

Travel & Driving Guide

United Kingdom

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Touring the UK By Car

The United Kingdom consists of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and has been a favorite destination for visitors from across the globe for centuries. Although small in size, the UK is widely varied in all of its aspects. The UK's landscapes vary from wild moors, lush forest, mountainous terrain, craggy coastlines and pristine beaches. Its people are a unique melting pot of different cultures, each blended together with their own histories and traditions. The whole of the United Kingdom is full of heritage, historical monuments, ancient ruins, magnificent castles and cathedrals and brilliant gardens and parks. The cities of the UK are bustling, full of life, fantastic local cuisine, great nightlife, museums and galleries.

With so much to interest every traveler, a self drive holiday is the perfect way to see as much of the UK as you wish. The UK has an excellent road network that will take you to all the famous sites, as well as allowing you the freedom to uncover some undiscovered treasures as well. This guide is aimed at the traveler that enjoys the independence, comfort and flexibility that comes with their own vehicle. We've included information you'll need for your self drive holiday, such as the rules of the road, rental FAQ's, even congestion charge information, as well as some great ideas on touring the many different regions in the United Kingdom.

Tips in Driving In the UK

- **Drive on the LEFT hand side of the road. The driver sits on the right hand side of the car.**
- **Familiarize yourself with your rental car and its controls before you leave the depot.**
- **Observe the speed limits. Speed cameras, hand held devices and portable speed detection devices are used by patrolling police to catch speeding drivers, and hefty fines are issued for excessive speed.**
- **Don't Drink and Drive! The maximum blood alcohol level is 0.08%, and DUI drivers can face hefty fines or imprisonment. So be smart, don't drink and drive.**
- **Be aware of U-Turners. Drivers are permitted to execute a u-turn or a 3 point turn on any UK road unless it's expressly forbidden.**
- **When driving rural roads, be patient. You may get stuck behind a slow moving vehicle but don't try to overtake on narrow winding roads.**
- **Some country roads are too narrow for two cars to pass, so make use of the shoulders, where one driver can move to the side of the road and give way to oncoming traffic.**
- **Keep your headlights on during the day, especially on country roads and in foggy or misty conditions.**



Driving Laws in the UK

- Unless otherwise indicated, the speed limits in the UK are:
 - City: 30mph
 - Country roads: 40-50mph
 - Single Lane Highways: 60mph
 - Double Lane Highways: 70mph
- **Seat belts:** You and your passengers must wear a seat belt at all times, including children over the age of 14.
- **Child Safety:** Children must be properly secured in an appropriate Child Safety Seat:
 - * Up to 30 lbs (birth to 9-12 months): Rear-facing baby seat.
 - * 20—40 lbs (9 months to 4 yrs): Forward facing child seat.
 - * 35—50 lbs (4-6yrs) : Forward facing child seat or booster seats.
 - * 50—80 lbs (6yrs and up): Forward facing child seat or booster cushions.
 - * Up to 11 years and under 54 inches: children must be seated in a child seat booster cushion or seat.
 - * 12 years up: a seat belt must be worn.
- It is illegal to talk on a mobile phone while driving in the UK.
- **Motorcyclist must wear a helmet.**
- **Park only where it's permitted.** Check to see if there are parking meters where you will have to 'pay and display' the parking receipt on your car's dashboard. Otherwise you run the risk of heavy fines and clamping in major cities.



London Bridge

Insurance

Car Rental companies in the UK will normally include:

- **Third Party insurance:** Compulsory insurance that will be included in your car rental rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle, and is normally included in prepaid car rental rates. Rentals are normally subject to liability deductible, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car.

Min & Max Age Requirements

Min Driving Age: Usually 21; however in some regions the minimum age is 25.

Young Driver's Surcharge: Drivers aged 21-22 years may be charged from £15+tax per day, drivers aged 23-24 years may be charged £11+VAT per day.

Max Driving Age: The majority of locations in the UK do not have a maximum driving age, however there may be restrictions for drivers aged 70-75 in some regions. In some cases, aged drivers may be required to hold a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with Auto Europe for further details.

License Requirements

A full driving license is required to drive in the UK. All drivers must have held a full valid driving license for a minimum of one year. North American residents are not required by law to have an international drivers license, although it is recommended since an international license holds more credibility with the local traffic police than your home driving license. Contact Auto Europe for further information.

Parking

In major cities, parking zones are differentiated by colored zones.

- **Blue Zones:** short term (1 to 1½ hours)
- **Green Zones:** longer periods (2 to 4 hours)
- **Red Zones:** parking not permitted at any time.

After parking restrictions have been lifted you can park on streets with single yellow line after 6pm, but you cannot park on streets with double yellow lines.

