

Grand Circle Travel[®]

THE LEADER IN VALUE AND WORLDWIDE DISCOVERY SINCE 1958

Your Grand Circle Travel Planning Guide



England, Scotland & Wales

2026

Grand Circle Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

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

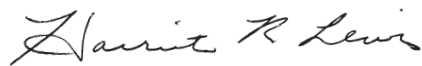
When you travel with us, you will enjoy a thoughtfully designed itinerary that balances unforgettable included discoveries with time for independent explorations. Your experience will be enriched by the company of like-minded American travelers and an **expert, local Program Director**. Assigned to a group of 30 travelers on average, these passionate leaders are ready and eager to share their homeland and insights as only a local can. Whether it is recommending their favorite restaurant, connecting travelers with people and culture, or providing the best regional maps to enhance your leisure time, your Program Director will be available to take care of all the details and ensure that you have a fun and carefree travel experience. 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.

Throughout your explorations, you will experience Exclusive Discovery Series events designed to connect you with local people and culture. From sharing traditional fare and lively conversation during Home-Hosted Visits, to discussing Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, you'll gain an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

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 **1-800-221-2610**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Grand Circle Travel

CONTENTS

ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES

Your Vacation at a Glance:

Where You're Going, What it Costs,
and What's Included **4**

Your Detailed Day-To-Day Itinerary **6**

Pre-Trip Extension **16**

Post-Trip Extension **18**

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel Documents & Entry Requirements... **22**

Rigors, Vaccines & General Health **24**

Money Matters: Local Currency &
Tipping Guidelines..... **27**

Air, Optional Tours & Staying in Touch **30**

Packing: What to Bring & Luggage Limits... **33**

Climate & Average Temperatures **39**

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Culture of England, Scotland, and Wales ... **42**

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs,
Shipping & More **48**

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

United Kingdom **50**

England **50**

Scotland..... **52**

Wales..... **54**

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading **56**

Suggested Films & Videos **57**

Useful Websites **59**

Useful Apps **60**



Edinburgh, Scotland

England, Scotland & Wales

England: London, Bath, York, Lake District | **Wales:** Snowdonia | **Scotland:** Edinburgh

16 days starting from \$4,795

including airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit

www.gct.com/bsc2026pricing

Experience the rich history and diversity of Great Britain with Grand Circle Travel, from cosmopolitan London and the rugged Welsh countryside to Scotland's capital city of Edinburgh and the storybook Cotswolds region, a beloved area of gentle hills with stone walls crisscrossing the landscape. Walk in the footsteps of centurions and soldiers, kings and queens, writers and poets—in a land permeated with legend and romance.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 14 nights accommodation
- 27 meals: 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 8 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 10 included features: 8 guided tours and 2 exclusive Discovery Series events: Home-Hosted Dinner
- Choose to purchase Grand Circle's airfare, and your airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges are included. Or, make your own air arrangements
- Gratuities on your main trip for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- Personal headset for all included and optional tours on your main trip
- Private motorcoach land travel
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- **5%** Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

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

England, Scotland & Wales



ITINERARY SUMMARY

1 • Depart U.S.

2-3 • London, England

Included Tour London

4-5 • Bath

Included Tours Oxford, Bath, Stonehenge

6-7 • Snowdonia, Wales

8-10 • York, England

Included Tours Chester, York

11-12 • Lake District

Included Tour Lake District islands cruise

13-15 • Edinburgh, Scotland

Included Tour Edinburgh

16 • Edinburgh • Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

1 2 3 4 5 Easy

Group Size

- A maximum of 42 travelers, led by a local Grand Circle Program Director

Pacing

- 6 locations in 15 days

Physical Requirements

- Walk 1-2 miles unassisted and participate in 1-2 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs
- Two days of this trip may require 3 miles of walking and 3.5 hours of optional physical activity
- 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

- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

Terrain & Transportation

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 46-73°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- March weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

all with FREE Single Supplements

London, England

PRE-TRIP: 3 nights from **\$1,095**

Scottish Highlands

POST-TRIP: 4 nights from **\$1,595**

England, Scotland & Wales

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *London, England*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive London, England

Day 3 Explore London

Day 4 London • Visit Hampton Court Palace

Day 5 London • Begin main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart from the U.S. today on your flight to London. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Arrive London, England

- Destination: London
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Leonardo Royal London City Hotel or similar

Morning/Afternoon: A Grand Circle representative will meet you at the airport and you will transfer to your hotel, where you'll meet your Program Director and your fellow travelers, including those who took our *London, England* pre-trip extension. After checking in, you'll set out for a brief vicinity walk to acquaint yourself with the area surrounding your hotel.

The balance of the day is at leisure to relax after your overseas flight or do some exploring on your own. You might consider a visit to the Tower of London, one of the city's most iconic structures. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the

sprawling compound has served as a palace, prison, treasury, and more—and is also home to the Crown Jewels.

Before dinner, gather with your Program Director and travel companions for a Welcome Briefing.

Dinner: Enjoy an included Welcome Dinner at your hotel tonight.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Explore London

- Destination: London
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Leonardo Royal London City Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin your England tour with an introduction to London's major landmarks, including Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, on a panoramic drive this morning.

After your tour, you'll return to your hotel by motorcoach—or perhaps you'll want to take a riverboat ride along the Thames to reach the hotel.

