of migrant women based in East Glasgow and together they're creating a vibrant, female-led collective based around everyone's favorite thing: food! By swapping recipes, ideas and skills, they're making women's lives brighter. This organization brings together women from all over the world, ending social isolation and empowering them to develop their talents—in the kitchen and beyond.

They believe that making a difference to people's lives is more important than just making money. Soul Food Sisters' role is to empower migrant women in the local community to start their own businesses, encourage their abilities and increase confidence.

**Learn more about the sites we support »**

**Lunch:** At Soul Food Sisters.

**Afternoon:** Following lunch, you'll have time to explore Glasgow at your own pace. Then, we'll reconvene to walk to the historic Willow Tea Room designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh in 1903. Our Trip Experience Leader will lead a Welcome Briefing before dinner.

**Dinner:** We'll sit down to a Welcome Dinner, featuring a variety of Scottish dishes to welcome you to the country.

**Evening:** Your evening is free—you may choose to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar.

### **Day 4 Glasgow • Visit Alloway • Home-Hosted Dinner**

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City of Glasgow Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to Alloway to learn about the life of one of Scotland's national treasures: Robert Burns. A beloved author and poet, Burns is celebrated for works like Auld Lang Syne, the famous song sung around the world when the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve. The Scots even have an annual holiday dedicated to the literary giant: On Burns Night (celebrated on January 25), Scottish friends and families come together to read Burns's poetry and share a meal of haggis.

Upon arrival, we'll meet a local enthusiast who will walk us to Burns Cottage, the humble home where the poet was born and raised, which has been converted into a museum. Here, we'll see handwritten manuscripts and other historical artifacts that will offer us a glimpse into his life. Next, we'll weave through the village along the Poet's Path to Auld Kirk, where his parents are buried. You will then have time to independently explore the writer's memorial and exhibition at your leisure before returning to Glasgow.

**Lunch:** On your own in Glasgow—your Trip Experience Leader can offer local recommendations.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy a few hours of free time in Glasgow. Perhaps you'd like to take a stroll through the Glasgow Botanic Gardens where you can enjoy the serenity of nature. Later, we'll meet up in the hotel lobby and drive to Glasgow's south side. Here, in a suburb of the city, we'll break into smaller groups for what many travelers report is a highlight of their time in Scotland: A meal with a local family.

**Dinner:** We'll be welcomed into the home of a local family for our **Home-Hosted Dinner**. Our hosts are likely from middle-class backgrounds; many are teachers (or former teachers) and have school-aged children at home. We'll share a home-cooked meal that the family would typically have on a weeknight—such as meat and potatoes. Expect simple, hearty fare showcasing the traditional flavors of Scottish cuisine.

This experience offers us a rare opportunity to connect with local culture on a more intimate level: In our hosts' homes, we'll see the family go about their evening routine and get an authentic look into what life is really like in Glasgow. There will be plenty of time to ask our hosts any questions we may have. Perhaps

you'd like to know how they celebrate Burns Night, or how they feel about the possibility of Scottish independence.

**Evening:** We'll say goodbye to our new friends and return to the hotel. From there, the rest of your evening is free—you may choose to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar, or you may retire to your room to pack for our overland journey to Oban tomorrow.

## **Day 5 Scottish Highlands hike • Explore Glencoe Visitors' Center • Oban**

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll bid farewell to Glasgow and begin our overland journey into the Scottish Highlands to Oban. Along the way, we'll stop to enjoy a hike in the Scottish countryside, taking in the region's scenic beauty on foot.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After our lunch, we will continue to Glencoe village, nestled in one of the most beautiful valleys of the Scottish Highlands, pausing at the Glencoe Visitors' Center en route.

Then, we'll continue our journey to Oban and check in to our hotel. You'll have some free time to settle in. Later, we'll gather for an orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity which will conclude a local restaurant.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant in Oban.

**Evening:** Free to make your own discoveries in Oban—you may choose to retire to your room to get some rest, or perhaps you'll set off on an evening stroll.

## Day 6 Oban • *A Day in the Life* of a Highland cattle farm

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we set off to Argyll to experience *A Day in the Life* of a Highland cattle farm. Here we'll meet the owners of the farm, and learn about the native Highland cattle, the oldest breed in the world and now an iconic symbol of Scotland.

**Lunch:** At the farm, featuring Scottish delights such as cold cuts, local cheeses, and fresh fruit.

**Afternoon:** We'll bid our hosts farewell and return to Oban, where the remainder of the afternoon is yours to make your own discoveries.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** The rest of your evening is at leisure. Perhaps you'll relax in your room or seek out a nightcap at a local pub in Oban.

## Day 7 Oban • Explore Isle of Iona

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

**Activity Note:** Depending on weather conditions, we may enjoy alternate activities on this day.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll begin our journey to the Isle of Iona, boarding two ferries to reach our destination. Our total journey will take around three hours. Along the way, you can soak up views of white-sand beaches and rugged cliffs cloaked in green vegetation.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant on the Isle of Iona.

**Afternoon:** After our lunch, we'll enjoy a guided tour of Iona, learning all about the island's historical significance with a local resident and theology student. She will introduce us to the important role of Christianity here over the centuries. She'll even provide us with insights into the everyday lives of the locals. We'll also learn about St. Columba of Ireland, who in the sixth century traveled to this small Scottish island to spread Christianity. He also built a Celtic church, Iona Abbey, where the famous *Book of Kells* is believed to have been written. And we'll learn how over the centuries, the church was repeatedly raided by Vikings, destroyed, rebuilt, and then abandoned during the Scottish Reformation. We'll take in breathtaking views of the nunnery and of Iona Abbey itself during our visit. We'll also have some free time following our tour to explore the island on our own.

**Dinner:** On your own in Oban. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to offer local recommendations.

**Evening:** Free to pursue your own interests.

## Day 8 Oban • Travel to Inverness • Visit Urquhart Castle

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Glen Mhor Hotel Inverness or similar

**Activity note:** Today's transfer to Inverness will take approximately 4 hours, with a few stops along the way to break up our journey.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll say *beannachd leibh*, or goodbye, to Oban and begin our journey to Inverness, dubbed the capital of the Scottish

Highlands. We'll make a stop in the village of Fort Augustus, located on the shores of Loch Ness.

**Lunch:** On your own upon arrival in Fort Augustus. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend one of the many local cafés in the village.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our discoveries on our way to Inverness when we stop to see the ruins of the medieval Urquhart Castle. Our visit starts with a video charting the castle's 1000-year-old history. Then, you'll have time to explore the castle's many towers and chambers on your own. After, we'll drive to our hotel. Located in the northern Highlands, Inverness is a quaint city of modest stone homes and a castle that appears to be straight from a storybook.

Enjoy some free time this afternoon to get settled in or start exploring on your own before we meet our Trip Experience Leader for a walk around the hotel's vicinity.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own with the freedom to make your own discoveries.

## **Day 9 Inverness • Visit Culloden Battlefield • Whisky tasting**

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Glen Mhor Hotel Inverness or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll set off to uncover a bloody chapter of Scotland's history at the Culloden Battlefield. On April 16, 1746, the last major battle fought on mainland British soil occurred here, and as a result more than 1500 soldiers perished. This battlefield was the site of the

final Jacobite uprising, an effort to restore the House of Stuart to the British throne. The battle only lasted one hour and came to a close when Government forces led by the Duke of Cumberland crushed the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

**Lunch:** On your own—Inverness features a variety of cuisines, including Chinese, Indian, American, and Scottish fare.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, you'll have some time for independent exploring in Inverness before we gather together for a short walk over to The Malt Room for a whisky tasting experience. This cozy bar in the heart of Inverness is the city's first venue specializing in the Scottish national drink, and we'll have an opportunity to sample three whisky varieties from different regions of Scotland.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the evening as you wish. You can return to your room to pack before we leave Inverness tomorrow morning, or head to a nearby pub where you can grab a pint.

## **Day 10 Explore Dunkeld • Discover Glamis Castle • Overland to Dundee**

- Destination: Dundee
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll drive through the sweeping landscapes of Cairngorms and enjoy a hike with a local naturalist along a lovely stretch of the River Tay, where we can view Birnam Oak, the iconic tree from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Then, we'll continue on to Dunkeld, one of the most preserved historic towns in Scotland.

**Lunch:** On your own in Dunkeld. Your Trip Experience Leader will provide recommendations based on his or her favorite local restaurants.

**Afternoon:** Following lunch, we set out to explore Glamis Castle, situated in Angus, Scotland, a captivating blend of stunning architecture, rich history, and intriguing legends. Dating back to the 14th century as a royal hunting lodge, it has evolved into a sprawling fortress owned by the Bowes-Lyon family. Glamis is steeped in folklore, including associations with Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and tales of ghosts like the *Monster of Glamis*. With its royal connections and pivotal role in Scottish history, the castle remains a symbol of the country's heritage. Visitors can explore its opulent interiors and tranquil grounds, making it a must-visit destination for those seeking a glimpse into Scotland's past.

After our visit, we'll continue our drive to Dundee, Scotland's fourth largest city. When we arrive, we'll check in to our hotel and you'll have some time to settle and unpack.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** The remainder of the evening is yours.

## **Day 11 Visit St. Andrews • Explore Dundee**

- Destination: Dundee
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll drive to St. Andrews. Quaint stone buildings, cobbled streets, and crumbling ruins instantly transport you back to the old days of this history-rich city.

Considered to be the ecclesiastical capital, St. Andrews was the first location to feel the stark changes of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The introduction of the new ideas of Protestantism and the traditional beliefs of Christianity ignited conflict within Scotland and the country's ruling parties.

We'll take a deep dive into this period of Scotland's history as we explore St. Andrews today with our Trip Experience Leader. We'll set off on a walking tour, beginning at the clubhouse of The St. Andrews Golf Club, where we'll learn about the history of one of the oldest golf clubs in the world. Our tour will take us from the ruins of Scotland's greatest cathedral and St. Andrews Castle to the University of St. Andrews. One of the oldest colleges in the world, the University of St. Andrews was founded in 1413 in response to Scotland's lack of higher education opportunities. Notable alumni include Kate Middleton and Prince William.

**Lunch:** On your own. You might like to seek out *bridie*, a popular meat pie that is typically served with beans. Your Trip Experience Leader will share some local restaurants to try.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to Dundee, and you'll have the remainder of the day free to relax or explore independently.