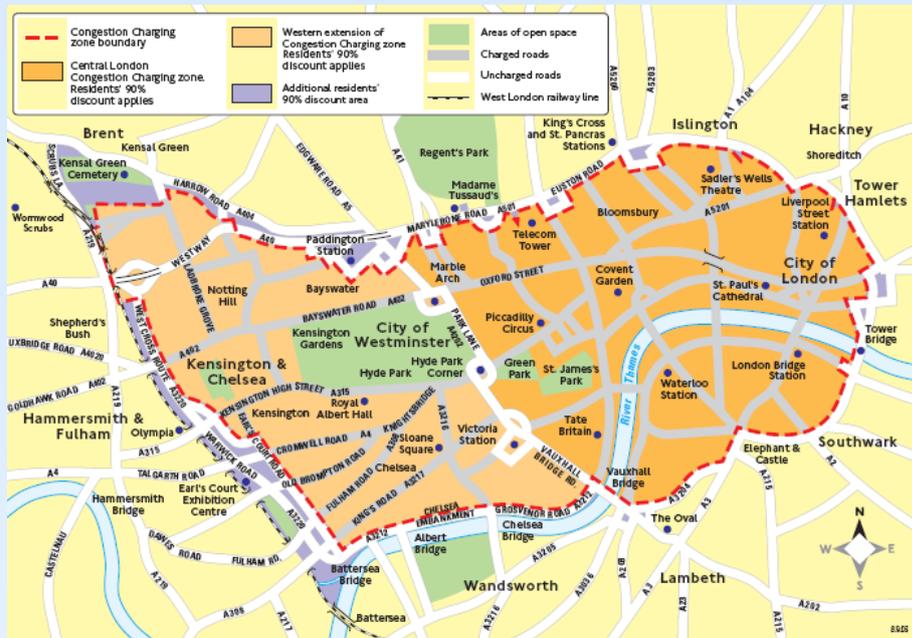
Car Fuel

Most vehicles in the UK run on gasoline, however many of the cars run on diesel. At gas stations, gasoline is sold as either Four Star at the red pump, or Unleaded at the green pump. There's an increasing number of electric or electric-petrol combined and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) available.



Rural Road, Lakes District

UK Congestion Zones and Road



The congestion charge is a fee charged to those that drive their vehicles within certain cities and towns during periods of peak demand to help reduce traffic congestion and reduce pollution. So far in the UK, London and Durham currently charge congestion fees.

Since 2007, the London Congestion Charging Zone has included the areas of; Bayswater, Notting Hill, North and South Kensington, Knightsbridge, Chelsea, Brompton, Belgravia, Pimlico, Victoria, St James, Waterloo, Borough, City of London, Clerkenwell, Finsbury, Holburn, Bloomsbury, Soho, Mayfair and parts of Marylebone. The daily charge for driving or parking within these areas between 7.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday is £8. For more information, visit www.cclondon.com

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

Traveling between England, Scotland and Wales:

Normally there are no additional fees to travel between these mainland countries, and one way rental will not incur an international one way fee between countries within the UK. However some suppliers may charge this fee. Travel to islands such as Isle of Man, Isle of White, Shetland Islands and Orkney Island is allowed with no additional charge, however travel to the Channel Islands will often incur an extra fee. One way rentals to these islands are not permitted. Check with Auto Europe when you book to find out further information.

Traveling between Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland:

Depending on the supplier, car rental companies will sometimes charge a Cross Border Fee from €25-€30 to travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland. Some companies require drivers attain written permission from the rental supplier to travel into Northern Ireland, as well as Wales, England and Scotland, and may face substantial fines to travel to other countries without permission. The cost to travel from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland will vary depending on the car rental supplier and often depends on the length of the time spent abroad, and can range anywhere from nil to £135. Check the details of your car rental before you book to ensure that you're aware of any additional charges.

One Way Car Rentals:

There may be additional charges to collect from one city and drop off in another within the same country, depending on the cities involved. Some companies will not permit international one way rentals from Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland, and for one way rentals from Northern Ireland to Rep of Ireland fees vary anywhere from £100-£300, so before you book find out any other additional charges from Auto Europe. Remember that you may not be covered by insurance if you travel to another country without the car rental company's permission.



UK Car Rental FAQ's

What kind of car should I rent for my holiday in UK?

This depends on where you're traveling, how many people are traveling and the style of driving you intend to do. Cars range from small (economy, compact) to larger size cars (intermediate, full size), to convertibles and luxury vehicles. For short trips with fewer passengers opt for the smaller cars; for longer trips with the family then a larger car, van or SUV would be more suitable. There are plenty of car rental options to choose from; it all depends on your personal needs.

How do I figure what car is right for me?

You can use the ACRISS system to show you which car will suit your needs.

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain		E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Special		
		X = Special		



Can I rent an automatic car in UK?

Yes, however automatics are generally more expensive than manual cars.

Will I be able to collect my rental car direct from the airport once I arrive, or will I have to take a shuttle bus to the depot?

The majority of car rental companies have desks at both international and domestic airport terminals, and many will have a shuttle bus that will take you direct to your rental vehicle. Check with Auto Europe before you arrive to find out the details to collect the car.

Are there additional fees to collect my rental car from UK airports?

Auto Europe's car rental rates usually do include the airport or 'premium location' fees for car rental collections in the UK. Check on your prepaid voucher to make sure that this is included.

What about collecting my rental car from downtown locations in the UK?

Downtown, airport and railway locations are all considered premium locations, and as above these fees are included in Auto Europe's 'inclusive' car rental rates.

Do I need a credit card to collect my car rental?

Yes. Car rental suppliers will usually freeze the deductible of the vehicle (from £550) which will be refunded to your credit card when the rental car is returned at the end of the rental. Some suppliers refund the deposit via a check that is mailed to the renter's residential address.

