
**England, Scotland
& Wales**

LAND TOUR

Plus two optional extensions

London; The Scottish Highlands

BSC/BSP 2014

Grand Circle Travel Handbook England, Scotland & Wales

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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, which would be at your own expense.

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

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

Recommended number of blank pages:

This recommendation is based on a “worst case” scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it’s better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Main trip only:** 2 blank “Visa” pages.
- **Pre- and/or a post-trip extension:** Same as the main trip.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at 1-877-487-2778, or visit their website at www.travel.state.gov for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at 1-800-556-9990 for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visa Not Required

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Great Britain (for stays of up to six months).

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. For your convenience, we recommend the services of PVS International, whose address follows. Or, contact your local consulate.

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 6 locations in 11 days, including a 1 single-night stay

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 3.5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 46-73°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- February, March, and November weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones

Transportation

- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach

Cuisine

- Meals will be based on the local cuisine

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition.

Prescription Medications: If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations

We strongly suggest that you consult your family physician at least six weeks before your departure concerning vaccinations and medications that you may need on this trip. Discuss your length of stay at each foreign destination, and be guided by your doctor's advice on what, if any, inoculations you should obtain. At this time, specific vaccinations are not a requirement for entry into Great Britain. Before you talk with your doctor, you can learn the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. Contact them at:

- On-line** — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.
- By phone**— at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

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 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). 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	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit than the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the “Air Travel” section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Carry-on luggage restrictions may vary upon your return from your destination, please consult www.baa.com before traveling.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, 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.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

***Tip:** Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public, which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the TSA's **3-1-1** rule: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly in Europe, as well.

Locking your luggage:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is a resident of Great Britain and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Your Program Director is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour. If you choose to take the optional pre-trip extension to London, you will have the services of a Grand Circle Hospitality Desk Representative for a few hours each day. If you choose to take the optional post-trip extension to the Scottish Highlands you will be accompanied by a Grand Circle Program Director.

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Arrival: At the beginning of your base trip or your optional pre-trip extension, after you have cleared customs and collected your luggage, a Grand Circle representative or driver will meet you and assist you with your transfer to the hotel. Please ensure that your GCT luggage tags are clearly visible on your luggage so they can be easily recognized.

Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your transfer vehicle. Your driver will load your luggage into the transfer vehicle.

Transferring flights at London Heathrow Airport: When making a connecting flight at London Heathrow Airport it is important to **allow a minimum of 75 minutes to transfer from one terminal to another**. In order to ensure that you do not miss your connection, we suggest that you go directly to your connecting flight's gate after arriving in London.

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

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.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

Traveler's checks—not recommended: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. Most banks, post offices, or exchange offices will want to see your passport at the time of exchange. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars not accepted: You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars (in the form of cash or traveler's checks) in Great Britain. Cash can be exchanged in some larger post offices or money exchange offices.

Carry a mix of local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card: You'll be well prepared if you plan on this combination for payments on your trip. You can obtain local currency from an ATM machine at the European airport on arrival (but keep in mind you will need your 4-digit PIN number to do this.)

Currency

The official currency of the United Kingdom is the pound sterling (GBP). One pound (£1) is divided into 100 pence (100p). This legal tender is used throughout Scotland, England, and Wales. Although the U.K. is part of the European Union, it has not adopted the euro for its currency. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, and 50 pounds
- Coins: 1 and 2 pence (copper); 5, 10, 20, and 50 pence (silver); 1 and 2 pounds (silver/gold)

It may be helpful to obtain some local currency before your trip if you are arriving during the weekend or on a bank holiday. You can change money at post offices, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted. In addition you may want to avoid bringing 50 pound notes as these are not always accepted at smaller restaurants, cafes or shops.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Banking Hours

British banks are typically open Monday through Friday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. Some central banks are open Saturday morning.

ATMs and Debit Cards

ATM and debit cards give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency. We recommend, if possible, that you make withdrawals at ATM machines when you need cash, as it will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience without relying on bank hours for money exchanges. When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns.

Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number). Keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

***Note on ATM use:** Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but where and when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted credit cards in the United Kingdom; American Express is not commonly honored. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

***Please note:** Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "OPT Boston" (depending on your credit card company).*

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Travel's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason 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. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

Your purchase decisions are very personal. You must use your best judgment when deciding whether an item is worth the price being asked. If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. In addition, we recommend that wherever possible you carry your purchases home with you, especially if they are valuable or fragile, rather than having them shipped home.