Lunch/Afternoon: Yours to do as you please. Your Program Director will be happy to recommend a spot for lunch and free time activities. Perhaps you'll visit one of London's many museums, including the Victoria and Albert Museum or Tate, a family of four galleries.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 4 London • Explore Oxford • Bath

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

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for Oxford, whose university has educated some of the world's most prominent scholars and statesmen.

Oxford University was established in the eleventh century, but there is evidence of structured teaching dating back as far as AD 872. Rather than orienting around a central campus, the University is a collection of more than 38 colleges and buildings spread throughout the city. Oxford is also one of the settings for the *Harry Potter* movies and the *Inspector Morse* television series.

Set off on a walking tour with your Program Director through the city center, passing some of the legendary colleges that have been seats of learning for many prime ministers, great writers, and various scholars, including Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift, and John Wesley.

The University colleges dominate the center of Oxford, as you can see by the spires and the numerous stone walls bordering college buildings.

Lunch: On your own. Your Program Director can direct you to a local pub or restaurant.

Afternoon: You are free to discover Oxford on your own.

Later, we'll travel to Bath, which developed into a prosperous, high-society destination in the 18th century under King George III, and retains its elegant air today. The city's striking architecture and Georgian terraces inspired the setting for Jane Austen's novel, *Persuasion*.

Enjoy free time to relax or explore the city after checking in to your hotel later this afternoon.

Dinner: Included at your hotel this evening.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Explore Bath • Visit Stonehenge

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

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today's discoveries begin with a walking tour of the city with your Program Director, concluding at the iconic Roman baths. Bath is named for the springs that well up in this city, producing about 500,000 gallons of water each day at 120 degrees Fahrenheit. The lead-lined bath, steps, column bases, and edging stones all date from Roman times.

After your tour, you'll have the rest of the morning free to explore Bath independently.

Lunch: On your own. Ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Afternoon: Continue on to Stonehenge, the starkly dramatic stone monument that has engaged the world's imagination for centuries. As one of the world's most recognizable images of a prehistoric culture, Stonehenge creates a powerful impression. In addition to appreciating the unique design and construction, many visitors experience a feeling of uncommon mystery.

You'll return to Bath by early evening, where the rest of the evening is yours to spend as you please.

Dinner/Evening: Enjoy independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 6 Bath • Snowdonia, Wales

- Destination: Snowdonia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Celtic Royal Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel early this morning.

Morning: Begin your transfer toward the Snowdonia region of Wales. Along the way, you'll get a glimpse into rural England before we cross over the border into Wales and stop in a quaint, riverside Welsh village.

Lunch: Enjoy a light lunch at a local tavern.

Afternoon: Continue on your way into the ruggedly beautiful Welsh countryside. The principality of Wales, together with Scotland and England, makes up Britain. Until the time of Norman King Edward I in the 13th century, this was an independent nation whose Celtic people fiercely defended their sovereignty. Welsh identity remains distinct today,

exemplified in the language, which is actually much easier to pronounce than it looks once you learn the sounds associated with the letters.

This afternoon we'll drive through the strikingly scenic and mountainous section of Wales called Snowdonia, which surrounds the region's highest peak, Mount Snowdon. Snowdonia is part of the impressive Cambrian Mountains, which are steep-sided and rugged, presenting some of the most spectacular natural beauty in the British Isles.

You are staying in Caernarfon, a small historic town right on the coast looking across to the Island of Anglesey. Near your hotel is the medieval castle and walls built by the Normans after their conquest of Wales. It was here that King Charles was formally inaugurated as Prince of Wales in 1969.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: Enjoy the evening as you wish.

Day 7 Snowdonia • Optional Welsh Experience tour • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Snowdonia
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Celtic Royal Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Spend the day exploring Caernarfon on your own.

Or, join an optional tour that includes a steam train ride on the Ffestiniog Railway from the coast of Porthmadog into the mountains at Blaenau Ffestiniog. The Ffestiniog Railway is the oldest independent narrow-gauge railway in the world. It was built in 1832 to carry slate but has been carrying passengers since 1864. This route will take you through some of Snowdonia's lush scenery.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Or, if you have chosen to join our optional tour, you'll drive to a local restaurant after disembarking the train, where you'll enjoy lunch together, included as part of your tour.

Afternoon: Today's optional tour continues as you enjoy a guided tour of Penrhyn Castle, a 19th-century neo-Norman fantasy castle built by the renowned Victorian architect Thomas Hopper.

After the tour, you'll drive back to Caernarfon, enjoying the opportunity to admire the mountain scenery of the picturesque Llanberis pass. You'll arrive at your hotel in time to freshen up before dinner.

Otherwise, the afternoon is free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Dinner: You'll be welcomed in by a local family for Home-Hosted Dinner and some of the legendary Welsh hospitality during an Exclusive Discovery Series event.

Evening: Free to make your own discoveries upon returning to the hotel.

Day 8 Snowdonia • Explore Chester, England • York

- Destination: York
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Park Inn York Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart Wales for York via Chester. Upon your arrival in Chester, enjoy a short walking tour with your Program Director of 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.

Following our walking tour, you are free to explore Chester as you please. Ask your Program Director or suggestions.

Lunch: Included at the Refectory in the Chester Cathedral.

Afternoon: Continue on to York after lunch, arriving by late afternoon. Enjoy time to relax or explore on your own before dinner.