Can I collect my rental car in one UK city and drop it off in another UK city?

Yes, this is certainly possible, but in most cases there may be a one-way fee payable when you collect your rental. Check with Auto Europe before you travel to find out any additional costs. In most cases, there are no fees for one way rentals within mainland UK.

More UK Car Rental FAQ's

I'd like to visit the island of Ireland on my holiday then return it to United Kingdom. Is this possible?

This is possible. Most car rental companies will permit travel to Northern Ireland with little or no fee, however travel to the Republic will incur an additional fee, anywhere from £60 for the rental. Check with Auto Europe for further details.

Can I collect my rental car in mainland UK and drop it off in the Republic of Ireland?

Most suppliers will not permit international one ways from mainland UK to the Republic of Ireland, however one way rentals from mainland UK to Northern Ireland is permitted with a substantial one way fee (min £500). This will depend on the car rental supplier. Check with Auto Europe when you book your car rental.

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance deductible is the maximum amount you are liable for. In the UK, the base amount of deductible begins at £550.

Should I rent GPS for driving in the UK?

GPS rentals are available from Auto Europe. Our rates include the GPS and full country mapping. The GPS is de-livered direct to your home or travel agent before you depart. GPS units can also be requested direct with some suppliers, however this will be at their own rates.

What do I do if I want to extend my car rental while I'm in the UK?

Once the car rental has commenced you can call Auto Europe toll free at 00-800-223-5555-5, who will arrange the car to be extended and you will be charged the additional days based upon the current rate with Auto Europe.

United Kingdom Regions

London

Southeast: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex

Southwest: Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

East England: Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

East Midlands: Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northampton, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire

West Midlands: Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands County, Shropshire, Staffordshire

Yorkshire & Humberside: Yorkshire and Lincolnshire

Northwest: Liverpool and Manchester

Northeast: Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley

Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland



London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom and is one of the world's largest financial centers, alongside New York. London is the dynamic, multicultural and historically vibrant epicentre of Europe. Whether it's festivals, fashion, food, fun or film you're after, you will find it all in the sprawling metropolis of London, and then some! The sheer scale of London ensures visitors a never ending supply of sites to see and cultures to experience. Be entertained at Knightsbridge and Soho, be charmed by the bountiful green places and Royal Parks and unwind at a traditional, cosy English pub in one of the undisputed greatest cities in the world.

What's On...

January:

- *New Year's Day Parade. Thousands of people line the streets of the city of Westminster to watch the 10, 000 or so participants.*

February:

- *Chinese New Year celebrations.*

March:

- *London Book Fair.*

May:

- *Chelsea Flower Show.*

June:

- *Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships from late June through to early July.*

July:

- *Great British Beer Festival.*

August:

- *Notting Hill Festival.*

September:

- *Chelsea Antiques Fair.*

October:

- *London Film Festival.*
- *Trafalgar Square Festival.*

November:

- *Christmas Lighting Ceremonies.*

Best Things to See & Do

Tour Buckingham Palace - Tickets start from around £17 for an adult ticket.

Visit Big Ben - One of London's most loved landmarks.

Tour the many Museums and Galleries - Visit the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert, Sir John Soane's Museum or the Natural History and Science Museum.

Visit Trafalgar Square - One of Britain's most popular visitor attractions.

Spend an afternoon in the parks - Stroll through Westminster, Holland, Hyde, or Regent's Parks.

Stroll through the famous street markets - Take a trip to the Camden Market, Portobello Market or the Greenwich Market.

Visit the Westminster Abbey - Attend the Evensong service and see the remarkable Abbey choir sing, or simply tour the spectacular interior.



Westminster Abbey, London

Self Drive Tours around London

London to the New Forest

To get to the New Forest from London take the M3 directly out of London and then head along the M27. The drive will take you approximately one and a half hours. Once you get there, visit the New Forest National Park which is the smallest National Park in Britain, stroll through the historic streets



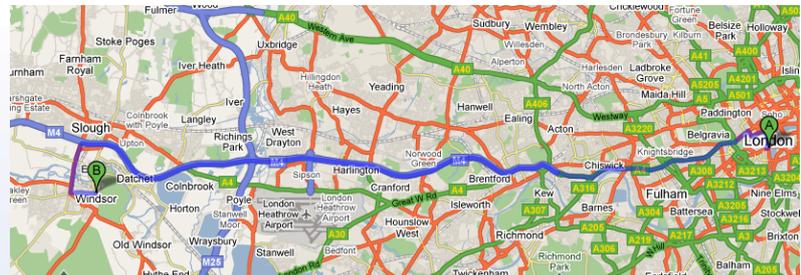
of Hythe Village or visit the Calshot Castle. If you're looking for something slightly more adventurous, why not head to the New Forest Water Park.



London to Windsor

For the perfect day out, take a leisurely drive along the M4 down to Windsor. The trip will take you under an hour and on arrival you will be spoilt for choice of things to do. Stroll through the historically quaint streets, take a half day boating trip along the river and

finish the day by visiting the famous castle. The Windsor castle is the largest inhabited castle in the world and is still used as an official residence by the British Monarch. Queen Elizabeth II spends most of the weekends at the castle entertaining for both private and state functions. After a tour of the castle, stop at one of the many restaurants and cafes for a bite to eat before heading back to London.