Note that Great Britain levies a 20% VAT (value added tax) on most purchases. You can get a refund for VAT payments, subject to certain requirements, if you spend a minimum of GBP50, retain your tax receipts, and complete a refund document.

By Destination

London

Department stores: These large establishments are the city's most famous shopping institutions. Harrods, 87-135 Brompton Rd., S.W. 1, by many estimates is the largest department store in the world, selling everything from pins to pianos. *Open:* Monday - Saturday 10 am – 8 pm. Sundays 12-6 pm. *Tube:* Knightsbridge.

Selfridges, 400 Oxford St., W. 1, seems almost as big as its chief rival, Harrods. *Open:* Monday-Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 9:30 am - 8 pm, Thursday 9:30 am – 9 pm, and Sunday 12 - 6 pm. *Tube:* Marble Arch or Bond Street.

Liberty, 210-220 Regent St., W. 1, has a worldwide reputation for selling fine textiles in unique surroundings. The pretty, old-world store has a fantastic Asian department. *Open:* Monday - Wednesday and Friday -Saturday 10 am – 8 pm, Thursday 10 am – 9 pm, Sunday 12 – 6 pm. *Tube:* Oxford Circus.

London's shopping areas: The West End, where the mile-long Oxford Street is the main artery, is extremely popular. At its mid-section, Oxford Street is bisected by Regent Street, a more elegant thoroughfare, lined with boutiques, fine china shops, and jewelers. At Piccadilly Circus, Regent Street meets Piccadilly, which, along with St. James's Street, Jermyn Street, and the Burlington Arcade, make up one of the most glamorous shopping regions in the entire world.

Shop hours: London shopping hours are generally 9:30 am - 5:30 pm. You can find late night shopping at Knightsbridge on Wednesdays until 8 pm, and at Oxford Street on Thursdays until 8 pm. Portobello Antique Market is open all day Saturdays. Most department stores are open on Sundays for 6 hours, and most museums and art galleries are generally open on Sundays.

Edinburgh

Princes Street: This boulevard in the New Town is arguably Edinburgh's main shopping area, with several large department stores and dozens of shops selling designer clothes, art works, quality jewelry, home products, and much more. George Street offers serious competition: high end shops and trendy eateries spill out into the side streets here.

The Old Town is also worth strolling through. Perhaps the best two shopping streets in this section of town are Victoria Street and Grassmarket. Both have some unusual shops.

Inverness

The main shopping center is the Eastgate Shopping Centre right in the heart of the city which includes Marks and Spencer's department store, The Body Shop, Next, Thorntons (chocolates & toffees), Boots (pharmacy, photography), Starbucks Coffee, shoe shops, clothing stores, jewelers, etc.

On Academy Street, take a look at the indoor Victorian Market which has shops selling Belgian chocolates, jewelry, needlework, toys, clothes, Scottish souvenirs, etc.

If you are interested in old/second-hand books, old maps and antique prints, then check out Leakeys in the old Greyfriars Hall. They have the largest collection of second-hand and rare books in Scotland. Well worth a visit.

For unusual gifts and greetings cards, check out a shop called Highland Games which sells (amongst other things) novelty chess sets.

If you walk down Bridge Street and cross the bridge over the river, you will see the Highland House of Fraser (formerly known as Hector Russell Kiltmakers) - a great shop for kilts and tartan with a bureau de change. There's also a video and history exhibition plus kilt making demonstrations in the visitor centre.

U.S. Customs Regulations and 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 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.

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—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.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

We're actually fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, which is likely a good thing. To tip or not to tip (and how much to tip if you so choose) is *always* at your discretion. We offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts – which can vary for different services and between countries, and which can be confusing when you're visiting multiple destinations. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should never be used for tips).

- **Program Director:** \$4-\$6 per person per day
(Note: Tips for Program Directors can only be in the form of cash.)
- **Motorcoach driver:** \$2 per person for each half-day tour/\$3 per person for each full-day tour.
- **Local tour guide:** \$2 per person for each half-day tour/\$3 per person for each full-day tour.
- **Housekeeping staff:** \$1 per person per day
(Note: If you are low on local currency, you can use U.S. dollars for tips.)

Your Program Director will tip hotel porters and waiters in restaurants.

Other Tips—Whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion, though your recognition of a job well done will be much appreciated. For those of you who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. The amounts suggested reflect the standard tipping amounts that we recommend on all our programs. If you're not sure how much or when to tip, do not hesitate to ask your Program Director.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light: A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. 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: In today's age of informality, comfortable and informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. Men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.