Dinner: Included at your hotel tonight.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 9 Explore York & York Minster • Lunch at local community center

- Destination: York
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Park Inn York Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Discover the medieval city of York today on a walking tour with your Program Director, where centuries-old city walls enclose the best-preserved medieval town center in England. York's history stretches back into ancient Roman times, when it was called Eboracum and served as the military capital of northern Britannia. Traces of Roman garrisons built before the fifth century are sprinkled throughout the city.

By the ninth century, Vikings—from what is now Denmark—had succeeded the Romans, calling the town Jorvik and leaving one legacy you'll still see today: the suffix “-gate”—meaning “street” in the old Viking language—in many street names.

You will finish at York Minster for an included visit of this English landmark. Volunteer guides are often available inside the Minster, who can help highlight the history of the cathedral, the largest Gothic cathedral north of the Alps. The stained glass here is magnificent. The cathedral's Great East Window—created by John Thornton of Coventry and completed in 1408—is the largest expanse of medieval stained glass in the world. It is 76 feet tall and comprises 1,680 square feet of glass.

Lunch: After some free time in the Minster, we'll head to a venue in a local church which works to support the local community, where we'll enjoy a simple lunch of local Yorkshire fare.

Afternoon: Yours to do as you please. Your Program Director will be happy to recommend a spot for lunch and free time activities. Maybe you'll take in the Shambles—originally the meat-butcher area of York. The cramped, ancient street now houses a variety of shops, and in some areas it is possible for upstairs residents to stretch out and shake hands across the street.

Or pay a visit the National Railway Museum, one of the world's best museums devoted to the legacy of steam engines and railway memorabilia.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own.

Day 10 York • Optional Whitby & Castle Howard tour

- Destination: York
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Park Inn York Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today is yours to explore at your own pace.

Or, join us for a full-day optional tour to Whitby and Castle Howard. After crossing the heather-clad North York Moors National Park, you'll arrive in Whitby, a key setting for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. You'll visit Whitby Abbey, where, on a clear day, you will have spectacular views over the city itself and the North Sea.

It was from this town that the explorer James Cook first set out to sea, and during the 19th century, Whitby was renowned for creating jet jewelry that was a favorite of Queen Victoria's after the death of Prince Albert.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Or, if you've chosen our optional tour, you'll take time in Whitby to savor an included Yorkshire lunch of fish and chips.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Or, if you've joined our optional tour, your discoveries continue as you head for Castle Howard, one of England's finest stately homes,

still lived in by the Howard family and where much of the filming for *Brideshead Revisited* was done.

Although construction on this Baroque masterpiece began in 1699, it took more than 100 years to complete. Admire its lavish, treasure-filled rooms—including paintings by Rubens and Gainsborough—and perhaps enjoy a stroll in its extensive walled gardens.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 11 York • Transfer to the Lake District National Park

- Destination: Lake District
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hydro Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for the scenic Lake District, England's largest national park and home to 16 major lakes. Set amidst the most mountainous region of England, it has been the inspiration for countless writers, from Wordsworth and Keats to Beatrix Potter.

As you travel towards the Lake District, you'll pass through North Yorkshire, England's largest county and home to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. This scenic landscape of rolling hills, white limestone cliffs, and tranquil pastures is crisscrossed by dry stone walls, built without the use of cement, applying construction techniques that date back to ancient times. Humans have lived and worked these lands since before recorded history, yet it remains one of England's most sparsely-populated regions, its pastoral beauty inspiring literary legends such as the Bronte sisters, who lived here for a time.

Lunch: On your own in Yorkshire village. Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations.

Afternoon: Continue your transfer this afternoon. As you gaze upon the surrounding landscape, perhaps you'll feel the same swell of inspiration that captivated the authors, poets, and artists that birthed the Romantic Movement of the 18th century—and continues to inspire today. In addition to its scenic charms, the Lake District is known for its culinary offerings as well; while you're here, you might sample local specialties such as Cumberland sausage, Grasmere Gingerbread, and Kendal Mint Cake.

Arrive at your hotel in Bowness-on-Windermere late this afternoon, and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

Dinner: Included at the hotel with your fellow travelers.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 12 Explore Lake District • Lakeland Farm visit and sheepdog demonstration

- Destination: Lake District
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hydro Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Visit Lakeland Farm, where you'll learn more about agriculture in the Lake District. You'll also get to see a unique demonstration of the skills and intelligence of the sheepdogs that live and work here every day and learn about how they are trained.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Enjoy an afternoon in Bowness to spend as you please. Perhaps you'll browse the wares of the shops along the town's high street, enjoy some refreshment at a local café, or sit by the lake and relax by the water.

Dinner: Savor an included dinner at a local restaurant overlooking a picturesque marina at the edge of Windermere, where you'll enjoy a meal of local specialties.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 13 Lake District • Transfer to Edinburgh, Scotland

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Apex Grassmarket Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Set off along the road to Edinburgh. During your drive, you'll pass by Gretna Green, Scotland's southernmost town that was once popular with couples desiring to elope and marry. As you cross the border into Scotland, take note of the changing scenery, as grassy pastures give way to the thickly-wooded hills of southern Scotland.

Lunch: You'll stop for an included lunch during your transfer to Edinburgh.

Afternoon: Arrive in Edinburgh and check into your hotel, then join your Program Director for a discovery walk to acquaint yourself with the area around your lodgings.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 14 Explore Edinburgh • Optional Rosslyn Chapel tour

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

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a panoramic tour of Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, the historic center of Scottish culture, commerce, and education. You'll see the unique atmosphere and architecture of Edinburgh's Old and New towns as you pass along the Royal Mile.