Windsor Castle

Southeast England

The Southeast region of England consists of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex. Almost all of these regions are within a two hour drive from the center of London, and are firm favorites among Londoners and seasoned visitors alike. With gorgeous seaside towns, vibrant lifestyles, cities built around world famous universities and rich culture and history, the southeast of England has something to offer every traveler!

Best Things to See & Do

Brighton & Hove, East Sussex

Brighton Beach – Fantastic restaurants, bars and clubs in a top seaside location

Visit the Royal Pavillion – Magnificent palace created by King George IV

Walk on Brighton Pier – Buskers, fish & chips, cool shops and fresh salt air.

Oxford, Oxfordshire

See the famous Oxford University – Explore the wonderful architecture and gentle spires in the University buildings.

Shopping in Oxford – Go to Oxford's Covered Market, with everything from clothes to books to food, or hit the High Street for unique boutiques and shops.

Visit an historic pub – Have a pint at the Crown, or the Old Parsonage Hotel that were patronised by famous literary greats.

Canterbury, Kent

Visit the Canterbury Cathedral – This magnificent cathedral dates back to 597AD, with beautiful stained glass and is the home to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

See St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury – These remains are World Heritage listed.

Canterbury Castle – See the ruins of the Norman castle built in the 11th AD.

Dover, Kent

Walk along the White Cliffs of Dover – The scenic North Downs Way will take you along the low hills along the coast.

Visit the Dover Castle – See the castle that has a 2,000 year old history, as well as holding a pivotal role in WWII.

Windsor & Eton

Visit Windsor Castle – See the historic and largest occupied castle in the world, and the official residence of the Queen of England.

Take a tour of Eton College – See where Princes William and Harry were educated

See Frogmore House – This elegant property is the final resting place for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

What's On...

February:

- **Brighton & Hove Half Marathon**

March:

- **Oxford Literary Festival, Oxford**
- **Easter festivals, Canterbury** – Held over March & April
- **Torpids Rowing Race, Oxford** – College rowing race

May:

- **Brighton Festival, Brighton** – Three week festival with concerts, parades and street entertainers.
- **Canterbury Half Marathon**
- **Eights Week, Oxford** – Main event of inter-college rowing races

June:

- **Classic Car Run, Brighton**
- **Cowley Road Carnival, Oxford** – Oxford's largest festival
- **Stour Festival, Canterbury** – 10 day music festival

July:

- **Kent Beer Festival, Canterbury's Merton Farm**
- **Tour de France** – Cyclist ride from London, finishing in Canterbury in early July

August:

- **Reading Festival, Berkshire** – International music festival
- **Classical Proms, Oxford** – Open-air classical concert
- **Herne Bay Festival, Canterbury** – Music, fireworks and street parades
- **Zippo's Circus, Brighton & Hove**

September:

- **Windsor Festival** – Annual festival held over 7 days.
- **Hop Hoodening, Kent** – Traditional English festival

October:

- **White Night, Brighton** – Illuminations, city tours and street performances
- **Canterbury Festival, Kent**

November:

- **Veteran Car Run, Brighton**
- **Bonfire Night** – Held beginning of November across southeast England
- **Euro Fair** – Held late November across Canterbury, a massive Christmas market

Brighton Pavilion

Self Drive Tours in Southeast England

Brighton to Portsmouth

This route follows the coast from Brighton to the town of Portsmouth. Begin this tour from the seaside town of Brighton & Hove, and follow the A27 west through Worthing, East Preston and Littlehampton, and up to Arundel. Stop here to check out the 11th century castle and cathedral, as well as quaint museums, tea rooms and antique shops.

Drive down to Littlehampton and along the coast to Bognor Regis, and then back onto the A259 to the town of Chichester. Pick up the A27 and head west along to the city of Portsmouth. This lovely town is rich in naval and cultural history, and it's worth a visit to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the Spinnaker Tower and the Southsea Castle. Outside of Portsmouth is the Portchester Castle, which is a well preserved Roman fortification that is worth the five minute drive from town.



Arundel Cathedral



Tour the Colleges

Follow this drive to see England's two most famous universities, Oxford and Cambridge. Begin in Oxford, where you'll be able to tour the university and its extensive grounds. Head north on the A44, stopping off in the small town of Woodstock which is home to the stately home of Blenheim Palace and is open to the public. Drive north east along to the town of Northampton, which is home to the Guildhall and holds one of Britain's oldest markets as well as having its own university.

From Northampton follow the A428 through Bedford and onto Cambridge. This wonderful town is home to Kings College, Queens College and Trinity colleges, to just a few. Explore the colleges, as well as the beautiful parks, gardens, many museums and churches.



Christ Church College, Oxford

Southwest England

The Southwest of England has long been regarded as one of the most beautiful regions in Britain. This region consists of Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. The Southwest provides magnificent scenery, wild moors, great beaches, stunning coastlines, charming villages and vibrant cities. All this, along with history and heritage like no other! Perfect for the self drive holiday.

What's On...