Warm clothes are needed year-round: Regardless of your travel season, bring a warm layer of clothing, such as a heavy sweatshirt, fleece top, or light sweater. During fall and spring, a jacket is recommended for the colder night temperatures. If you're traveling in the summer, be prepared for warm temperatures, though cool days are still possible. Bring a sweater (or a fleece top), as well as some summery attire and a windbreaker for "in-between" days.

Good walking shoes are essential: The region's magnificent archaeological ruins, cathedrals, museums, and town plazas truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the pathways and rather uneven sidewalks can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler. For your comfort, you'll need supportive walking shoes that offer good traction. Water-resistant shoes can be handy in case a heavy downpour passes through.

Rain gear: Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell—preferably one that is knee length.

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

What not to pack: Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Clothing Options

The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Consider ...

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger (seasonal, June-August)
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Swimsuit if your hotel has a pool
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat (seasonal, June-August)
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (and originals!)
- Extra passport-sized photos (to replace your passport if lost)
- Written prescriptions for your medicines
- Washcloth (**not** a standard amenity in English hotels)

Medicines

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

Optional Gear

- Photos or post cards from home, small gift for home-hosted visit
- Travel alarm or watch with alarm
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Handkerchiefs
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see “Regional Electricity” below
- Travel journal/note pad
- Home address book, e-mail addresses
- Reading materials
- Phrase book

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict what the weather will be during your travels, but you'll find historical averages and general information on the climate of your destinations below. As your departure nears it's a good idea to visit the *My Account* feature of www.gct.com, where you'll find monthly temperature averages for the countries you'll visit as well as a current 10-day forecast of local temperatures and conditions. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts.

England: The weather across England can be unreliable and unpredictable, with lovely sun-drenched mornings regularly turning into damp, overcast afternoons—and vice versa. Still, legends about incessant rain in England are exaggerated. London, in fact, has less rainfall accumulation than Rome, which is known as a sunny city. It's just that in London, the rain is spread over more days. The British capital is very much a city of the temperate zone. With occasional exceptions, London's summers tend to be moderately warm, with few days having temperatures above 75° F; winters as well tend to be moderately cold, with few days dropping below 30° F. Spring and autumn are generally comfortable, with little more than a sweater or light overcoat required. The weather in York is similar.

Wales: Wales typically has a more temperate climate than Scotland and England. Here, spring and fall temperatures average in the upper 50s, summers in the high 60s. As a general rule, Wales is cloudier, wetter, and milder than the eastern side of Great Britain.

Scotland: The variable climate of Scotland is infamous for its consistent ability to change from day to 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 anytime, temperatures could drop and the weather become chilly.

Note on Air Conditioning: In general the British climate does not necessitate air conditioning. As result, the hotels you stay at during your tour do not feature air conditioning.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?												
Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
London, England												
High	44	45	49	54	61	66	71	71	65	58	50	46
Low	34	34	36	38	44	50	53	52	48	44	38	36
Caernarfon, Wales												
High	48	48	50	54	59	63	66	66	63	57	52	48
Low	36	36	37	39	43	46	50	50	48	43	39	36
York, England												
High	35	44	52	54	60	63	69	69	64	58	49	41
Low	26	32	36	37	41	47	53	52	49	42	37	33
Edinburgh, Scotland												
High	43	44	47	51	57	62	66	65	60	54	48	44
Low	33	34	36	38	43	48	51	51	47	42	37	35

Please note: The data cited above reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

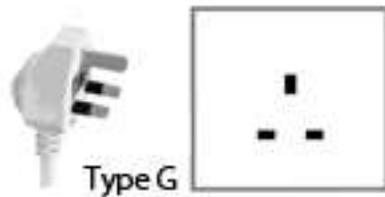
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

The electric current in Great Britain is 220/240 volts AC, 50 Hz. Electrical outlets take a Type G plug.



Even though you'll only need a Type G plug adapter on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, this item will ensure that you are prepared for your current trip as well as future vacations. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representatives will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Accommodations

Your tour features a selection of hotels that have been carefully chosen to reflect both the traditional British style and the more modern. What results is that each new location brings a new experience, and while the older hotels tend to have more individual character, they may not be as up-to-date in terms of facilities. Also, as is common with hotels in the United Kingdom, none of our hotels feature air conditioning, though all feature heating. In general you'll also find that most European hotel rooms are smaller than what you may be used to in the U.S.