**Dinner:** On your own—your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to offer a local recommendation.

**Evening:** The remainder of the evening is free for you to do as you'd like.

## Day 12 Overland to Edinburgh • Visit a local Scottish estate

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll drive to a local Scottish estate, where we'll be greeted by a bagpiper and learn a bit of the history of the pipes and the tartans and plaids that make up a piper's kilt. Travelers can then dress in traditional tweeds worn in the Highlands, before we meet members of the estate's team who are instrumental in its running and will provide insights into land management and everyday life in a typical Scottish estate.

**Lunch:** Enjoy a light lunch at the estate.

**Afternoon:** After our visit, we'll continue our drive to our hotel in Edinburgh. After checking in, you'll have some free time to unpack, settle in, or begin exploring on your own. Then, we'll take a short orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity, ending at a local restaurant in the center of town.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** We'll return to our hotel. Or, if you'd like, you can remain in the city center to take advantage of the capital city's nightlife.

## Day 13 Explore Edinburgh • Optional Falkirk Wheel & the Kelpies tour

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll kick off our discoveries in Scotland's capital with a tour of the city led by a local guide. As we explore, we'll see the stark contrasts between Edinburgh's labyrinthine Old Town and its well-organized New Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll begin our explorations in Old Town, where we'll be transported back into Edinburgh's history as we stroll the winding cobbled *closes*, or alleyways, narrow stairways, curving steep streets and walk up the Royal Mile. Running through the heart of Old Town, the Royal Mile connects the Palace of Holyroodhouse, which lies in the shadow of the extinct volcano known as Arthur's Seat, up to our final destination, the magnificent Edinburgh Castle.

When we arrive at Edinburgh Castle, we'll be able to see how New Town and its neoclassical buildings dating from the 18th and 19th centuries contrasts with Old Town during our tour. Perched high above the city, the iconic castle was used as the royal residency for Scottish monarchs, a fortress for armies, and a prison for pirates and POWs. During free time here, you'll be able to discover St. Margaret's Chapel—the oldest surviving building in the city, which dates back to the twelfth century. And you'll want to stay for the firing of the famous one o'clock gun—locals and sailors have been setting their clocks to it since 1861.

You can also choose to join an optional tour to the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies, which begins with lunch in the ancient town of Linlithgow, followed by a boat tour of the famous Falkirk Wheel, a modern engineering marvel, which transfers boats between the Union Canal and Forth and Clyde Canal by way of a rotating elevator. The tour continues to the Kelpies, a pair of nearly 100-foot-high horse head statues honoring the equestrian heritage of Scotland, before returning to Edinburgh later in the afternoon.

**Lunch:** On your own. Travelers on the optional tour will have lunch at a café in Linlithgow.

**Afternoon:** The rest of the day is free for you to relax or explore more of the city on your own.

**Dinner/Evening:** Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own—perhaps you'll find a restaurant that serves traditional dishes like *haggis* with *neeps* and *tatties*, or turnips and potatoes.

### Day 14 Edinburgh • Visit Leith

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart our hotel and take a local tram to the port district of Leith. Due to Leith's location on the water, it has served as the gateway into Edinburgh for ships for centuries. A ship that has permanently dropped anchor here is the Royal Yacht Britannia. A mighty vessel fit for royalty quite literally served as a home for the monarchy over the course of 40 years. We'll walk over to the Royal Yacht and learn more about its fascinating history—from hosting business endeavors to transporting royals to their honeymoon locations.

**Lunch:** On your own—perhaps you'll seek out the traditional flavors of Scotland that we have come to know.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to Edinburgh by local tram, and then you'll have a few hours to rest or do any last-minute sightseeing before dinner.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Your final night is free. Choose to retire early to pack before tomorrow's flight, or stop at pub for one final dram of whisky or pint of ale.

### Day 15 Return to U.S. or begin your post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Drive to the airport for your return flight home, or to begin the post-trip extension to *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions*. Travelers on our *Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England* post-trip extension will drive to Edinburgh's Waverley Station to begin their train transfer toward Wales.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

### **5 nights in *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions***

**Day 1** Fly to Shetland Isles • Meet Shetland knitwear designer • Overland to Lerwick

**Day 2** Bressay farm visit • Explore Lerwick

**Day 3** Visit Sumburgh Head • Shetland pony visit

**Day 4** Explore Eshaness • Sullom Voe Terminal tour • Delting Galley Shed visit

**Day 5** Fly to Edinburgh • Farewell Dinner

**Day 6** Return to U.S.

OR

### **5 nights in *Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England***

**Day 1** Transfer to Betws-y-Coed, Wales • Explore Conwy

**Day 2** Visit the Isle of Anglesey • **Home-Hosted Lunch**

**Day 3** Explore Snowdonia National Park

**Day 4** Visit local sheep farm • Discover Chester, England • Transfer to Liverpool

**Day 5** Explore Liverpool • Farewell Dinner

**Day 6** Transfer to Manchester • Return to U.S.

## OPTIONAL TOURS

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During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

**Please note:** *Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.*

### Falkirk Wheel & the Kelpies

(Day 13 \$140 per person)

Discover the beauty and cultural heritage of the lowlands on an optional tour to the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies. We'll begin with a drive to the ancient town of Linlithgow, where we'll enjoy lunch at Mannerstons Farm Shop. Then, we'll head to the town of Falkirk for a boat tour of the famous Falkirk Wheel, a modern engineering marvel, which transfers boats between the Union Canal and Forth and Clyde Canal by way of a rotating elevator.

After some time in Falkirk, our tour continues to The Kelpies, a pair of nearly 100-foot-high horse head statues honoring the equestrian heritage of Scotland. You'll also enjoy a short walk through the peaceful environs of Helix Park, where the statues are located.

After our visit, we'll return to Edinburgh, where dinner is on your own.

**Please note:** *A minimum of six travelers is required to operate this optional tour.*

## PRE-TRIP

### *The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris*

## INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 6 nights accommodation
- » 12 meals—6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 3 dinners
- » 3 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

## PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Rambling rocky coastline surrenders to secluded, scenic beaches ... harbors fringed by the sloping terrain of the highlands breathe mystery and allure into remote villages and mystifying monuments. Journey to off-the-beaten locales in the verdant slopes and wild waters of Scotland's Inner and Outer Hebrides.*

### **Day 1 Depart U.S.**

Depart today on your flight from the U.S. to Inverness, Scotland.

### **Day 2 Arrive Inverness, Scotland • Overland to Nairn**

- Destination: Nairn
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Muthu Newton Hotel or similar

**Morning:** You will arrive in Inverness, Scotland throughout the morning or afternoon. Your driver will transfer you to our hotel in Nairn, a small seaside town nestled in the heart of the Highlands along the shores of the Moray Firth.

**Lunch:** On your own—you can enjoy a meal at the hotel restaurant as you settle in from your international flight.

**Afternoon:** Following some free time to relax, we will gather as a group to introduce ourselves and meet our Trip Experience Leader and travelers who arrived early in Nairn before their pre-trip extension. Then, we will get acquainted with the coastal landscape and neighborhood around our hotel during an orientation walk. Following our orientation walk, maybe you'll venture out on your own to explore this fishing village's sandy beaches, or take in local history at the Nairn Museum.

**Dinner:** At the hotel's restaurant. We'll enjoy our first taste of Scottish cuisine while getting to know our fellow travelers.

**Evening:** You are free to explore on your own. Perhaps you'll join your fellow travelers in a local pub to discuss your upcoming discoveries over a pint.

### Day 3 Overland to Portree, Isle of Skye

- Destination: Portree
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Cuillin Hills Hotel or similar

**Activity Note:** Today our drive from Nairn to Portree will involve a journey through the Scottish Highlands that will last around 5 hours. We will break up the journey with stops along the way.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We will check out of our hotel and begin our journey to Portree, the capital of the Isle of Skye. We'll enjoy the shifting scenery of the Scottish Highlands passing by the Kyle of Lochalsh and the Skye Bridge as we venture towards our next destination.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our journey to Portree. Upon arrival, we will set out on a discovery walk. We'll marvel at this small town's idyllic harbor fringed by flourishing cliffs. The vibrant pastels of the homes stacked along the winding harbor are quite a contrast to the verdant hue of the Highlands.

After our walk, we'll check in to our hotel.

**Dinner:** At the hotel's restaurant. We'll enjoy traditional dishes and toast to the discoveries to come during this Welcome Dinner.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to explore this small town on your own this evening. Perhaps you'll grab a drink in one of the local pubs with your fellow travelers to discuss today's explorations.

### Day 4 Portree • Isle of Skye tour

- Destination: Portree
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Cuillin Hills Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart for a tour of Skye led by a local guide, beginning with St. Columba's Isle. Peppered with ancient ruins and graves dating back to the eleventh century, this historic area was previously the center of Christianity in the Hebrides. We'll spend some time exploring the area. Then, we'll visit Columba 1400, a community center dedicated to helping young people from all over Scotland discover their true potential.

**Lunch:** At the restaurant at Columba 1400, followed by a discussion of some of the works the community center is involved with.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to Portree, where the remainder of the afternoon is free for your own discoveries.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to offer you some recommendations.

**Evening:** Enjoy the freedom to explore on your own. Perhaps you'll venture through the charming streets of Portree or enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers at the hotel.

### Day 5 Outer Hebrides • Isles of Harris and Lewis

- Destination: Stornoway
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Stornoway Bed and Breakfast or similar

**Activity Note:** Depending on the day of week, your visit to the Isle of Lewis may be rescheduled to another day. Also, note that

if your return flight to the mainland is on a Sunday, it will depart in the afternoon instead of the morning.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll check out of our hotel and drive to the ferry terminal toward Tarbert. Upon arrival, we'll embark on our journey to Stornoway, the capital of the Isles of Harris and Lewis. Experience the rocky peaks and slanting slopes of the Scottish Highlands from a distance as we venture toward the islands' shores. The Isles of Harris and Lewis are actually joined, and form part of a chain of islands called the Western Isles or Outer Hebrides. The Hebrides are known as the "long island" as they stretch for 100 miles.

**Lunch:** At a local café with your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll continue our journey to Stornoway, the largest town of the Outer Hebrides. Upon arrival, we'll check in to our hotel here; feel free to relax in your room or enjoy free time before dinner.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** This evening is free for you to make your own discoveries. Maybe you'll take a stroll past the town's shops or relax in the hotel bar over a drink recapping today's discoveries.