March:

- *Somerset Spring Festival of Food & Drink*

April:

- *Apr – Sept: Classic Cars on the Prom, Seafront, Bournemouth*
- *World Heritage Day, Bath*

May:

- *Salisbury International Arts Festival*
- *Bath Dance Festival, Bath*
- *Mayfest, Bristol*
- *Dragonboat Regatta, Gloucester*
- *Cheese-Rolling Race, Gloucestershire*

June:

- *Glastonbury Festival, Somerset – World famous music festival*
- *Exmouth Summer Festival*

September:

- *Jane Austin Festival, Bath*
- *Cornwall Food & Drink Festival, Lemon Quay, Truro*

October:

- *British National Surfing Championships, Fistral Beach, Newquay*
- *Falmouth Oyster Festival, Falmouth, Cornwall*

November:

- *Fireworks and Guy Fakes Celebrations – Weymouth, Gloucester, Bournemouth and Bristol*
- *Bath Mozart Festival, Bath*



Best Things to See & Do in Southwest England

Bristol

See the Clifton Suspension Bridge – Stroll across this amazing bridge and enjoy the views of the Avon Gorge.

Take the family to the Bristol Zoo Gardens – See over 450 species of wonderful animals from around the world, set in 12 acres of gardens.

Get scientific – Discover Explore-At-Bristol and explore the amazing hands-on Planetarium.

Shop til you drop – Visit Cabot Circus, Broadmead and the Mall Bristol for brilliant retail therapy.

See the world's first great ocean liner – Explore Brunel's SS Great Britain.

Enjoy the nightlife – Eat out at waterfront restaurants, bars or visit the trendy bars on The Strip.

Gloucestershire

Visit Berkeley Castle – Fantastic medieval fortress, and place where King Edward II was murdered.

Drive around Cotswolds – Discover the gentle hill country, and visit gardens and lovely historic houses.

See the Gloucester Cathedral – See the beautiful honey colored lime-stone cathedral in the heart of Gloucester.

Somerset

Visit World Heritage Listed Bath – See the Roman Baths and Pump Room, and even soak in the Thermae Bath Spa. See the Bath Abbey and the Royal Crescent as well.

Glastonbury – See the Tor and the Abbey

Cheddar Gorge – Explore the caves, go on bat patrol.

Exmoor National Park – Enjoy the peace of deep valleys, sparkling rivers and high sea cliffs, maybe even spot some wild red deer.

Wookey Hole Caves – Visit great caves and see the home of the infamous Witch of Wookey.

See Wells Cathedral – Magnificent cathedral dating back to 12th century and built in English Gothic style.

Dorset

Uncover fossils and prehistoric remains – Explore the Jurassic Coast, with steep white cliffs and stunning countryside hiding historic gems.

Explore historic Dorset village

Drive across the sweeping countryside – See thatched villages, ancient sites and magnificent coastline.

Wiltshire

Visit Stonehenge, Amesbury – This prehistoric monument surrounded by the remains of domestic and ceremonial buildings, is a World Heritage Site.

See 800 years of history – Visit beautiful Salisbury Cathedral and see the tallest spire in Britain.

Bowood House and Gardens, Calne – See the magnificent 18th century house complete with paintings and art works, and fantastic landscaped garden.

Devon

Visit Dartmoor National Park – Walk, hike or camp in this wild, craggy landscape.

Catch a wave – Go surfing at Croyde or Lynmouth.

Discover sea faring history – Explore Plymouth, where the historic Mayflower first departed, as well as the stunning natural harbour and surrounding wild moor lands.

Cornwall

Visit the Eden Project – See the giant biomes (greenhouses) and experience rainforest, desert and temperate climates in the one area.

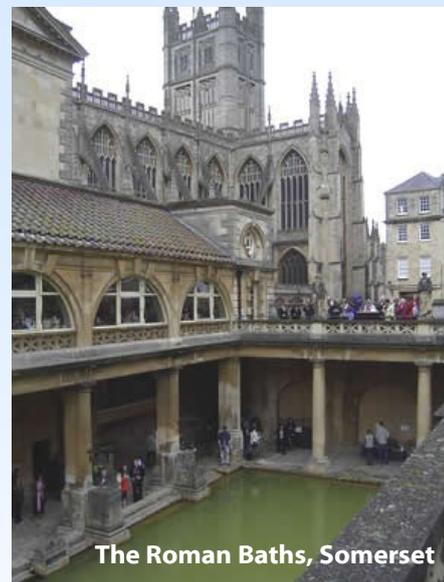
Discover seaside villages – Fishing ports, whitewashed houses, sweeping bays and granite breakwaters.

St Michael's Mount – Visit the castle and church on this iconic island, which is only accessible by foot at low tide, or by boat at high tide.

Have a day at the beach – With over 320 miles of magnificent coastline, with sandy beaches and great scenery, you're sure to find a great spot to spend the day.

Isle of Scilly

Take a boat tour around the island archipelago – Visit Tresco Abbey Garden at Tresco, The Halangy Down Ancient Bronze Age Village or the Isles of Scilly Museum on St Mary's.



Self Drive Tours around Southwest England

The Jurassic Coast

Discover all the wild beauty and majesty of the Jurassic Coast, as well as uncover some hidden prehistoric gems along the way. Begin this tour in the town of Exmouth and follow the South West Coast Path which is a national trail to the town of Bournemouth. Along the way you'll be able to stop to search for fossils from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. Visitors are permitted to collect fossils that have washed out of the cliffs and bluffs, and the areas around Lyme Regis and Charmouth are recommended due to the high level of erosion.