Your tour concludes with a visit to Edinburgh Castle, which overlooks the city from a perch atop a long-extinct volcanic plug. A royal dwelling has been located here since the twelfth century, and the castle's St. Margaret's Chapel—the oldest surviving building in the city—dates to this time.

Lunch: Enjoy lunch on your own. Ask your Program Director for recommendations for local restaurants.

Afternoon: The rest of the day is yours to do as you please. Late this afternoon, you may choose to join an optional tour to discover stunning Rosslyn Chapel. Founded in the mid-15th century, Rosslyn Chapel continues to be an active place of worship to this day with services held here weekly. It is famous for its interior of intricate stonework, vibrant stained glass windows, and as the setting for the finale of author Dan Brown's best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*.

You'll enjoy a private tour of the chapel in the company of a local guide, including a chance to take photos of the building's interior—a rare opportunity not normally allowed to visitors.

Dinner: Travelers on tonight's optional tour will enjoy a three-course meal at Rosslyn Chapel's visitor's center, included in the cost of the tour. Otherwise, dinner is on your own.

Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening.

Day 15 Edinburgh • Optional *Royal Scotland* tour

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

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a full day to make your own discoveries. With a variety of world renowned galleries and museums, a Gothic cathedral, and UNESCO-protected architecture, there's sure to be an activity to suit your interests—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Or, join an optional tour to the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, Queen Elizabeth II's beloved home on the high seas. The yacht was decommissioned

in 1997, and now has a permanent home in Edinburgh. Following your explorations onboard, you'll sit down to tea and scones for a true taste of royal life.

Lunch/Afternoon: Yours to do as you please. Your Program Director will be happy to recommend a spot for lunch and free time activities.

Dinner: Toast your journey over an included Farewell Dinner at the hotel with your fellow travelers tonight.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 16 Edinburgh • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your return home today, or continue your guided tour of Scotland with our optional *Scottish Highlands* extension.

END YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Scottish Highlands*

Day 1 Edinburgh • Overland transfer to Inverness

Day 2 Inverness • Traverse the Highlands to visit Isle of Skye

Day 3 Inverness • Optional *Historical Highlands* tour

Day 4 Inverness • Explore Glasgow

Day 5 Glasgow • Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Program Director. 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. We do not accept American Express.

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 include gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers, are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication, and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

Welsh Experience

(Day 7 \$120 per person)

Join an optional tour that includes a steam train ride on the Ffestiniog Railway from the coast of Porthmadog into the mountains at Blaenau Ffestiniog. The oldest independent railway in the world, the narrow-gauge Ffestiniog Railway was built in 1832 to carry slate, and has been carrying passengers since 1864. This route will take you through some of Snowdonia's spectacular scenery.

You'll enjoy an included lunch of traditional Welsh fare, then we'll enjoy a guided tour of Penrhyn Castle, a 19th-century neo-Norman fantasy castle built by the renowned Victorian architect Thomas Hopper.

Whitby & Castle Howard

(Day 10 \$125 per person)

Discover two Yorkshire gems—the town of Whitby and imposing Castle Howard—on this full-day tour. After crossing the heather-clad North York Moors National Park, you'll arrive in Whitby, a key setting for Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Visit Whitby Abbey, where on a clear day you will have spectacular views over the

city itself and the North Sea. You'll take time in this original whaling port to savor an included Yorkshire lunch of fish and chips. Afterwards, head for Castle Howard, one of England's finest stately homes, still lived in by the Howard family and where much of the filming for *Brideshead Revisited* was done. Although construction on this Baroque masterpiece began in 1699, it took a century to complete.

Rosslyn Chapel

(Day 14 \$220 per person)

Explore medieval Rosslyn Chapel, which continues to be an active place of worship to this day with services held here weekly. It is famous for its interior of intricate stonework, vibrant stained glass windows, and as the setting for the finale of author Dan Brown's best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*.

You'll enjoy a late afternoon private tour of the chapel in the company of a local guide, including a chance to take photos of the building's interior—a rare opportunity not normally allowed to visitors. After your tour of the chapel, enjoy a three-course meal at the chapel's visitor's center.

Royal Scotland

(Day 15 \$120 per person)

Step aboard the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, which was launched by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, and has since transported the royal family and various dignitaries on nearly 1,000 trips through the world's oceans. You'll tour the ship, learn about its notable voyages, and cap off your visit with an onboard snack of tea and handmade scones.

PRE-TRIP

London, England

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 3 nights
- » **3 meals:** 3 breakfasts
- » **1 included tour:** Hampton Court Palace
- » **2-day London Transport Pass**
- » Exclusive services of a **Grand Circle Program Director**
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your extension and all optional tours
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Begin your discoveries in the capital—and bustling, historic heart—of England. An included two-day London Transport Pass will give you easy access to the city’s “Tube” (subway) and buses, bringing you to all corners of the city, including iconic sites like the Royal Albert Hall and the British Museum.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on your flight to London. Please refer to your individual air itinerary for exact departure and arrival times.

Day 2 Arrive London, England

- Destination: London
- Accommodations: Tower Hotel or similar

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive throughout the day in London, England. You’ll be met at the airport and transported to your hotel, where you are invited to join your Program Director for a discovery walk of the surrounding area.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 3 Explore London

- Destination: London
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Tower Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: The day is yours to explore London using your included London Transport Pass. Your Program Director will accompany you on a tour of the city’s sights, or, you might choose to set off on your own. Perhaps you’ll journey to Buckingham Palace to view the official residence of His Majesty, the King.