## **Day 6 Stornoway • Weaving demonstration • Callanish Standing Stones**

- Destination: Stornoway
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Stornoway Bed and Breakfast or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin today with a drive to meet local weaving artisans in their studio. Here, we'll enjoy a lecture and demonstration about this longstanding art form and see firsthand how to make Harris' eponymous tweed, which is only available on the island.

Afterwards, we'll drive to the village of traditional black houses. The thatched roofs and dry-stone walls of these homes once dotted the Hebridean landscape. They served as one-room abodes for families and their livestock. In the late 1800s, as locals started moving into more modern homes, or white houses—due to their construction with lime mortar—and health regulations became stricter, these traditional homesteads became vacant. Unbelievably though, some of the black houses were still inhabited until the mid-1970s. We'll learn more about the history of houses and the people who lived here.

**Lunch:** On your own—at the Blackhouses Visitors' Center.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll make our way to Callanish to visit the Callanish Standing Stones. Built around 3000 BC, these mysterious megaliths are assumed to have been used mainly as a hub for ritual activities, but their exact purpose has been lost to history. These towering stones evoke a similar feeling to Stonehenge but predate it by 2000 years. We will explore the local legends and lore surrounding this mystifying monument with our Trip Experience Leader. After, we'll return to Stornoway where you'll have the rest of the afternoon free to discover the area.

**Dinner:** On your own this evening. Perhaps you'll seek out a plate of freshly-caught salmon.

**Evening:** On your own—you have the freedom to make your own discoveries. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions on evening entertainment in the area.

### **Day 7 Stornoway • Meet *guga* hunter • Visit Lews Castle grounds**

- Destination: Stornoway
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Stornoway Bed and Breakfast or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin today with a bus ride to the Port of Ness. Our small group allows us the unique opportunity to meet with a local *guga* hunter. A small island off the Port of Ness, Sula Sgeir, is home to thousands of gannets, known locally as *guga*, and they were harvested annually by the local people, *guga* hunters, as a main staple of their diet. In more recent years, this has become a controversial topic due to a push for the protection of these birds and a ban on this long-established practice. We will discuss the challenges these hunters have faced in more modern times and the intimate history of their practice dating back to the 15th century. Then, we will journey back to Stornoway.

**Lunch:** On your own.

**Afternoon:** Your Trip Experience Leader will take us on a walk by the expansive Lews Castle. Discover this Victoria-era castle by exploring its various walking paths and sprawling green lawns, after which you'll have the rest of the afternoon free to discover the area on your own. Perhaps you'll visit the Lanntair Gallery—a hub for creatives in the outer Hebrides—where you can catch a performance or exhibition.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide a recommendation for one final dinner in Stornoway.

**Evening:** You're free to retire to your room, or venture into Stornoway for the evening. Your Trip Experience Leader is always ready with suggestions.

### **Day 8 Fly to Glasgow • Join main trip**

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Depart this morning for our flight from Stornoway to Glasgow, where we'll meet up with our fellow travelers on our main trip, *Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes*.

## POST-TRIP

### *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions*

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 5 nights accommodation
- » 11 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 4 dinners
- » 3 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Journey to the northern reaches of Scotland to the remote, windswept Shetland Islands, an archipelago in the North Sea where sheep outnumber people and the green, rugged landscape gives way to glorious coastal views. We'll get to know the warm, hearty people who populate these islands—including crofters (or farmers) and see the time-honored traditions they're working to keep alive. We'll also spend time immersing ourselves in the Islands' natural splendor with visits to towering coastal cliffs where seabirds flourish.*

##### **Day 1 Fly to Shetland Isles • Meet Shetland knitwear designer • Overland to Lerwick**

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Glen Orchy House or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll catch an early morning flight north to the Shetland Islands, a windswept archipelago halfway between Scotland and Norway. Upon arrival, we'll make our way to Lerwick, with a stop along the way in Nielanell, a shop that specializes in contemporary Shetland knitwear. We'll meet the owner, Niela Nell, who will explain how her works draw inspiration from the longstanding traditions and techniques of the Shetlands' textile heritage.

**Lunch:** At a local café.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll continue to Lerwick, the largest town in the Shetlands. With gray stone buildings clustered around the harbor and sweeping coastal views in every direction, Lerwick is the perfect place to begin our Shetland discoveries. We'll have some time to explore on our own before checking in to our hotel.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** Free for you to continue discovering Lerwick, or to retire early to your room for a fresh start tomorrow.

## Day 2 Bressay farm visit • Explore Lerwick

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Glen Orchy House or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we'll take a short drive to the Bressay Ferry Terminal. From there, we'll take a quick ferry ride from the harbor to the nearby island of Bressay.

Here, we'll be met by a crofter and local farmer on the island. He'll drive us to his farm and lead us on an interactive tour of his property, and we'll see his flock of sheep. The Shetland Islands are known for their *katmoget*, or "badger-faced" sheep, a special breed with a light-colored body and a darker belly and legs. We'll also see a variety of other sheep species, and the different colored wool and fleeces they produce.

As we walk, he'll take us through his daily chores and explain how life on the farm changes in response to the seasons. We'll get to see the traditional crofting tools he uses and learn about the particular challenges of farm life in this climate. You'll have plenty of time to ask questions and see what life is really like on a working croft.

**Lunch:** In a local café, featuring hearty regional fare.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll take a scenic tour of Bressay. The local farmer will join us for the ride, pointing out some of his favorite spots and places of interest. Then, we'll return to Lerwick via ferry, where the remainder of the afternoon will be on your own.

**Dinner:** On your own. Perhaps you'll indulge in a local classic—fish and chips.

**Evening:** Free—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

## Day 3 Visit Sumburgh Head • Shetland pony visit

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Glen Orchy House or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we set out on a scenic tour of the south and western parts of the island.

We'll drive south through the rugged landscape to Sumburgh Head, a towering cliff on the island's southern tip where seals and puffins frolic from May to July. The head itself is a 300-foot-tall rocky promontory that juts out into the sea, offering panoramic coastal views from its cliffs.

Upon arrival, you'll have some time to explore this picturesque setting on your own; keep your eyes peeled for dolphins and whales, which can sometimes be spotted in the waters below. Indeed, Sumburgh Head is teeming with unique wildlife. Then, we'll meet with a local ranger for a walking tour around the cliffs, and they will provide us insight on the many species of birds that flock to the area.

**Lunch:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for a local recommendation.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive to a croft where Shetland ponies are bred. Known for their diminutive stature and heavy coats, these intelligent ponies are thought to have originated in the Shetland Islands in the Bronze Age. As a result of the Islands' harsh climate and scarce food supply, the ponies have developed into an extremely hardy breed. Perhaps because of this, Shetland ponies were

first used for pulling carts, carrying peat and coal, and plowing farmland, and later were commonly used in coal mines as “pit ponies” to haul coal underground. Unfortunately, mine work was incredibly taxing to even the ponies’ strong constitutions, and many pit ponies lived short lives of hard labor.

We’ll have the chance to meet the ponies while our hosts tell us about their temperament and unique characteristics. Ask any questions you’d like—this is sure to be a memorable afternoon.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** At your leisure—perhaps you’ll go on an evening stroll or relax in your room before tomorrow’s discoveries.

#### **Day 4 Explore Eshaness • Sullom Voe Terminal tour • Delting Galley Shed visit**

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Glen Orchy House or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We’ll set out to explore the northern end of the island, beginning with a visit to the Eshaness geological site. In the Devonian period, some 350–400 million years ago, the Shetland Islands lay near the equator and boasted a tropical climate; the Eshaness we see before us was once a volcano. Today, the area consists of craggy coastal cliffs carved over the eons by powerful waves. A local guide will take us on a walk along the coastline to see the stacks and blowholes that have formed and share the area’s unique geological makeup. As we walk, look out for fulmars cresting on air currents above the sea, and other seabirds nesting in the crannies of the rock face. We’ll then embark on a scenic drive to the village of Brae.

**Lunch:** On your own.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we’ll head to the Sullom Voe Terminal, an oil and gas terminal on the Shetland Islands. The terminal manages the production from oilfields in the North Sea and East Shetland Basin, and stores it before it is transported by tanker. When Shetland was identified as a location to provide a pipeline terminal and support facilities for offshore oil installations in the North Sea, local corporations involved had expected to each build their own terminal facilities. However, wishing to minimize the negative impacts of the industry, the Shetland Islands Council, with power granted to it by the UK Parliament, was able to contain all pipeline terminal facilities at the Sullom Voe site.

During our visit, our local guide will discuss how the impact of oil and gas on the Island—an accommodation that was supposed to be temporary—has led to job losses. They will also explain how Brexit has impacted the oil and gas industry in general. During this conversation, we’ll be able to ask any questions we may have.

Next, we’ll drive to the Delting Galley Shed to learn more about a festival held on the Shetland Islands—Up Helly AA, a fire festival held annually from January to March in various locations around the islands to mark the end of the yule season. Each festival involves a torch-lit procession by costumed participants known as *guizers* that culminates in the burning of a Viking-style galley ship. The main festival held in Lerwick, the Shetlands’ capital, involves a procession of up to a thousand *guizers* who march through the streets of Lerwick on the last Tuesday in January. Since its inception, women and girls have been excluded from participating as *guizers* in Lerwick, though are welcome in the rural festivals. This has become a controversial issue and is the subject of ongoing debate in Shetland. During our visit at

the Delting Galley Shed where the Viking galley is constructed for each year's festival, we'll have time to ask any questions we may have about this unique celebration.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a dinner of traditional fish and chips.

**Evening:** Free to make your own discoveries.

### **Day 5 Fly to Edinburgh • Farewell Dinner**

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Edinburgh Airport or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll transfer to the airport for our flight to Edinburgh.

**Lunch:** On your own. You might like to grab something at the hotel or take a bus into Edinburgh.

**Afternoon:** We'll check into our hotel, which is located near the airport to make it more convenient for tomorrow's flights back to the U.S.

**Dinner:** Our small group will share one final meal together at tonight's Farewell Dinner in the hotel restaurant. Dine on the Scottish cuisine you've come to know and compare highlights with your fellow travelers.

**Evening:** Free. You may wish to have a final dram and toast your last night in Scotland. *Slàinte Mhath!* (Or "cheers," as the Scottish would say.)