Or if you prefer the less inquisitive trip, why not just sit back and enjoy the ride, take in the majestic scenery, the white cliffs and the picturesque views along the way!



Durdle Door, Jurassic Coast

London to Bristol

Many city dwellers follow this route to escape the trappings of London and unwind by the seaside, while enjoying the picturesque scenery along the way. Take the M4 out of London and head to Reading on the confluence of the River Thames and the River Kent, which is home to two universities, the Abbey Ruins and the Forbury Gardens, plus great pubs and restaurants. Follow the A33 to Basingstoke, then onto the A303 along to Amesbury. This is the home of world famous Stonehenge, so stop for an hour or two and explore the surrounding countryside.

Back on the road, drive past lush countryside on the A36, then north into Bath. Explore the magnificent Roman Baths, have lunch in a quaint English pub, see the Bath Abbey or just stroll the medieval streets with historic terraces and wonderful shops. Only a short half hour drive north west is the vibrant city of Bristol. Drive over the Clifton Suspension Bridge, explore the Avon Gorge, explore the dynamic harborside or stroll through Old Bristol.



Stonehenge, Amesbury

East England

The lush rural landscape of Eastern England consists of the regions of Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. This region lies to the northeast of London, and maintains an unspoiled atmosphere among its sprawling countryside and waterways. East Anglia is home to medieval villages, quaint hamlets, university towns and Edwardian seaside resorts, as well as sparkling rivers and fens, rich farmland and rolling hills. Discover some of the ancient ruins, soaring spires in magnificent cathedrals and market towns in East England, all at your own pace!

What's On...

February:

- *Snowdrop Season, Cambridge - Spectacular spring flowers at Anglesey Abbey*

May:

- *Stilton Cheese Rolling, Cambridge - Fun day held in historic town of Stilton*

- *Cambridge Beer Festival, Cambridge*

June:

- *Strawberry Fair, Cambridge - Festival marking the beginning of summer*

July:

- *Cambridge Shakespeare Festival - Outdoor performance of famous Shakespeare plays in Cambridge*
- *Big Day out, Cambridge - Outdoor music festival*

August:

- *Jazz and Brass in the Park, Cambridge - Jazz and brass bands play at outdoor venues.*
- *Fenland Country Fair, Stow-Cum-Quy village, Cambridge*

September:

- *Chariots of Fire Race, Cambridge*

November:

- *Cambridge Music Festival, Cambridge*

Best Things to See & Do

Cambridgeshire

Visit the historic colleges – See Kings College and Kings Chapel, St Johns College, Queens College and Trinity College, as well as their surrounding gardens in Cambridge.

Explore the Sedgwick Museum – One of the oldest of the university museums.

Walk along the Backs – The gardens on the river Cam behind the colleges.

Rowing – Take up a punt on the river Cam.

Norfolk

Visit Norwich – See Norwich Cathedral, Dragon Hall and Norwich Castle.

Explore The Broads, Norfolk – Visit the UK's largest protected wetlands.

Head to Great Yarmouth – This is one of England's most popular seaside resorts, with nice beaches, entertainment and attractions.

Essex

Visit Colchester – This is Britain's oldest town, see Colchester Castle, the Zoo and Carter's Vineyard.

Suffolk

Explore Ipswich – Unwind in green open spaces, visit the Christchurch Mansion and the Victorian wet dock with waterfront restaurants and bars.

Drive through the Stour Valley – Discover pretty villages and stunning rural scenery.

Visit Bury St Edmunds – See the beautiful Georgian architecture, ancient ruins and powerful history.

Hertfordshire

St Albans – Explore the Roman Wall, St Albans Cathedral, Hatfield House and the medieval clock tower in this beautiful Georgian town.



Trinity College, Cambridge

Self Drive Tours around East England

Cambridge to Ipswich

This route takes in the beautiful countryside and elegant towns of Eastern England. After you've seen the universities and cathedrals, parks and rivers of Cambridge, head east on the A11 to Newmarket. This small market town is a great spot for equine enthusiasts, as it's the home to the National Horseracing Museum, the National Stud and is the head quarters of the British Jockey club. Driving further on eastward you'll come across Bury St Edmund with the lovely Abbey Gardens and St Edmundsbury Cathedral that are worth visiting.