Regardless of what type of hotel you are staying in, we assure you you'll be met with a warm British welcome.

Laundry Service

Most of your hotels provide laundry services, though this service is expensive. Your Program Director or concierge can assist you with making arrangements if you need clothes laundered.

Cuisine

The area is traditionally known for 'meat, potatoes and two veg', meals but these days people in the UK are just as likely to eat Italian, Chinese, Thai, Indian, or junk food (including hamburgers and döner kebabs). Vegetarian is normally available. Fish and chips is another well-known meal and is usually bought from special shops (chippies) where the cooked food is wrapped and sprinkled with salt and vinegar. There are lots of traditional regional specialties, including haggis, the Scottish national dish which is made of sheep's stomach stuffed with oatmeal and spices. Haggis is eaten with 'neeps and tatties' (turnips and mashed potatoes).

Other regional dishes include Yorkshire pudding (made with flour and water) and roast beef, toad in the hole (sausages in Yorkshire pudding), and a meat or vegetable soup called cawl, which is eaten in Wales.

Drinking Water

Tap water is generally safe to drink throughout the United Kingdom. However, never drink from a lake, river, or stream, regardless of how clean it might appear.

London in Brief

City Layout

London is frequently described as a “city of villages” that cropped up around the square mile of the first walled Roman city that once stood here. Though most of the walls disappeared long ago, the political autonomy of The City of London still distinguishes it from the surrounding neighborhoods. The City has always been London’s financial center, and it is chock full of tiny lanes and a historic atmosphere. The 32 boroughs of Greater London, which surround The City, comprise over 600 square miles, though thankfully for visitors, the major tourist attractions are relatively close together in the center.

The West End: Situated west of the City to Hyde Park is the lively West End which includes the nation’s thickest grouping of boutiques, stores, restaurants, and theaters. Oxford Street, which runs the length of the West End, vies with nearby Covent Garden and Soho as the most popular site for sightseers and shoppers.

South Kensington and Chelsea: Just beyond the West End, south of Hyde Park, are the stylish residential districts of South Kensington and Chelsea. These areas contain many impressive estates and important city buildings.

The East End: Flanking the City’s eastern side is one of London’s most impoverished areas. Historically, the East End was unappealing because both the prevailing winds and the flow of the River Thames move from west to east. In the plague-ridden days before sewers, life on the “wrong” side of the City was truly perilous for one’s health. Today the East End is still home to indigent immigrants and the capital’s famous Cockneys.

Southwark: The borough of Southwark lies across the river from the City, on the south bank of the Thames. Southwark became notorious as London’s entertainment quarter during Elizabethan times, when theaters and brothels were banned within the City.

Edinburgh in Brief

City Layout

Edinburgh consists of a New Town, dating from the 18th century, and an Old Town dating back to the city’s origin in medieval times. The spine of the Old Town is the famous Royal Mile, comprised of the four linked streets of Canongate, High Street, Lawnmarket, and Castlehill. Holyrood Palace sits at the end of Canongate, next to a hilly park of the same name, while Edinburgh Castle dominates the city skyline from the Castlehill end of the Royal Mile.

Below and to the north of the Old Town lies the New Town, built in the Georgian era between 1766 and 1840. This area is laid out in a neat grid, with George Street running through the middle between the charming parks of Charlotte Square and St. Andrew Square. Paralleling George Street to its south is Princes Street, which has an elegant shopping district and offers fine views of the Old City from the adjoining Princes Street Gardens. Between Princes and George Streets, Rose Street boasts a dense concentration of shops, restaurants, and pubs.

Inverness in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout

The capital of the Highlands, Inverness lies at the mouth of the River Ness as it flows into the Moray Firth in north-east Scotland. It is from this that the city derives its name: *Inbhir Nis* Scots Gaelic for "mouth (or confluence) of the Ness". The river flows from nearby Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal connects Loch Ness, Loch Oich, and Loch Lochy.