### **Day 6 Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Drive to the airport for your return flight to the U.S.

## POST-TRIP

### *Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England*

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 5 nights accommodation
- » 9 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 9 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Round out your discoveries of Great Britain by discovering a few of the highlights of Wales and England on this optional extension. Discover the natural beauty of Snowdonia National Park, and follow in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary trained for his Everest ascent. Plus, learn about rural life during conversations with a sheep farmer and wool weaver, then travel to England where the Roman roots of Chester and scouser spirit of Liverpool await your discovery.*

##### **Day 1 Transfer to Betws-y-Coed, Wales • Explore Conwy**

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Royal Oak Hotel or similar

**Morning:** We drive to Waverley train station to begin our transfer to Betws-y-Coed, Wales, stopping along the way in Conwy.

**Lunch:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for a local recommendation.

**Afternoon:** Upon arrival in Conwy, we'll have some time to explore Conwy independently. You might choose to indulge your sweet tooth at Baravelli's chocolate shop to try some locally-made treats and chat with the owner, about how she's one of only three people in Britain to run a shop that produces chocolate from bean to bar, entirely in-house.

Then, we'll drive the rest of our journey to Betws-y-Coed. This charming market town on the northern coast of Wales will serve as our base of exploration over the next three nights of our adventure. Later, join our Trip Experience Leader for a short orientation walk of the surrounding neighborhood.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

##### **Day 2 Visit the Isle of Anglesey • Home-Hosted Lunch**

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Royal Oak Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we'll meet with a native Welsh speaker and harpist and get to learn a bit about the Welsh language, traditional music, as well as life growing up in North Wales.

**Lunch:** We'll join a local family in their home in Caernarfon for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**. This is a unique opportunity to connect with a Welsh family and learn about their everyday lives.

**Afternoon:** This afternoon, we'll drive to Anglesey, an island off the Welsh coast connected to the mainland by bridge. We'll spend the morning exploring Beaumaris Castle. Construction on the fortifications began in 1295 under the English King Edward I, as the final piece of his "Iron Ring" designed to impress England's superiority over Wales. It is regarded today as a great unfinished masterpiece; although supplies ran out before the project could be completed, the work that was done is regarded by many as the pinnacle of English medieval construction.

We'll judge for ourselves as we explore the castle and the surrounding medieval village freely with our Trip Experience Leader. Note its symmetrical design, and the concentric pattern of walls within walls, providing layers of protection from any who dared to assault it. The castle was planned by the architect James of St. George, and its design reflects the fruits of his many years of experience.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** Enjoy time to make independent discoveries this evening.

### Day 3 Explore Snowdonia National Park

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Royal Oak Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we set out to explore Snowdonia National Park, taking in the rugged natural splendor from several perspectives. First, we'll arrive at the Ffestiniog Railway, the oldest independent narrow-gauge railway in the world. It was built in 1832 to carry slate but has been carrying passengers since 1864. We'll board the train and ride a 13.5-mile route through some of Snowdonia's spectacular scenery.

Starting from sea level at the harbor town of Porthmadog, we'll ride along a stunning trail of pastures and forests, then rise 700 feet into the mountains, passing through tunnels and riding rails carved into the rock itself.

**Lunch:** At the hotel.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll enjoy a brief walk through the area's rugged countryside.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** Enjoy time at your leisure this evening.

### Day 4 Visit local sheep farm • Discover Chester, England • Transfer to Liverpool

- Destination: Liverpool
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Indigo Liverpool or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We begin our transfer to Liverpool today, stopping along the way to visit a Welsh sheep farm. Here, we'll meet a farmer, who will show us around and tell us about the day-to-day life of farmers in rural Wales.

Farming has been a staple of Welsh life from time immemorial, but in recent years, this old tradition has been threatened. Farmers typically make a living from selling their produce overseas—about 40% of Welsh lamb is exported—but with Brexit disrupting Britain's trade deals and international relations, the future of this profession is uncertain. During your conversation, you'll learn about the hardships of modern farming and the impact of Brexit on this fragile industry.

After our visit here, we'll continue our journey, crossing the border into England to visit the city of Chester.

We'll discover the city with our Trip Experience Leader, followed by some free time to explore this ancient English town with Roman roots and a well-preserved medieval center. Around AD 60, the Romans expanded their empire in Britain to the banks of the Dee River, where Chester is located. The city today still displays the Roman layout, extending from the Cross, where a Roman fortress once stood, to four city gates. In the Middle Ages, commerce on the Dee River, particularly with Ireland, enriched the town in the twelfth and 13th centuries.

The prosperity of those times is still evident in one of Chester's unique features: "the Rows," a series of two-tiered shops along the ancient streets of the historic town center. Chester also holds a significant place in English cultural history as the town where, beginning in the 14th century, mystery plays (public theater depicting biblical events) were presented.

**Lunch:** On your own in Chester. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide recommendations.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue on our drive to Liverpool. After checking in to our hotel, our Trip Experience Leader will lead us on a short orientation walk.

**Dinner:** On your own; ask your Trip Experience Leader about the best local fare in the area.

**Evening:** Enjoy the rest of the evening at your leisure—perhaps you'll raise a glass with your fellow travelers in the hotel bar.

## **Day 5 Explore Liverpool • Farewell Dinner**

- Destination: Liverpool
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Indigo Liverpool or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll explore Liverpool with a local guide who will introduce us to this maritime city, set on the banks of the River Mersey and the Irish Sea.

Liverpool was a bustling hub of trade and migration between the 18th and 20th centuries. For much of its history, it wore a reputation as a poor, rough-and-tumble city, but in recent decades has joyfully emerged as a sought-after destination. Liverpool was designated by the European Union as a European Capital of Culture in 2008, as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004. Liverpool's residents—officially known as "Liverpudlians," but most call them "scousers," after a stew popular amongst local dockworkers—are famously friendly, as we'll learn during our explorations.

We'll walk for a little over 3 hours, exploring local sights, including the waterfront, where ferries cruise the sea and an iconic trio of mercantile buildings known as the "Three Graces" look out over the water. We'll also soak up some local culture when we stop by a historic café that has been a popular hangout spot for local dockers for more than a century.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will happily offer suggestions.

**Afternoon:** Free to explore independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can help you find activities to suit your interests. You might choose to discover The Beatles Story, a museum which highlights the journey that these four famous Liverpool musicians took on the road to stardom. The museum features replicas of the Casbah Coffee Club, Mathew Street, Abbey Road Studios, The Cavern, and other locales to recreate the spirit of the 60s when Beatlemania was at its apex.

**Dinner:** Join your fellow travelers this evening at a local restaurant and toast to your discoveries over an included Farewell Dinner.

**Evening:** Free to do as you'd like. You may choose to take an evening stroll, or share a final drink with your fellow travelers as you discuss highlights of your adventure.

## **Day 6 Transfer to Manchester • Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Drive to the airport in Manchester for your return flight to the U.S.

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need a total of 2 blank passport pages
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extensions:** No additional pages are needed.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam:** You will need to add 2 additional pages to the applicable total listed above.
- **Stopover in London:** No additional pages are needed.

## Entry Requirements

**A detailed instruction packet and fees will be available on your My Planner about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **United Kingdom:** The United Kingdom requires an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) for entry. This includes entry to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. You will need an ETA if the UK is your final destination. The ETA will be valid for 2 years.

## **Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### PACING

- 5 locations in 14 days

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- Must be able to walk approximately 3 miles unassisted each day and participate in 6–8 hours of daily physical activities
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

#### CLIMATE

- Scottish weather is traditionally fickle, but summer temperatures usually range from the low 40s to the mid 60s
- Autumn generally brings mist, showers, and brisk weather in the 40s
- Most of the country receives some rain at least 200 days a year

#### TERRAIN

- There is a fair amount of hiking, and walking over uneven, unpaved, or cobbled surfaces

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Travel by motorcoach, public transportation, and ferry
- There are several 1–3 hour drives (sometimes with around 2 hours between stops), and 1- to 2-hour ferry rides
- Agility and balance are required for boarding or disembarking ferries

## ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Hotel rooms are smaller than U.S. and offer basic amenities
- All accommodations feature private baths with showers
- Some hotels do not have elevators and rooms must be accessed by stairs

## Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

## Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **[travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)** (Go to "Find International Travel Information", select "Country Information", then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the "Health" section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.

- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### **Allergies**

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

### **Water**

- Tap water is safe to drink on this trip.
- If you prefer bottled water is widely available for sale. Or consider bringing a reusable water bottle from home to fill up at your hotel before you head out for the day.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not accepted in the United Kingdom.**
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**United Kingdom:** Pound Sterling (GBP)

**Scotland:** Pound Sterling (GBP)

## How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at large post offices and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1–\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff. *Please note: Because of the difficulty in exchanging a small amount of dollars, it would be easier for the housekeeping staff if you left their tips in local currency.*

*Please Note:* Your tour price includes gratuities on the main trip and optional extensions for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters that may assist you during the scheduled activities on your adventure. All tips are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Please do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

## Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

## What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## Communicating with Home from Abroad

### Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

## Calling Apps

We recommend you use WhatsApp while abroad to communicate home and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

## Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

## How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**United Kingdom:** +44

**Scotland:** +44

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
<p><b>Pre-trip extension to the Hebrides (Isles of Skye and Harris):</b> Because of stricter limitations on the flight from Stornoway to Glasgow, you will be limited to <b>44lbs for checked luggage</b> and <b>13lbs for your carry-on</b>. In addition, the overhead bins on the plane are smaller than average. They will fit a backpack or handbag but not a roller suitcase.</p> <p><b>Post-trip extension to the Remote Shetlands:</b> Because of stricter limitations on the flight from Edinburgh to the Shetland Islands, you will be limited to <b>44lbs for checked luggage</b> and <b>13lbs for your carry-on</b>. In addition, the overhead bins on the plane are smaller than average. They will fit a backpack or handbag but not a roller suitcase.</p> <p><b>Post-trip extension in Wales &amp; England:</b> Same as the main trip.</p>

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

## Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers.** Weather in Scotland is unpredictable, and can feature warm and cold temperatures at any time of the year. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to any fluctuations in temperatures.

- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall and heavy fog is a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell (including rain pants). Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through. This will be particularly helpful during some of your outdoor activities, such as open-air boat rides.
- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes.

## Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

**What not to pack:** Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Leave behind any credit cards that are not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

## Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Rain jacket/windbreaker with hood and rain pants: At any time of year, you’ll encounter the heavy rains, wind, and fog associated with the lush green landscapes of Scotland. Since you’ll be exposed to the elements during several activities (such as open-air boat rides and hikes), we strongly suggest that you bring rain gear.
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

## Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, sunscreen, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ☐ Compact umbrella
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

## Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- ☐ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

## Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

## Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Scotland, Wales, and England is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smart phones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

## Plugs

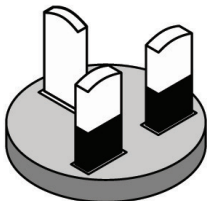
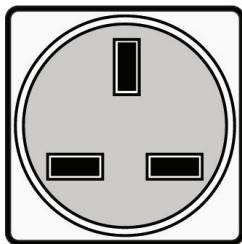
The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**United Kingdom: G**

**Scotland: G**

### Type G



## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Scotland:** The variable climate of Scotland is infamous for its consistent ability to change by the minute. It is common to experience more than one season in a day. Cool, mild weather, accompanied by frequent cloud cover and rain, is the norm. But on occasion, and at any time of year, a stint of foul weather can settle in. In Scotland's lowlands (the Edinburgh region), temperatures average in the low 50s during spring and fall, and in the low 60s during summer. At any time, temperatures could drop and the weather become chilly.

**Portree, Scotland (Isle of Skye, part of the Inner Hebrides Islands):** Like many of the Scottish islands, the Inner Hebrides have a mild oceanic climate, similar to nearby Ireland. Despite their northern location, winters are seldom below freezing, with average temperatures in the 40s. And summers are rarely hot, with averages in the 60s. Wind and rain are abundant here. April and May are the driest months and December is the wettest.

**Liverpool, England:** Liverpool's climate is similar to a coastal town in the Pacific Northwest—it doesn't get very hot or very cold, but it is frequently overcast and rains most days. Because of the mild climate, it doesn't snow very often in winter, and the lows are usually in the 40s. Spring is basically an extension of winter, and continues to be cool and wet. It isn't until May or June when highs start to creep up into the 60s, and—barring the occasional heat wave—summer highs rarely go beyond the high 70s. Fall is windy, with comfortable highs in the 50s.

**NOTE:** If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- [www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)
- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	GLASGOW, SCOTLAND			INVERNESS, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	44 to 35	88 to 83	25	42 to 35	85 to 81	2.0
<b>FEB</b>	45 to 35	86 to 75	22	43 to 34	86 to 76	1.6
<b>MAR</b>	49 to 37	87 to 70	23	47 to 37	86 to 70	1.5
<b>APR</b>	55 to 41	87 to 62	22	50 to 39	86 to 68	1.5
<b>MAY</b>	61 to 45	87 to 60	19	60 to 49	87 to 67	1.8
<b>JUN</b>	65 to 50	87 to 63	20	60 to 49	86 to 68	1.9
<b>JUL</b>	68 to 54	88 to 66	21	64 to 53	88 to 70	2.6
<b>AUG</b>	67 to 53	91 to 66	21	63 to 52	89 to 68	2.8
<b>SEP</b>	62 to 50	90 to 71	20	58 to 48	88 to 71	2.3
<b>OCT</b>	55 to 44	89 to 75	24	53 to 44	87 to 75	2.6
<b>NOV</b>	49 to 39	88 to 80	24	46 to 39	86 to 81	2.4
<b>DEC</b>	44 to 35	88 to 85	22	43 to 36	86 to 83	2.1

MONTH	EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND			PORTREE, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Avg. # of Days with Rain
<b>JAN</b>	44 to 34	86 to 80	14	45 to 38	87	31
<b>FEB</b>	45 to 34	86 to 75	10	42 to 33	82	24
<b>MAR</b>	48 to 37	86 to 68	12	43 to 36	80	27
<b>APR</b>	53 to 39	87 to 65	10	50 to 41	74	18
<b>MAY</b>	58 to 44	87 to 65	11	53 to 43	80	25
<b>JUN</b>	63 to 48	86 to 64	10	56 to 47	84	27
<b>JUL</b>	67 to 52	88 to 66	10	60 to 51	87	28
<b>AUG</b>	66 to 51	90 to 66	11	59 to 51	88	29
<b>SEP</b>	62 to 49	89 to 69	10	55 to 48	85	27
<b>OCT</b>	55 to 43	88 to 74	13	49 to 42	80	26
<b>NOV</b>	49 to 39	87 to 79	13	43 to 37	80	19
<b>DEC</b>	44 to 34	87 to 82	13	44 to 37	84	27

MONTH	LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # Days with Rainfall
JAN	46 to 37	--	20
FEB	46 to 37	--	18
MAR	50 to 40	--	19
APR	55 to 43	--	18
MAY	61 to 46	--	17
JUN	65 to 52	--	17
JUL	68 to 55	--	18
AUG	68 to 55	--	18
SEP	64 to 52	--	17
OCT	57 to 46	--	20
NOV	50 to 41	--	21
DEC	45 to 37	--	20

## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Scottish Culture

Scots are known to be outgoing, steadfast, practical, and full of humor. They are also fiercely proud of their culture—in part, perhaps, because it has taken a lot for them to retain it. Scotland has endured centuries of attempted repression by the English—not to mention other invaders like the Romans, Vikings, and Normans.

But Scottish culture is not wholly defined in opposition to something else. Scottish Gaelic is still an official language, and even though very few Scots speak it, many signs are translated into Gaelic and Gaelic words have infiltrated the larger culture. Many Scots identify with their ancient clans, and proudly wear their clan tartans for weddings, holidays and special occasions. Though these were originally part of Highland dress, they are now the national dress of the whole country.

Within Scotland, there is an imaginary line that runs roughly from Aberdeen to Glasgow that separates the Highlands in the north and west, from the Lowlands in the south and east. Generally speaking, Highland culture is more Gaelic and rural; whereas Lowland culture is more hybrid and urban. The Hebridean islands are a bastion of Gaelic tradition, but Orkney and Shetland have a totally distinct feel, with strong Scandinavian influences.

Scottish folklore is rich and widely loved. You'll hear tales of kelpies (shape-shifting water spirits), wulvers (werewolves, but kind ones), selkies (seals who can take human form), and all manner of mythical beasts—Nessie the Loch Ness monster being the most famous. And one of the most popular holidays is Halloween, when all those goblins and faeries might run amok in the streets.

Some of that folklore has inspired Scotland's rich literary tradition, which gave us greats like Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott, Arthur Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie, and the most revered Scottish poet of all, Robert (Rabbie) Burns. Among the country's best-known artists are the portraitist Allan Ramsay; and the architect-designer-watercolorist and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who had a major impact on the Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Bauhaus and other modernist movements. You can see some of his finest work in Glasgow. Today, you can experience some of the most exciting contemporary art, music, theater and more at cultural festivals like the Edinburgh International, the Fringe, Up Helly Aa (Shetland fire festivals), Aye Write! (the Glasgow book fair), and more.

That's quite a lot to celebrate, and Scots love to do just that the local pub, another cultural icon. Wander in and share a beer or a whisky, and pretty soon you'll be having a *blether* (conversation) with your bar mate. Just don't call what you're drinking a Scotch (it's called whisky here), and don't call your new friend that, either. It's considered antiquated and offensive. They are Scots or Scottish—and fiercely proud of it.

## Religion and Religious Observance

Today's Scots are not a particularly religious people. In a 2016 government survey, 51% of respondents said they had no religion at all. Otherwise, of those who did claim a religious orientation, most identified simply as "Christian." The official (and largest) denomination is the Church of Scotland. It is simply called "the Kirk," and theologically, it is Presbyterian. The next largest group are Catholics. Especially with increased immigration, there are growing populations of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs. There are small Jewish communities, primarily in Glasgow, but as with other groups, observance has fallen off.

Christmas and Easter are the major religious observances. Interestingly, Christmas was banned here in 1640, and was not made a public holiday until 1958. At the time of the Scottish Reformation, Yule celebrations were common among the previously Catholic people. These included bonfires and other activities associated with old Celtic and pagan rites. Plus, the Protestant clergy frowned upon any activities that were extravagant or superstitious. So Christmas celebrations were prohibited. As a result, the Scots found another outlet for their festivities: Hogmanay or New Year's Eve. Even today, Hogmanay is the biggest, most popular holiday of all.

## Language in Scotland

There are three official languages in Scotland. The first is English, which is spoken by more than 99% of the people. The dialect you will hear most often is Scottish English, and sometimes, it is hard to understand! But if you just ask people to speak more slowly, you will catch on. The second most spoken language is Scots, a Germanic language that is related to Old English. The third language, Gaelic, is Celtic in origin. Scottish Gaelic is different than Irish Gaelic. It is spoken by nearly 90,000 people in Scotland, most of which are concentrated in the Highlands and the western islands. But very few people speak only Gaelic.

## Useful Phrases

Scottish English has some colorful slang and expressions that you are likely to hear:

- *Aye* means "yes." *Naw* means "no."
- *Braw* is something that is great or fantastic, as in "that dinner was braw." If it's really, really great, you can say it was *pure barry*.
- *Fitba* is football. And football (in case you didn't know it) is soccer.
- *Haud yer weesht* is a very brusque way to say "be quiet."

- *To go out on the skite* means to have a night on the town, usually fueled by alcohol. Do that, and you might get *steaming* (very drunk.) The next day, you might look a little *peely-wally*, or sickly and pale. In that case, you may want to drink an Irn Bru (pronounced iron brew.) This popular carbonated beverage tastes like bubblegum and orange, and aside from being Scotland's most popular soft drink, it is said to cure hangovers.
- *Haste ye back!* Is what you'll want to do upon leaving Scotland: Come back soon.

## Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

## Scottish Cuisine

Scotland has some of the most creative chefs in the United Kingdom and considering the fantastic pantry they have to work with—with world-class seafood, game and produce—it's no wonder that the country boasts eleven Michelin-starred restaurants. Sixteen products of Scottish origin qualify for the European Union's PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) designation, including Shetland lamb, Orkney Island Scottish cheddar, Scottish salmon, and Scottish whisky. The daily Scottish diet tends to consist of meat, carbohydrates, and fried food. Here are some delicacies that you can sample all over the country:

- **Salt 'n Sauce:** A tangy, brown condiment unique to Edinburgh that's a cross between malt vinegar, brown gravy, and ketchup. This can be found at local fish and chip shops often referred to as **chippies**.
- **Cullen Skink:** A fish soup of smoked haddock, potatoes and leeks. Traditionally, it's made from **finnan haddie**, a cold-smoked haddock from Aberdeen; or **Arbroath smokie**, a hot-smoked haddock.
- **Angus Aberdeen beef:** Rich marled beef often used in roast, stew, or steak.