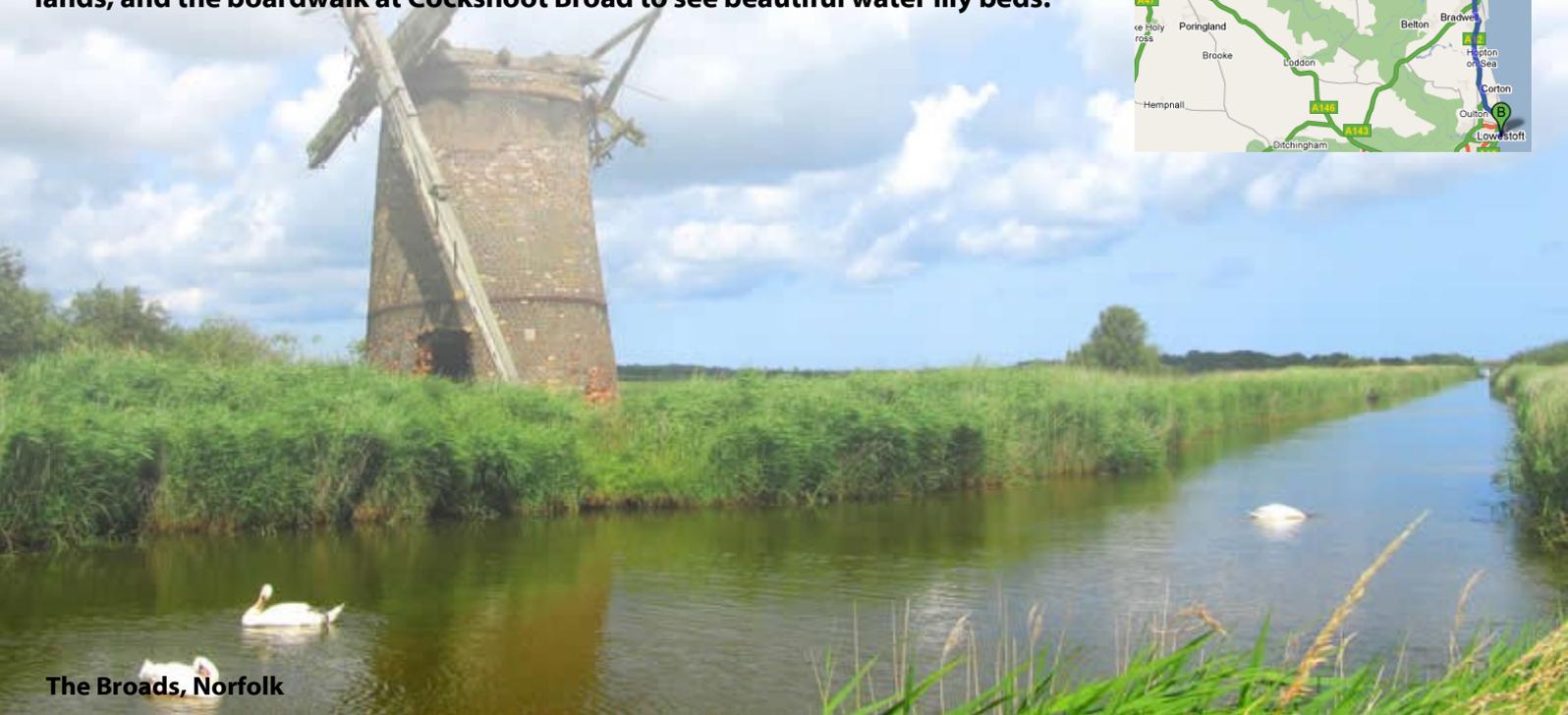
Follow the A14 through Woolpit and Stowmarket until you reach Ipswich. Here you can enjoy the waterfront marinas, a bustling city centre, twelve medieval churches and lovely green open spaces.



Norwich and The Broads

See the best of Norfolk in this driving route. Begin in Cromer, where you can visit Sheringham Park, and explore the landscaped gardens and fantastic view to the coastline. See Felbrigg Hall, Garden and Park and Aylsham, home to Blickling Hall. Follow the B1354 through Horstead and Hoveton, which will take you on to The Broads.

The Broads are the UK's largest inland wetlands. You can see some of England's most rare and spectacular flora and fauna that make their home in the waterways, marshes and estuaries in the Broads. Visit the floating wildlife centre at NWT Ranworth Broad, plus explore the trails along the reed beds and woodlands, and the boardwalk at Cockshoot Broad to see beautiful water lily beds.



The Broads, Norfolk

The East Midlands

The East Midlands is one of the regions of England and consists of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northampton, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. With the rich historic past of each culturally diverse community, no two places in the East Midlands will ever be the same. Whether you want to experience the history of the region or the outdoors, the East Midlands offers a great variety of activities to suit everyone.

What's On...

February:

- *Chinese New Year celebrations.*

May:

- *Spring Craft Fair, Derbyshire.*
- *Nottingham Arboretum Festival.*

June:

- *Oakham Festival, Rutland.*

September:

- *Canal and Floral Art Exhibition, Northampton.*

November:

- *Bonfire Night featuring fireworks displays,*
- *Nottingham.*

Best Things to See & Do

Derbyshire

Visit Bolsover Castle - Take a tour of one of the most beautiful castles in England.

Visit the Derby Museum and Art Gallery.

Take the family to the Matlock Farm Park - With plenty of activities to keep the kids busy and ample places for the adults to relax it's a great day out for all.

Leicestershire

Explore the National Space Centre - A great day out for the kids and adults alike and features real rockets and interactive activities.

Visit the Art DeJardin Sculpture Garden - Featuring a showcase of unique contemporary art.

Explore the Carillon and War Memorial Museum.

Rutland

Visit the Green Mountain Rock Climbing Centre - For a day of fun.

Go fishing - Rutland offers some of the best fishing in the region.

Visit the Rutland Country Museum - Provides visitors with the perfect introduction to the county.

Northampton

Visit the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery.