Islands in the River Ness, and the river banks form a pleasant series of walks. Buildings in Inverness include Inverness Castle and numerous churches, including St Andrew's Cathedral (Episcopalian). However, the oldest church is the Old High Church, on St Michael's Mount by the riverside, a site perhaps used for worship since Celtic times. The church tower dates from the 16th century, and is Inverness' oldest surviving building. The Castle was built on the site of its medieval predecessor in 1835 and is now a Sheriff Court. St Andrew's Cathedral has a curiously square-topped look to its spires, as funds ran out before they could be completed.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

United Kingdom

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 (2011): Entire UK 63,181,775

Religions: Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.) 72%, Muslim 3%, Hindu 1%, other 24%

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.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/18	Good Friday
04/20	Easter/Bank Holiday
05/05	Early May Bank Holiday
05/26	Spring Bank Holiday
08/04	Summer Bank Holiday (Scotland)
08/25	Summer Bank Holiday (England)
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	Boxing Day

Historical Overview

THE NATION OFFICIALLY KNOWN TODAY AS THE “UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND” is home to the four distinct cultures of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They are intertwined in a rich pageant of history that has been filled with conflict, but has also produced cultural and political legacies that have had lasting effects far beyond the boundaries of Britain.

England was home to Celtic peoples in prehistoric times, then was ruled by the Roman Empire from about A.D. 43 to A.D. 410. After the fall of Rome, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons established small kingdoms, and Anglo-Saxon fiefdoms whose names still endure, such as Wessex, continued for centuries. King Alfred the Great of Wessex unified much of England against Viking invaders in the late 9th century. Among the monarchs who have ruled England in the centuries since, some are particularly notable 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. The relationship between England and Scotland took many twists and turns over the centuries, with Scottish King James VI becoming King James I of England in 1603 (succeeding Queen Elizabeth I). The United Kingdom came into being with the 1707 Act of Union between the parliaments of England and Scotland.

In the meantime, England under Edward III had fought the Hundred Years’ War with France between 1337 and 1453, with England ultimately losing its possessions on the French side of the Channel. Then, between 1455 and 1485, York and Lancaster battled on English soil in the Wars of the Roses. Henry VIII ruled in the 1530s, and his daughter Elizabeth later became the first Queen Elizabeth, who presided over the cultural flowering of the Elizabethan era (1558-1603).

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 monarchy’s power became even further restricted during the reign of William and Mary, which began in 1689. The first of four King Georges ascended the English throne in 1714, beginning the Georgian Era during which England laid the groundwork for Empire. In the 19th century, the Victorian Era brought the globe-girdling ascendancy of the industrialized British Empire under the long reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901.

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. In recent years, the desires of the Scots and Welsh for greater autonomy within the UK have led to the process called “devolution.” In 1999, Scotland regained its own parliament (in Edinburgh) and Wales established its own National Assembly in Cardiff.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

All Creatures Great and Small by James Herriot (Memoir—England)

A heart-warming book, in which a veterinarian in Yorkshire shares amusing anecdotes about his dealings with animals and their owners.

The Citadel by A. J. Cronin (Fiction—Wales)

An absorbing novel about a young doctor's career, from poverty in Wales to success in London. Basis for the 1938 movie and PBS TV series.

The Ladies of Llangollen by Doris Grumbach (Fiction—Wales)

The true story of the "Ladies of Llangollen" of the 18th century, who spurned convention and eloped from Ireland to live together in a Welsh village.

Literary London edited and published by Spellmont Ltd (Travel Writing—England)

A collection of descriptions of London locales written by Conan Doyle, Chaucer, T.S. Eliot, Keats, Shaw, Dickens, and a host of other English literary lions.

London by Edward Rutherfurd (Fiction—England)

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.

The Matter of Wales: Epic Views of a Small Country by Jan Morris (Travel Writing—Wales)

This noted travel writer celebrates her native country: "what is special about it—from rocks and soil to history and religion to the prevailing national character." —*Booklist*

The Scottish World: History and Culture of Scotland by Harold Orel, et al (Culture—Scotland)

Ten essays seek to show that Scottish culture is distinctly different from English (in its art, architecture, literature, music, and history).

A Traveller's History of England by Christopher Daniell (History—England)

An entertaining refresher course in English history, from hunter-gatherers to Margaret Thatcher's resignation. Written by a noted British historian and archaeologist.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – if your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Mrs. Brown starring Judi Dench and Billy Connolly (1997, color) After the death of her husband, Queen Victoria plunged herself into an intense grief that only lightened with the help and support of one of her favorite servants, the highlander John Brown. But a friendship between queen and servant is simply “not done”, and the scandal threatens the Queen's popularity and position. Consider watching this along with ***Young Victoria***, starring Emily Blunt and Rupert Friend (2009, color), for a Victoria double feature.

Gosford Park directed by Robert Altman (2001, color) “Upstairs, Downstairs” meets Agatha Christie in this whodunit set in an English country estate in 1932. A powerhouse ensemble cast that includes British stars such as Helen Mirren, Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon, Kristin Scott Thomas, Stephen Fry, Kelly Macdonald, and Clive Owens.