- **Black Pudding:** A sausage made from congealed pig's blood mixed with oats, fat, and seasonings. It may not sound appetizing, but because it's loaded with protein, potassium, calcium and iron, it's considered a "superfood."
- **Bangers and Mash:** Sausage and mashed potatoes. Sometimes served with something besides pork, such as venison or apples.
- **Lorne sausage:** Square sausages made with beef.
- **Haggis:** Scotland's national dish. It's made from minced sheep's liver, lungs, and heart; mixed with spices and oatmeal; and served inside the stomach lining. It is usually served with **neeps and tatties** (mashed swede or rutabaga and potatoes.)
- **Cranachan:** A rich parfait of cream, raspberries and oats.

Whatever your meal includes, you can toast it with a wee dram of **Scottish whisky**. If you order it in a pub, please don't call it "Scotch." If you ask for it on the rocks, you may get a pitying look along with your ice. To impress your bartender, order a single malt and specify one of the six official Scottish whisky regions: Lowlands, Speyside, Highlands, Campbeltown, Islay and Islands. Then raise your glass and say *slainte-mhath* (pronounced "slange var")—to your health!

## Welsh Cuisine

Just like their language and ancient customs, the people of Wales have proudly preserved their traditional cuisine—much of which was borne out of poverty. Traditional Welsh cooking is linked to the diets of fishermen, farmers, and men who worked in the mines. Lamb, beef, freshly caught fish, and vegetables from the garden figure prominently in Welsh cooking. Popular dishes include:

- **Cawl:** A classic dish of Welsh lamb with leeks and root vegetables>
- **Glamorgan sausage:** A vegetarian sausage-shaped dish made with Caerphilly cheese, leeks, and breadcrumbs.
- **Bara Brith** (speckled bread): A Welsh national fruitcake that starts out by soaking dried fruit in strong black tea overnight.
- **Welsh Rarebit:** Melted cheese on toasted bread, originated in the 17th century as a way to accentuate the local wheat bread and savory cheddar or Caerphilly cheese made in Wales.

Passages from the 1939 novel *How Green Was My Valley* may provide you with a more accurate portrayal of Welsh cuisine: "When we sat down, with me in Mama's lap, my father would ladle out of the cauldron thin leek soup with a big lump of ham in it ... There was everything in it that was good ... and the smell alone was enough to make you feel so warm and comfortable ..."

## English Cuisine

The French used to have a joke about their English neighbors that went something like “other countries know how to cook while the English know how to boil”. Even the Brits themselves would joke about their standard “meat, potatoes, and two veg” meals. But starting in the 90s there was a revival of British classics using fresh ingredients, flavor-boosting “low and slow” cooking methods, and sometimes borrowing elements from other cuisines. As a result, modern British cooking now has many admirers (see the devoted fans of *Great British Bake Off* or the cookbooks of Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay, and Nigella Lawson as proof). Add to this the fact that the UK has a diverse choice of restaurants—Indian, Thai, Italian, French, and Chinese to name a few—and we can say that the English eat very well. Popular dishes include:

- **Bangers and Mash:** Sausage and mashed potatoes.
- **Bubble and Squeak:** A potato and cabbage/brussel sprout dish.
- **Fish and chips:** A well-known meal and is usually bought from special shops (chippies) where the cooked food is wrapped and sprinkled with salt and vinegar.
- **Toad in the Hole:** Sausages served with **Yorkshire Pudding**, a baked pudding made from eggs, flour, and milk or water.
- **Cream Scones:** A baked good served with jam and clotted cream.

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor’s terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop’s contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don’t assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

### Crafts & Souvenirs

#### Scotland

Scotland has many fine local products to choose from, including shortbread, handmade soaps, Celtic jewelry, and bagpipes. There are plenty of items emblazoned with the Scottish flag, Nessie the Loch Ness monster, and golf imagery (since the game was invented here.) If there’s a dog lover on your gift list, consider a memento of Greyfriar’s Bobby. He was a 19th-century Skye Terrier who supposedly stood by his master’s grave in Edinburgh’s Greyfriar’s churchyard—every day for 14 years.

Many of the best souvenirs are wearable, like Scottish cashmere, Harris tweed, quality woolens, Balmoral caps, tams, and tartans (which found on everything from umbrellas to scarves and pajamas.) While the kilt is the quintessential Scottish garment, there are also special accessories that complete the look: a *sporrán* (pouch), *sgian-dubh* (a small ceremonial knife—which might be hard to get back to the U.S. in your luggage), and jaunty knee-high socks. Although women don't wear kilts, they do wear tartan skirts and special shoes known as *ghillie boots*.

And of course, there's whisky (without an "e"), which is so synonymous with Scotland that many Americans call it "Scotch." Not a whisky fan? Scotland is also known for high-quality gin.

## Wales

Popular Welsh souvenirs to bring home are Welsh cheese, Welsh love spoons, Welsh slate (as a coaster, cheese board, or even an engraved decoration), laverbread, Welsh cakes, or traditional wool blankets.

## England

Different parts of the United Kingdom (UK) are known for different specialties. Even if your trip only takes you to one part of the country, you'll find these items for sale throughout. Popular items include umbrellas, Cadbury chocolate bars, Derby-style hats and fascinators, Paddington toy bears, Wedgwood china, orange marmalade, Woods of Windsor soaps and lotions, football team shirts, Wellington boots, Burberry trench coats and accessories, books by British authors, Earl Grey tea, Beatles memorabilia and so much more. You can find all kinds of items emblazoned with Union Jacks, London Underground (Tube) imagery, and images of the royal family.

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

## DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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### United Kingdom

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 94,525 square miles
- **Capital:** London, with a separate parliament in Edinburgh for Scotland, a National Assembly in Cardiff for Wales, and a National Assembly for Northern Ireland in Belfast.
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy
- **Languages:** English, Welsh, Gaelic
- **Location:** Situated off the northwest coast of Europe, the island of Britain is occupied by England, Wales, and Scotland—collectively called Great Britain. Together with Northern Ireland, Great Britain makes up the nation officially called the United Kingdom (UK). England, in the southern part of Britain, is separated from Scotland on the north by the granite Cheviot Hills. To the west along the border of Wales—a land of steep hills and valleys—are the Cambrian Mountains. To the south of England is the English Channel and to the east is the North Sea, which also washes the eastern coast of Scotland. To the west of England is the Irish Sea, mixed to the north with the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Population:** Entire UK 65,105,246 (estimate): England – 55,268,100, Scotland – 5,404,700, Wales – 3,113,200, Northern Ireland – 1,862,100
- **Religions:** Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.) 59.5%, Muslim 4.4%, Hindu 1.3%, other 2%, unspecified 7.2%, none 25.7%
- **Time zone:** Great Britain is five hours ahead of Eastern Time: when it is 6 am in New York, it is 11 am in Wales, England, and Scotland.

#### National Holidays: United Kingdom

National holidays can vary depending on which part of the country you're in; please refer to the section for the specific area that you'll be visiting. The United Kingdom also celebrates a number of national holidays that

follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

### Scotland

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 30,918 square miles
- **Capital:** Edinburgh (regional); Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London

- **Location:** Consists of 32 council areas, occupying the northern part of Great Britain and islands
- **Languages:** English, Scots, Scottish Gaelic
- **Population:** 5,404,700
- **Religions:** None 49.4%, Church of Scotland 24.1%, Roman Catholic 14.5%, other Christian 7.8%, Other 2.3%, Muslim 1.6%, Unknown 0.3%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

## National Holidays: Scotland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Scotland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit **www.timeanddate.com/holidays**.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/02 2nd January Holiday

1st Monday in May Early May Bank Holiday

Last Monday in May Spring Bank Holiday

First Monday in August Summer Bank Holiday

11/30 St. Andrew's Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

## Scotland: A Brief History

We know that various hunter-gatherer tribes inhabited Scotland as far back as 9,600 BC. By 3,000 BC, they used tools, established farming and scattered standing stones all over. You can see some of these Neolithic monoliths on the Isle of Lewis, Shetland, Orkney, and beyond.

The Romans arrived in Great Britain 43 AD, but when they attempted to occupy Scotland, they met fierce resistance from the native tribes, who they referred to as Caledonians. The Romans built several fortifications, including Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. But they were never able to conquer the Caledonians and by 212 AD, they left.

In the wake of the Romans, Scotland was divided into four main kingdoms. The Picts held the northeast, the Scots (from Ireland) established Dal Riata in the west, the Britons occupied the southwest, and the Angles had Bernicia, which eventually morphed into Northumbria and stretched into England. Their rivalries were set aside in the face of a new threat: by 793 AD, Viking marauders arrived, ferociously attacking the monasteries at Iona and Lindisfarne, taking over villages and establishing trading posts. In 843 AD, the various kingdoms united under Kenneth MacAlpin, the first King of Alba. Eventually, his domain became known as Scotland. A nation was born.

When the Normans took over England in 1066, many Anglo-Saxons moved north into the Scottish Lowlands. This is when the Scots began adopting English cultural ways. But when a succession dispute arose, the English King Edward I seized the opportunity to invade and name himself king. This led to the first War of Scottish Independence in which William Wallace, of *Braveheart* fame,

routed the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297. The victory was short lived, as the English returned in 1298, captured Wallace and executed him in 1305. But Robert the Bruce picked up the baton (and the crown), and defeated the English at Bannockburn in 1314. Scotland's independence was assured, but peace was not.

Centuries of conflict with England ensued, often fueled by religion and marked not just by physical violence, but by various English attempts to suppress Scottish culture. The connections between clans were broken, and the chieftains became feudal lords whose rapacity often forced their own people off lands in evictions known as "clearances." In 1707, the two nations signed onto the Act of Union, which united England and Scotland under the same flag and Parliament, but allowed Scotland to keep its own church and legal system. The United Kingdom was born, but again, the bloodshed did not die as years of rebellion continued. The last one, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, culminated with the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

Despite tensions, Scotland's economy was supercharged by the Industrial Revolution. The 18th century saw the Scottish Enlightenment, and Glasgow became a great trading port. Scotland's educational system flourished, and its inventors exported their genius around the world. During World Wars I and II, the Scots' warrior legacy made huge contributions to the Allied War effort.