Or you might explore the exhibits at one of London’s many museums. The vast collection of the National Portrait Gallery, near Trafalgar Square, includes the famous Chandos portrait of William Shakespeare. The Tate Britain offers an extraordinary range of five centuries

of British art. The Tate Modern features contemporary art, with changing installations that make headlines around the world.

Lunch/Afternoon: Yours to do as you please. Your Program Director will be happy to recommend a spot for lunch and free time activities.

You might visit the Royal Albert Hall, which was inspired by the early works of the Romans. This large amphitheater is home to some of the world's finest concerts and musical events, and is a true English monument. Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone for the Royal Albert Hall in 1867 in memory of her late husband, Prince Albert.

Or, perhaps you'll visit the Victoria and Albert Museum, a spacious building full of art galleries and artistic displays. Some of the country's great artistic treasures are here. Entry to the museum is free, as is entry to the adjacent National History Museum and Science Museum, both of which are well worth a visit.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 4 London • Visit Hampton Court Palace

- Destination: London
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Tower Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy an included visit of Hampton Court Palace this morning, where you can explore at your own pace on a self-guided tour using audio guides made available at the palace. The estate was leased by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514, and he began rebuilding and converting it into a lavish palace. Hampton Court became

a royal residence when it was turned over to Henry VIII in 1529. A pair of magnificent public rooms remains from Henry's reign: the Great Hall and the Chapel Royal, still a place of worship today. The practical side of royal life is represented by the enormous Tudor Kitchens, the most extensive surviving 16th-century kitchens in Europe, where meals for 1,000 people were once prepared daily. The palace is home to one of the greatest collections of Renaissance paintings in England, housed in the Wolsey Rooms and the Renaissance Picture Gallery. The buildings cover six acres, and there are also more than 60 acres of gardens.

After your tour, you'll have the choice to transfer back to your hotel in the late afternoon, or stay behind in this discovery-rich neighborhood of London to make your own discoveries.

Lunch/Afternoon: Yours to do as you please. Your Program Director will be happy to recommend a spot for lunch and free time activities.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 5 London • Begin main trip

- Destination: London
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Join fellow travelers arriving for your *England, Scotland & Wales* vacation and begin your journey.

POST-TRIP

Scottish Highlands

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 4 nights
- » **5 meals:** 4 breakfasts and 1 dinner
- » **1 included tour:** Isle of Skye
- » Exclusive services of a **Grand Circle Program Director**
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your extension and all optional tours
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Discover the stunning landscapes and undiminishable spirit of Scotland with a four-night tour of the highlands region. You'll delve into the secrets of Loch Ness; discover Inverness, the thoroughly modern city with strong ancient roots; and behold a land teeming with history and pride.

Day 1 Edinburgh • Overland transfer to Inverness

- Destination: Inverness
- Accommodations: Kingsmills Hotel or similar

Morning: Conclude your *England, Scotland & Wales* itinerary this morning as you depart Edinburgh and head for Inverness, stopping along the way at The Kelpies, a pair of nearly 100-foot high horse head statues honoring the equestrian heritage of Scotland.

Lunch: On your own a Highlands town—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Arrive in Inverness late this afternoon, and enjoy the rest of the day to spend as you choose.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 2 Inverness • Traverse the Highlands to visit Isle of Skye

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Kingsmills Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Due to the rural nature of the roads in this part of Scotland, today's drive to Skye will take approximately 2.45 hours. After an opportunity for lunch on Skye, our return journey will be along a different route, with a similar journey time.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for the Isle of Skye, traversing the Highlands as you journey along the famed Loch Ness, a fabled lake of many moods—from

the sultry to the serene. Beneath its placid surface, the occasional sturgeon has been spotted. And who hasn't heard the tale of the Loch Ness monster, often spoken of but seldom seen? The legend of "Nessie," though never proved to be real, has a long history. Its first reported "sighting" was in AD 565.

Not all the wonders of Loch Ness are beneath its surface, however. The area also hosts a vibrant bird population, acting as a flight path for sea birds migrating between the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. It is common to see buzzards circling above the banks of the loch, and eagles, though more rare, do make an occasional appearance. Also seen from time to time are the increasingly rare ospreys out fishing for a quick bite or two.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Continue exploring this beautiful region of Scotland. You'll pass Eilan Donan before crossing to the Isle of Skye by bridge (this bridge opened in 1995). The Isle of Skye is considered the jewel of the Inner Hebrides. Often referred to in Gaelic as *Eilean a' Cheo* (The Misty Isle), Skye beckons with its jagged mountain ridges, placid inlets and bay, and charming villages.

Natural beauty is in full abundance here, especially in the form of the Cuillin Mountains, a favorite destination of climbers and hikers alike. These commanding heights can be appreciated at a distance, too, as you journey indented coastlines that wind through verdant hills and moors and through history-rich villages. You may catch a glimpse of local wildlife, so watch for oystercatcher birds.

Arrive back at your hotel late this afternoon.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 3 Inverness • Optional *Historical Highlands* tour

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Kingsmills Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today is yours to enjoy at your own pace.

Or, join us on an optional *Historical Highlands* tour to grasp a sense of the past that is so inseparable from this region's identity. We visit Culloden Moor, scene of the last major battle fought on mainland Britain. The final Jacobite uprising, and their efforts to restore the House of Stuart to the British throne, ended here on April 16, 1746, when Government forces led by the Duke of Cumberland crushed the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

Your visit includes entrance to the Visitor Centre, which offers an in-depth account of the Battle from both the Jacobite and Government perspective. You will also have time to visit the Battlefield and reflect on the clans who lost their lives in the battle.