Bend it Like Beckham starring Parminder Nagra and Keira Knightley (2002, color) Showcasing the “new Britain” (a term used to describe modern Britain's increasing diversity), this light comedy follows Jess, a second-generation Brit of Indian descent who wants to play women's soccer instead of finding the perfect Indian boyfriend.

84 Charring Cross Road starring Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins (1984, color) When a New York book lover stumbles across an ad for a London bookshop that does mail-order, she begins an unlikely transatlantic friendship with the bookseller, located at 84, Charring Cross Road. Set during the late 1940s through the 1960s, the movie shows the changes in both London and New York over the years.

Shakespeare in Love starring Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes (1998, color) A whimsical “could-have-been” take on how a romance might have inspired Shakespeare to write one of his most famous plays. Although not a true episode in Shakespeare’s life, the film does a good job at mixing the bawdy and humorous spirit of Elizabethan times with a modern romance. Written by Tom Stoppard, a famous playwright who has turned to Shakespeare before, turning Hamlet into ***Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead***.

Jane Austen adaptations: Although Austen only completed six novels, her work seems to support an entire sub-genre of British movies. Here are some of the standouts:

Pride & Prejudice – It’s all about who you prefer as Mr. Darcy. The classic 1940 B&W version has Laurence Olivier, the critically-acclaimed 1995 BBC version has Colin Firth, and the lush, romantic 2005 version has Matthew Macfadyen. Chose wisely.

Emma – Both the 1996 version with Gwyneth Paltrow and the 2009 BBC/PBS version with Romola Garai capture the mayhem of Emma’s bungled attempts at matchmaking.

Sense & Sensibility – The 2008 BBC/PBS version got good reviews, but the 1996 version with Emma Thompson (as the sensible Elinor) and Kate Winslet (as romantic Marianne) won an Oscar for its screenplay.

Mansfield Park – Although it strays from the book, the 1999 movie with Frances O’Conner moves the plot along and updates the heroine with a bit of feistiness.

Northanger Abbey – One of Austen’s lesser-known novels the 2007 BBC/PBS version got high marks for keeping some of the humor and the gothic elements.

Persuasion – The 1995 version with Amanda Root and Ciaran Hinds is often cited by critics as the best Austen adaptation – true to the original story but easy for modern audiences to follow.

Additional Inspirations – Austen’s stories have also inspired new stories, such the comedy *Bridget Jones’ Diary* (inspired by *Pride & Prejudice*), the lighthearted *Jane Austen Book Club*, and *Becoming Jane*, which focuses on a particular chapter of Austen’s early life.

British TV: Known for their dry humor and intriguing mysteries, and well-produced period adaptations, British T.V. shows are a fun way to see the Brits as they see themselves. Most shows are available on DVD, or on BBC America, or though PBS.

Keeping Up Appearances – (Comedy) Social climber Hyacinth Bucket (that’s pronounced “boo-kay”) drives her long-suffering husband, motley family, and over-awed neighbors crazy with schemes that always spin out of control.

Monty Python’s Flying Circus – (Comedy) By turns wacky, witty, and surreal, this classic sketch show from the 1970s continues to have a devoted following.

Inspector Morse – (Mystery) Moody and brilliant, Morse solves complicated murders in Oxford with the help of his more-grounded partner Sergeant Lewis. Recently the ITV/PBS has the Lewis character a promotion and his own series with sidekick: ***Inspector Lewis***.

Rumpole of the Bailey – (Comedy/Mystery) The great Leo McKern stars as Horace Rumpole, the defense lawyer who never pleads guilty, jokes in the courtroom, and stands up to Her Majesty’s judges, but can’t get anything past *She Who Must Be Obeyed*, Mrs. Rumpole.

Prime Suspect – (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.

Masterpiece Classic – (Period/Adaptations) A PBS series that showcases adaptations of literary works, many of which are produced by the BBC. Classic novels by Dickens (*Little Dorrit*, *Bleak House*), the Brontes (*Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Height*), and P.G. Wodehouse (*Jeeves and Wooster*) are well-represented. They also showcase original shows set in bygone eras, like the Edwardian drama *Upstairs, Downstairs* and the recent hit *Downton Abbey*, which takes the concept into the countryside and the post-Edwardian era.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS ATMs**

Country information:

www.visitbritain.com **Great Britain (with links to Wales, England, Scotland)**

www.londontheatreticketsservice.com **London theater tickets**

www.123london.com **London**