Following deindustrialization in the 20th century, the Scottish economy hit a wall. Tensions with England continue, manifesting as periodic calls for independence. In 2014, voters rejected a referendum for independence by a slim margin. They may well be reconsidering that decision: only 38% of Scots were in favor of Brexit, and a 2020 poll showed that 52% of voters support leaving the UK, post-Brexit.

## Wales

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 8,006 square miles
- **Capital:** Cardiff (regional); Wales is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London
- **Location:** Consists of 8 counties, occupying the southwestern part of Great Britain
- **Languages:** English, Welsh
- **Population:** 3,113,200
- **Religions:** Christian 57.6%, None 32.1%, Unknown 7.6%, Muslim 1.5%, Other 1.2%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

## National Holidays: Wales

Wales typically celebrates the same holidays as England, in addition to a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar,

such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

## Wales: A Brief History

One of the oldest regions in the world, the area of land occupied by Wales is thought to have been inhabited since about 250,000 BC. Celts began arriving on Britain's shores in about 600 BC. The Romans came in 55 BC, but didn't fully occupy present-day Wales and England until about 60 AD. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, various independent kingdoms sprouted across Britain and were under constant threat by Anglo-Saxon invaders—a period that some say gave rise to the exploits of King Arthur who engaged in battles against them. When the Anglo-Saxons eventually gained control of much of present-day England, remote regions such as Wales clung to their language and customs. And by the sixth century, Wales had developed a unique identity that set it apart from the rest of Britain.

While the Kingdom of England was formed in 927 AD, internecine struggles among various Welsh kingdoms prevented Wales from uniting under a single ruler for very long. After the Norman conquest of England, the Welsh kingdoms gradually came under the sway of the English crown. Then, in the late 13th century, King Edward I conquered Wales and claimed it as a territory of England—and the successors to the English monarch would begin holding the title of the “Prince of Wales” to signify their control of the region.

After a smattering of revolts against English rule were launched by the Welsh in the 15th and 16th centuries, Henry VIII passed laws aimed at incorporating Wales into the Kingdom of England. In 1707 Wales became part of the Kingdom of Great Britain and about a century later (in 1801) was folded into the United Kingdom.

While the British Empire rose and flourished in the 19th century, Wales embraced changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and saw its population rise dramatically. But with the breakup of the British Empire after the Second World War, the industries of Wales also went into a steep decline, eventually giving rise to nationalist sentiments and possible paths to independence.

## England

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 50,346 square miles
- **Capital:** London
- **Location:** Consists of 48 counties, occupying the southern part of Great Britain
- **Languages:** English
- **Population:** 55,268,100

- **Religions:** Christianity 59.4%, Non-religious 24.7%, Unknown 7.2%, Muslim 5.0%, Hindu 1.5%, Sikh 0.8%, Jewish 0.5%, Buddhist 0.5%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

## National Holidays: England

In addition to the holidays listed below, England celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit **www.timeanddate.com/holidays**.

01/01 New Year's Day

1st Monday in May Early May Bank Holiday

Last Monday in May Spring Bank Holiday

Last Monday in August Summer Bank Holiday

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

## England: A Brief History

Prehistoric England was home to Celtic and other tribal peoples, then was ruled by the Roman Empire from about AD 43 to AD 410. After Rome fell, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons established small kingdoms and fiefdoms. When the Viking marauders hit England's shores in the 9th century, many of those small kingdoms were unified by King Alfred the Great of Wessex. Strength in numbers.

Some of England's medieval monarchs stand out for their lasting impacts on history. William the Conqueror brought Norman rule to England in 1066. Richard the Lionheart embarked on the Third Crusade in 1189. King John was compelled to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, laying the foundation for constitutional monarchy.

English King Edward I conquered Wales in 1283 and sought to rule Scotland as well. Those imperial ambitions were not limited to the island of Great Britain—England under Edward III fought the Hundred Years' War with France between 1337 and 1453, ultimately losing all its possessions on the French side of the Channel. Then, between 1455 and 1485, the York and Lancaster families battled for the crown in the Wars of the Roses. The victor, Henry Tudor, who was a Lancaster but through illegitimate descent. He married a York, and their offspring, Henry VIII, became the third Tudor king in 1509.

Henry VIII is best known for his six marriages, the first of which, to Catherine of Aragon, he sought to end through annulment. When the Pope forbade it, Henry separated the Church of England from papal authority and made himself its head. His daughter, Elizabeth I, became queen in 1558 and ruled for 44 years—a golden age of cultural flowering, and the expansion of England's naval prowess.

England fell into civil war between 1642 and 1649, when Oliver Cromwell executed King Charles I and briefly replaced the monarchy with a republic. The monarchy was restored in 1660 with the enthronement of Charles II, though royal power was restored with limitations.

The United Kingdom came into being with the 1707 Act of Union between the parliaments of England and Scotland. Then, by 1714, the first of four King Georges ascended the throne, beginning the Georgian era, a time when England laid the groundwork for Empire. It reached its fruition in the 19th century during the Victorian era, when the British Empire straddled the globe.

During the 19th century, the entire island of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, having been incorporated into the UK in 1801. The Irish however, sought independence, and in 1921, all but the six northern counties of Ulster became the Republic of Ireland—leaving the UK in its present form. But the United Kingdom was still able to call on its crown colonies, protectorates and Commonwealth when it declared war on Germany in 1939. The Battle of Britain and the destructive air attacks known as the Blitz besieged England from July 1940 to June 1941. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, one of England’s most influential statesmen, led the country to victory.

As a popular song of the war years put it, “There’ll Always Be an England.” But what of the United Kingdom? In recent years, the desires of the Scots and Welsh for greater autonomy have led to the process called “devolution.” In 1999, Scotland regained its own Parliament, and Wales established its own National Assembly. In 2014, a referendum was held in Scotland to vote on independence from the United Kingdom, but was defeated.

In 2016, a United Kingdom referendum passed with 51.9% in favor of leaving the European Union. Brexit went into effect on January 31, 2020, with an 11-month transition period, during which the government of former Prime Minister Boris Johnson must negotiate a new EU trade deal. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic the same year, Johnson was faced with serious policy decisions to mitigate civilian casualties. Johnson’s struggles came to a head in July 2022, following multiple scandals, when the former Prime Minister stepped down.

His successor, Liz Truss, was in office from September 6th, 2022 to October 25th, 2022. Two days after her appointment, Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of the United Kingdom for over 70 years, passed. Faced with universal criticism and financial instability, Truss resigned from her position, to be succeeded by Rishi Sunak, who was in office from October 25nd, 2022 to July 5th, 2024. Rishi Sunak called for a general election in July 2024, and lost the election to Keir Starmer, from the opposing Labour Party.

King Charles III was coronated as the King of the United Kingdom and 14 Commonwealth Realms on May 6th, 2023.

## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### Scotland

***Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*** by Robert Burns (2012, Poetry) A collection by the famous Scottish poet who is known for writing in the Scots language, including the famous *Auld Lang Syne*.

***Corrag*** by Susan Fletcher (2010, Historical Fiction) In Glencoe in 1692, 38 members of the Macdonald clan are killed by the redcoats of William III — after they'd enjoyed the family's hospitality for a week. This real-life incident is told from the perspective of Corrag, a young woman who is accused of witchcraft after the event, and imprisoned in Inverary.

**44 *Scotland Street series* by Alexander McCall Smith** (2004, Fiction) Alexander McCall Smith, also known for the bestselling No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series, depicts the lives of colorful residents in an Edinburgh apartment building

***The Crow Road*** by Iain Banks (1992, Fiction) Set in the west Highlands (in a town reminiscent of Oban), this darkly comic tale from one of Scotland's most acclaimed writers touches on themes of love, death, sex, addiction, family and the power of the Scottish landscape. In it, Prentice, a bumbling student, attempts to unravel the disappearance of his Uncle Rory, just one of the eccentric characters in the sprawling McHoan family. The Crow Road is a real road in Glasgow, but the expression "to take the crow road" means you are dead.

***The Scottish World: History and Culture of Scotland*** by Harold Orel, et al (1981, Culture) Ten essays seek to show that Scottish culture is distinctly different from English in its art, architecture, literature, music, and history.

#### Wales

***The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship*** by Elizabeth Mavor (2011, Non-Fiction) A beautifully written account of two 18th-century women who abandoned their aristocratic lives in Ireland to settle in Llangollen, Wales. Wanting to keep their lives private and away from the glare of society, their achievements, intelligence, and wit would instead make them local legends.

***The Matter of Wales: Epic Views of a Small Country*** by Jan Morris (2000, Travel Writing) One of the world's leading travel writers celebrates her native country in this deeply personal study of the architecture, landscapes, and national character of Wales.

***Here Be Dragons*** by Sharon Kay Penman (1985, Historical Fiction). This is the first book in a highly praised trilogy that follows the decline of Welsh kings. Penman skillfully melds history and fiction and brings 13th-century Wales vividly to life.

## England

***A Traveller's History of England*** by Christopher Daniell (2005, History) An entertaining refresher course in English history, from hunter-gatherers to Margaret Thatcher's resignation. Written by a noted British historian and archaeologist

***London*** by Edward Rutherfurd (1998, Fiction) A very ambitious historical novel of London's past, which sweeps from Roman times through the medieval, Elizabethan, Victorian, and Edwardian eras on up to the present.

***All Creatures Great and Small*** by James Herriot (1998, Memoir) A heart-warming book, in which a veterinarian in Yorkshire shares amusing anecdotes about his dealings with animals and their owners.

***Bath*** by Edith Sitwell (1932, History) Sitwell, the famed Bloomsbury writer, provides a fine portrait of Beau Nash, the 18th-century "Master of Ceremonies" who put the city Bath on the Georgian social map. Insightful commentary on the fashions of the day, the development of the city, and the colorful array of politicians, peers, matchmakers, gamblers, artists and con artists who flocked here to "take the waters."

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Scotland

***Mary Queen of Scots*** (2018, Historical Drama) History has cast Queen Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie) and her cousin Mary (Saoirse Ronan) as enemies. This film imagines them as both power brokers and pawns whose mutual admiration is crushed by the misogyny, nationalism and treachery of their courts.

***Macbeth*** (2015, Drama) Evocative Scottish settings, outstanding production values and the timeless themes of Shakespeare's tragedy make this a must-see. Stars Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard bring intensity and depth as Scotland's most famous power couple.