Our tour also takes us to the 16th-century Brodie Castle, the historic seat of Clan Brodie, one of Scotland's influential families. The castle is today owned by Scotland's National Trust, and much of the interior is carefully restored and preserved to resemble things as they might have been in the heyday of the clan. Hear about the heritage of daffodils at Brodie Castle, which today is home to the National Collection of Brodie Daffodils, first started by the 24th Laird of Brodie in the mid 1800s.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations. Or, if you’ve chosen to join our optional tour, you’ll enjoy an included light lunch at Brodie Castle.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries. Inverness, the capital of the Highlands, is a thoroughly modern town with ancient roots and will no doubt entice you with its array of offerings.

Clan Donald is said to have burned the town at least seven times, while Bonnie Prince Charlie’s forces destroyed the fort here in 1745. Peace prevails today in the city’s most welcoming environment.

Dinner/Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening, with dinner on your own. Ask your Program Director for restaurant recommendations.

Day 4 Inverness • Explore Glasgow

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Sandman Signature Glasgow or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Travel to Glasgow through the scenic landscapes of Glencoe, Loch Lomond, and Trossachs. You’ll also pass through the town of Fort William, which is magnificently set against the shores of Loch Linnhe and rolling mountain scenery.

Lunch: Stop for an independent lunch during your transfer to Glasgow.

Afternoon: Arrive at our hotel and enjoy some free time.

Dinner: Included at your hotel tonight.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Glasgow • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: This morning, your Grand Circle Program Director will see you off from the hotel for your transfer to the airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Historical Highlands

(Day 3 \$105 per person)

Join us for an optional *Historical Highlands* excursion to grasp a sense of the history that is so inseparable from this region’s identity. First, travel to Culloden Moor, scene of the last major battle fought on mainland Britain, where Prince Charles Edward Stuart’s army was quelled by the Duke of Cumberland, ending the Jacobite uprising in 1746. Today, fortifications

that played a pivotal role in the battle have been reconstructed to give visitors a sense of how the battlefield would have looked centuries ago, and the award-winning visitor center gives insights into the climactic battle.

Next, visit Brodie Castle, once the home of one of Scotland’s ancient clans. Originally built in the 12th century, the castle suffered a major fire in 1645 and was later rebuilt, but some elements of the original construction

still remain, including the lime-harled tower house. The castle halls also house a collection of furniture, porcelain, and paintings from a bygone era, giving a look into noble Scottish life as it once was.

Conclude your optional tour with a light lunch in the castle's tea room, prepared with fresh, locally-grown ingredients.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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 vacation.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Pre- and/or a post-trip extension:** No additional pages 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**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Traveling with a minor may require certain documentation for border crossings. For further detail on the required documentation, please contact the local embassy or state government.

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

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

Please review the information below prior to departing on this trip. We reserve the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.

GROUP SIZE

- A maximum of 42 travelers, led by a local Grand Circle Program Director

PACING

- 6 locations in 15 days

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 1-2 miles unassisted and participate in 1-2 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs
- Two days of this trip may require 3 miles of walking and 3.5 hours of optional physical activity
- 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
- We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 46-73°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- March weather can be unpredictable and change quickly

Health Check

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential to fully enjoy your trip. 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 itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. (You can use the “Keep Your Abilities in Mind” on the previous page as a guideline to discuss with him or her.)
- You may want to have a dental exam before your trip. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling.
- 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.

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** (Select “Find International Travel Information” then select “Country Information”; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Your Health Abroad” 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 **1-800-321-2835**, 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; however, it may be processed differently than your tap water at home, so you might not like the taste or it may feel “heavy” in your stomach.
- Bottled water is widely available for sale.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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 recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need pounds instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like 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 some hotels, 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.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards, or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

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. To make it easy for you to budget, we have quoted the amounts in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars.

- **Grand Circle Program Director:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your GCT Program Director at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$7–\$10 per traveler for each day their Program Director is with them. *Please note that tips for your Program Director can only be in the form of cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Program Director 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.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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).
- **Customized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.gct.com/myplanner under "My Reservations".

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased air with Grand Circle Travel, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Arrival:** Once you arrive, you'll need to collect your luggage and clear customs. A Grand Circle Representative will meet you outside of customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel or ship. Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the baggage claim 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.
- **Flight Delays:** Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the regional Grand Circle office (their number will be in your Final Documents) in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff is not notified of flight rerouting, and our local representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.
- **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 GCT travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

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 **1-800-321-2835**.

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**

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your vacation 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 Program Director 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 Program Director 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.gct.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 Program Director 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	The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags. Please keep in mind that even if your airline allows more weight than this, the real limiting factor is your motorcoach in the U.K.
Size Restrictions	Your suitcase can be up to 62 linear inches (length+width+depth), which is the same as a normal U.S.-size suitcase. But your carry-on for the bus will need to be smaller than usual; it cannot exceed 22in x 14in x 9in. (Because the overhead compartments are smaller than on a plane.) Fortunately, you can also bring one personal item onto the bus, such as an umbrella or purse.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as the main trip.	

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS

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.

Luggage rules: 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.

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. Portage 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. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit www.travelite.org.

- **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 the UK 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 is likely. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.
- **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. Aboard ship, you’ll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.