***Trainspotting*** (1997, Dark Comedy/Drama) Danny Boyle's electrifying breakthrough film follows a young heroin addict (Ewan MacGregor) and his outrageous friends as they struggle to score in the underside of Edinburgh. Plenty of black humor and provocative social commentary.

### Scottish TV Shows

***Outlander*** (2014–present, Drama) Based on the novels of Diana Gabaldon, this wildly popular, historical time-travel series begins when a WWII nurse visits Inverness, Scotland, where she is mysteriously carried from the standing stones at Craigh na Dun back in time to 1743. She falls in love with a rebel Highlander, whose Jacobite cause, she knows, is doomed.

***Shetland*** (2013–present, Mystery) Small town life is more complicated than it seems in this acclaimed BBC series. Follow detective Jimmy Pérez as he investigates crime amidst the elemental landscapes of the Shetlands.

## Wales

***The Englishman Who Went up a Hill but Came Down a Mountain*** (1995). Scored with a Welsh choir, this heartwarming tale recounts the experiences of two cartographers who arrive in a Welsh village in 1917. Loosely based on actual events, the film reveals how the Welsh are very different from the English.

***How Green Was My Valley*** (1941). Grab a hankie for director John Ford's Academy Award winning film that chronicles the lives of a 19th-century Welsh coal-mining family.

## England

***All Is True*** (2019, Drama) After the Globe Theater is burned in a fire, William Shakespeare (Sir Kenneth Branagh) returns to Stratford-Upon-Avon and his stoic wife, Anne Hathaway (Dame Judi Dench). Fame is trailing him, as are the ghosts of his past, and the genius for wit and wordplay that he can no longer summon. Also starring Sir Ian McKellen.

***Atonement*** (2007, Drama) On the eve of World War II, a 13-year old girl irrevocably changes the lives of three people when she mistakenly accuses her sister's lover of a crime. The depiction of the manors and manners of the British gentry is at once searing and beautifully evocative. And the war scenes—notably the famous tracking shot on the beaches of Dunkirk—are harrowing. This Oscar winner stars Keira Knightley, James McAvoy and a young Saoirse Ronan.

***Gosford Park*** (2001, Drama) “Upstairs, Downstairs” meets Agatha Christie in this whodunit set in an English country estate in 1932. The powerhouse ensemble cast includes Helen Mirren, Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon, Kelly MacDonald and Clive Owen.

## British TV

***The Crown*** (2016, Historical Drama) A Netflix original drama following Queen Elizabeth II in the mid-20th century as she assumes the throne and the events that follow.

***The Great British Baking Show*** (2010, Reality Cooking Series) Sometimes known as *The Great British Bake Off*, this competition features 12 aspiring bakers from Britain as they take on challenges to create everything from traditional British treats to twists on the classics with their “showstopper” dishes before facing the judges.

***Prime Suspect*** (1991, Mystery) This gritty modern crime drama introduced Helen Mirren to wider audiences as the no-nonsense detective Jane Tennison. The show deals with some dark subject matter, such as crime and alcoholism.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/  
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security**

#### **Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps or Maps.me**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber or Bolt or Grab**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App or Skype or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

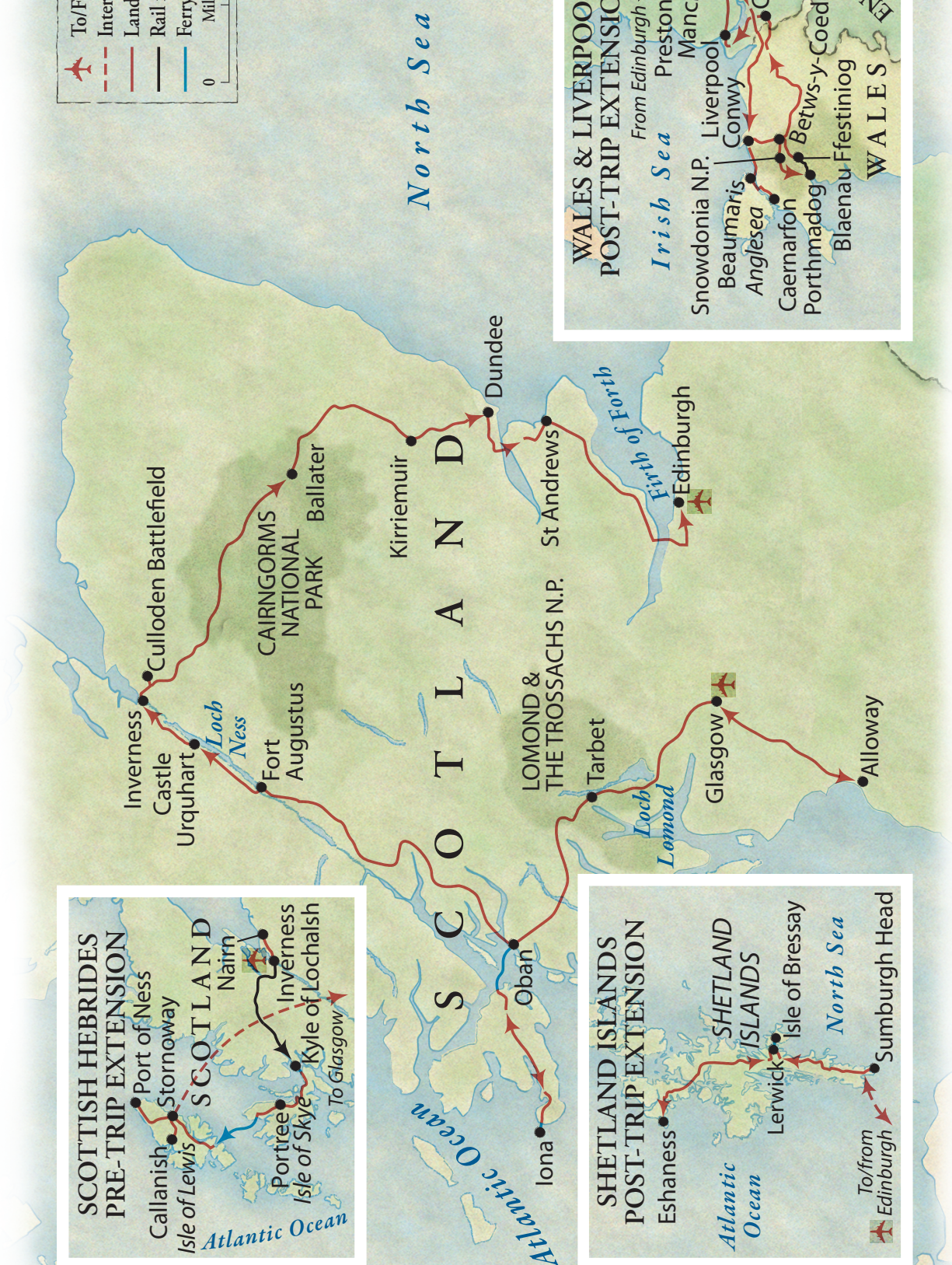
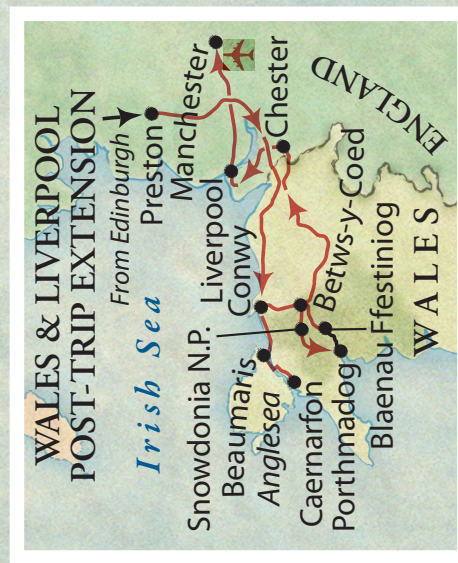
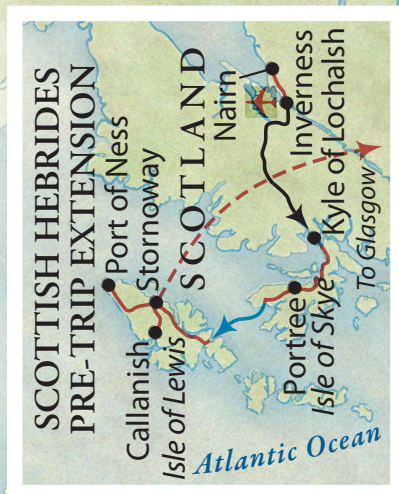
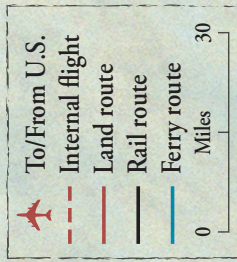
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

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### **Chirpey**

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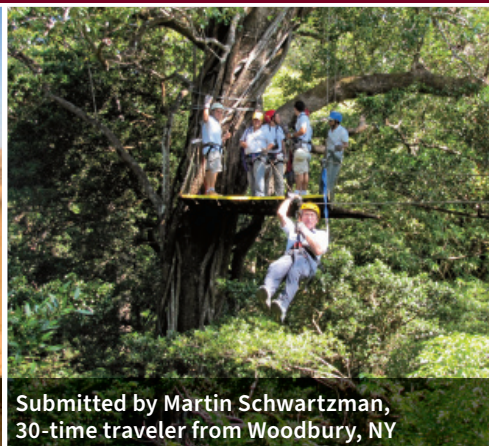
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Submitted by Joy and Don Janke,  
8-time travelers from Stevensville, MI



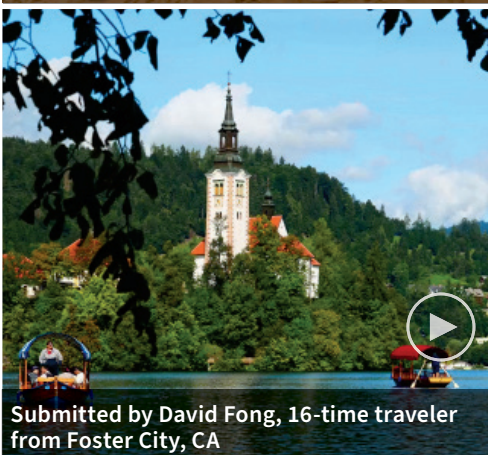
Submitted by Julia Schneider,  
5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



Submitted by Martin Schwartzman,  
30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler  
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler  
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