What to Bring

We have included suggestions from Program Directors and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

Your accommodations will supply soap, body wash, and shampoo/conditioner. If you prefer a certain brand you may want to bring your own, but otherwise you can rely on what they provide. **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.

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
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ 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, body soap, 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

Optional Gear

- ☐ Travel alarm
- ☐ Compact binoculars

- ☐ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ☐ Washcloth
- ☐ Travel-size tissues
- ☐ Basic sewing kit
- ☐ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ☐ Electrical transformer and plug adapter
- ☐ Reading materials
- ☐ Travel journal/note pad
- ☐ Swimsuit, if your ship/hotel has a pool or whirlpool
- ☐ Addresses for postcards
- ☐ Photos, small gift for Home-Hosted visit
- ☐ Phrase book
- ☐ Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates
- ☐ Travel hair dryer: Many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version.

Home-Hosted Visits

It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all Grand Circle vacations include a home-hosted visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity

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

Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Great Britain 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, smartphones, 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

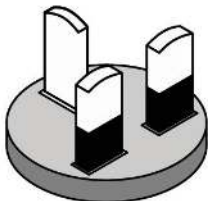
The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on 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

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 and Bath 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.

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** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

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

MONTH	LONDON, ENGLAND			BATH, ENGLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # Days with Rainfall
JAN	45 to 34	90 to 80	23	45 to 37	88	19
FEB	46 to 34	90 to 74	19	46 to 37	86	17
MAR	52 to 37	91 to 68	21	50 to 40	82	18
APR	57 to 39	90 to 60	20	54 to 41	79	17
MAY	63 to 44	90 to 59	18	61 to 46	77	15
JUN	69 to 49	90 to 61	18	64 to 52	77	15
JUL	73 to 53	91 to 59	17	68 to 55	78	16
AUG	73 to 53	94 to 64	18	68 to 55	79	15
SEP	59 to 44	93 to 72	21	63 to 52	81	15
OCT	59 to 44	93 to 72	21	55 to 46	86	20
NOV	51 to 39	92 to 78	22	50 to 41	89	20
DEC	46 to 35	90 to 82	22	45 to 37	90	19

MONTH	CAERNARFON, WALES			YORK, ENGLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	47 to 41	-	18	45 to 34	84	7.3
FEB	47 to 40	-	15	46 to 34	81	5.9
MAR	49 to 41	-	14	50 to 37	78	4.9
APR	52 to 44	-	15	55 to 39	74	5.6
MAY	57 to 48	-	13	61 to 44	71	6
JUN	61 to 52	-	12	66 to 49	73	5.5
JUL	64 to 55	-	13	70 to 53	73	7.1
AUG	65 to 56	-	13	69 to 53	74	6.9
SEP	62 to 54	-	15	64 to 49	76	5.9
OCT	57 to 50	-	18	57 to 44	78	6.4
NOV	52 to 46	-	20	50 to 38	82	6.6
DEC	48 to 41	-	17	45 to 34	84	6.9

MONTH	EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	44 to 34	86 to 80	14
FEB	45 to 34	86 to 75	10
MAR	48 to 37	86 to 68	12
APR	53 to 39	87 to 65	10
MAY	58 to 44	87 to 65	11
JUN	63 to 48	86 to 64	10
JUL	67 to 52	88 to 66	10
AUG	66 to 51	90 to 66	11
SEP	62 to 49	89 to 69	10
OCT	55 to 43	88 to 74	13
NOV	49 to 39	87 to 79	13
DEC	44 to 34	87 to 82	13

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Your Program Director

During your exclusive Grand Circle vacation, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. He or she 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 trips, 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 a Program Director throughout your vacation.

Culture of England, Scotland, and Wales

They may be united under the same monarch, use the same currency, and speak the same language, but England, Scotland, and Wales have distinct national identities that have been shaped by their history and heritage. People in Scotland and Wales tend to think of themselves as "Scottish and British," or "Welsh and British," while those in England are just British—who live in what is by far the largest and most populous of the four countries (when you add in Northern Ireland) that make up the United Kingdom.

The British are often portrayed as reserved and unemotional, always maintaining a stiff upper lip. And there is some truth in the stereotype. It emerged during the hardships of the two World Wars, when they were meant to put their emotions aside, come together as a nation, and "keep calm and carry on." Yet while they do tend to keep a lid on their emotions (and sometimes remark on the brash, forward behavior of Americans), humor is an important aspect of British culture. Often it's a subtle form of sarcasm delivered in a deadpan manner that doesn't translate well across cultures, especially to Americans—but then George Bernard Shaw and others always said that Britain and America were "two nations separated by a common language."

While English is spoken by approximately 98% of the population in England, Scotland, and Wales, regional accents and dialects abound, and languages such as Scottish Gaelic and Welsh are still spoken by many people. And in England, regional accents vary so much from south to north that even the British themselves can get confused.

The Church of England, a Christian Protestant faith, is the official state-sanctioned religion in the UK, although the role of the church in Britain has been in steep decline. Now, less than half the population attends church services or professes a belief in God. While Christianity remains the dominant religion, a large immigrant population has given rise to religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, and Buddhism.

Politeness, reserve, and restraint are the watchwords of the English, who take great pride in their country's lengthy and rich history. The Scots may be even more passionate about their history and heritage—from haggis, Burns and bagpipes to ancient clans and colorful kilts—and doggedly guard against any attempt by England or anyone else to change it. Outwardly aloof, Scots are actually deeply sentimental about their family and heritage. And except for matters of religion (a centuries-old Catholic-Protestant rift), they are largely free of social elitism (a rigid class system still exists somewhat in British culture). And in case you were wondering, you really shouldn't ask a Scot what he wears under his kilt.

Known as the land of song, Wales conjures images of castles and daffodils, rugby and sheep, Dylan Thomas and Tom Jones. Even though they've been a part of the United Kingdom for more than 400 years, the people of Wales have managed to keep their own language, literature, and traditions largely intact. And they are intensely proud of that heritage. It is said that the two greatest passions of the Welsh are rugby and singing—and at a rugby match they do both. Just try to remember that the Welsh do not like to be referred to as British.

When engaging with locals in England, Scotland, and Wales (or anywhere else for that matter), religion and politics are issues to be avoided. Jokes about the royal family or attempting to mimic a British accent are also not advisable. But perhaps the most important caveat is that you should never try to push ahead in a line—for in England, the queue is sacred.

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.

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.

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 ..."

London in Brief

City Layout and Details

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: Stretching from 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.

Local Transportation

Bus and Underground ("tube"): Bus stations and tube stops abound in London, making it relatively easy to get across this vast city. The tube generally runs every few minutes from about 5:30 am to midnight (7:30 am to 11 pm on Sunday). In addition, some lines have an overnight service called "Night Tube" on Fridays and Saturdays. You can pick up a handy tube map, distributed free at all station ticket windows. While London's comprehensive tube transport network may seem intimidating at first, it is surprisingly easy to navigate, and can feel very familiar after just a few rides. However, be aware that certain stations involve going up and down lengthy stairways; others provide escalators. You can access the tube using a contactless credit or debit card. If you do not have a contactless card, you will need to purchase a paper ticket in the station. Hold on to your subway ticket throughout the ride; you must insert it in a turnstile to exit the subway.

Taxicabs: You may opt to take a cab once or twice. Metered cabs may be hailed on the street (when "for hire" sign is lit) or ordered by phone. A 10% to 15% tip is usual for a cab ride. Expect an additional charge for travel after 8 pm, and on weekends.

On Foot: London can be a somewhat confusing city to negotiate. It seems as though no two streets run parallel, and even locals regularly consult maps. But in the winding streets of The City and in the tourist area of the West End, there's no better way to go. Don't forget that cars drive on the left, and look both ways before stepping off the curb. Also, cars have the right-of-way over pedestrians; take care even when the light seems to be in your favor.

Edinburgh in Brief

City Layout and Details

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.

Festivals

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

Commonly referred to as “The Tattoo,” Edinburgh plays host to hundreds of musicians, pipers and drummers, singers and dancers at the annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo festival, including the Massed Pipes and Drums and the Massed Military Bands. The festival takes place for three weeks, typically during the month of August, with a different line up of entertainment and performers each year. From traditional Scottish costumes and bagpipes to theatrical performances and fireworks displays, this festival has become an international sensation.

Because this festival attracts international attention with over 200,000 visitors, we strongly recommend that you purchase tickets in advance if you are interested in experiencing this unique performance at the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade. To purchase tickets, please visit **www.edintattoo.co.uk/tickets**. You will have the option to purchase tickets online for a specific date and time, as there are many performances over the course of the three week festival.

More information about The Tattoo is available at **www.edintattoo.co.uk**.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe

The Fringe is the largest arts and culture festival around the globe, featuring thousands of performances in theater, comedy, dance, opera, circus, music, and more. Lasting for 3-4 weeks and usually held during the month of August, the events range from free performances and exhibits to ticketed events. To find out more about the specific events and buy tickets for performances, visit their website at **www.edfringe.com**.

Inverness in Brief

City Layout and Details

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.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your vacation. 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 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. If the shop is outside the country, you should 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 the standards you are used to, 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

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.

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.

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 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

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**.

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.

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.

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.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

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."

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.

Suggested Films & Videos

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.

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.

Useful Websites

Grand Circle Forum (tips from previous travelers)

www.gct.com/forum

Grand Circle Frequently Asked Questions

www.gct.com/faq

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

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
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

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, 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

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

TripWhistle

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

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

ALIX for One

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

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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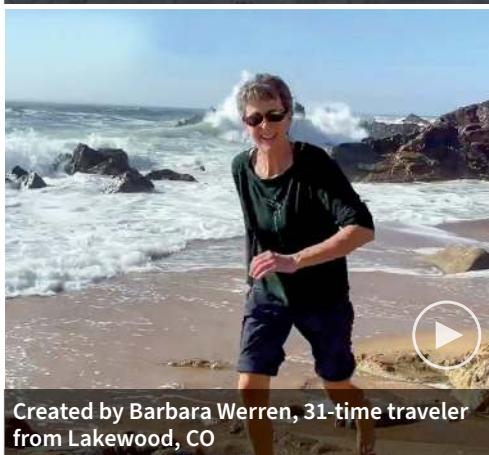
Submitted by Paul Motyka, 11-time traveler
from Acton, MA



Submitted by Kay Gevedon, 3-time traveler
from Mt. Sterling, KY



Submitted by David Woods, first-time
traveler from Rockport, TX



Created by Barbara Werren, 31-time traveler
from Lakewood, CO



Created by Sharon Fleury, 8-time traveler
from Poughkeepsie, NY



Created by Susan Karski, 5-time traveler
from Wimauma, FL



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