Explore the Smith College Botanic Garden - Featuring ten different types of gardens as well as a greenhouse.

Indulge yourself at the Brooks and Butterfield Day Spa.

Nottinghamshire

Visit the Nottingham Castle - Take a tour and learn about the castle's colourful history.

Experience the outdoors - The County offers over 42 sports such as golf, fishing and water sports.

Be entertained at the Broadway Media Centre - Dedicated to independent and world films; a great outing for film lovers.

Self Drive Tours around East Midlands

River Derwent



Matlock Bath to Northampton

Start this trip with a tour around Matlock Bath that is built along the River Derwent in Derbyshire. It was originally developed as a spa town back in the 1800's, and today is home to the self contained park called Heights of Abraham. The sheer cliff of High Tor complete with cable car, and many other museums and amusements. Head south to the town of Derby, and enjoy the passing scenery of wild moors, remote farms and tiny villages. In Derby you can visit the Derby Cathedral or visit the famous Royal Crown Derby china factory.

If you're pressed for time you can take the M1 south straight through to Northampton, but if you want to see some more beautiful English countryside, take the A6 down through Loughborough toward Leicester, and on through Great Glen, Market Harborough, and onto the A508 down to Northampton. Along the way you'll see historic towns, stately homes and picturesque scenery.

Best of the Parks

Begin this tour in the township of Nottingham, where you can see Nottingham Castle, Wollaton Hall and Ye Ole Trip to Jerusalem that claims to be the oldest pub in Britain. Drive 30 minutes out of town into the Sherwood Forest Country Park, the home of the legendary Robin Hood.

From here head north on the A60 through Ravenshead to the town of Mansfield, where you can visit the Palace Theatre that was built in 1910, and also see St John's, St Mark's, St Peter and St Paul's churches. Drive north-west on the A617 through the borough of Chesterfield, home to fantastic markets and the twisted spire on the Church of St Mary. From Chesterfield, drive on west on Baslow Road which will take you through to the Peak District National Park. This was the first national park in the British Isle and is the second most visited national park in the world. Here you can enjoy plenty of outdoor activities, including hiking, mountain-biking and horse riding, or just enjoy the scenery and the peaceful countryside.



The Peak District



The West Midlands

The West Midlands creates a tantalizing scene of tranquil countryside in the Malvern Hills and parts of the National Forest, with a contrast of its multicultural conurbation including one of the biggest cities in the UK, Birmingham. This impressive region is formed from parts of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, West Midlands County, Shropshire and Staffordshire. Located in central England it is positioned north-west of London which is easily accessible on the M40, M1 or the M6 Motorway, and is also south of Manchester making it a great place to start your UK adventures in your car rental. West Midlands has an intriguing charisma filled with the romantic Shakespeare,

Best Things to See & Do

Herefordshire:

Hereford Cathedral - A beautiful church which holds one of the most famous treasures, the Mappa Mundi, which is a mediaeval map of the world from the 13th century.

A historical Drive - Take a drive through the Black and White Village Trail which follows through several old English Villages.

Croft Castle - A majestic stone castle filled with a great historical significance.

Worcestershire:

Safari & Leisure Park - Feel like you've stepped into Africa with the magnificent display of exotic animals. They also offer a 4 mile drive which runs through the park.

Croome Park - An architectural mansion landscaped in a magical country park.

Malvern Hills - An enchanting landscape of mountain ranges and curious wildlife.

Warwickshire:

Rowing - Take a punt on Oxford Canal.

Warwick Castle - A medieval castle.

Shropshire:

Stokesay Castle - A very romantic 13th Century fortified manor house.

Ironbridge Gorge Museums - A nine award winning museum and sites which tells the story of the world's first iron bridge.

Hawkstone Historic Park - A mysterious park with caves, cliffs and follies.

Wroxeter Roman Vineyard - A beautiful vineyard producing red, white and sparkling wines.

Staffordshire:

Peak District National Park - Britain's first national park brings people from all over the world to enjoy a tranquil or adventurous experience with climbing, caving, hiking, cycling and more.

Trentham Estate - Offers a great day out with stunning gardens, a giant observation wheel and shopping villages. There's even the monkey forest which is a unique experience as you can walk alongside the Barbary Macaques roaming free.

Lichfield Cathedral - An 800 year old Cathedral with a fascinating history.

Drayton Manor Theme Park, Waterworld, Tamworth SnowDome -

Packed with a wide range of rides which features some of the biggest, wettest and scariest rides.

What's On...

January:

- **Historic Rally, Coventry** - Annual vintage motor show
- **The Wassail, Coventry** - Traditional Morris dancing to promote a good harvest in the Ryton Organic Gardens

February:

- **Spring Fair, Birmingham** - Early Feb

March:

- **St Patricks Day Parade**: (Sunday before St Patrick's Day)

April:

- **St George Day, Coventry** - April 23 medieval festival and parades
- **The Complete Works, Stratford Upon Avon** - Major Shakespeare event

May:

- **Concertos, Birmingham** - Symphony Hall
- **Jousting at Warwick Castle, Coventry** - Medieval festival

June:

- **DFS Classic International Womens Tennis, Birmingham**
- **Strawberry Fair, Coventry** - Summer festival with concerts and parades

July:

- **International Jazz Festival, Birmingham**

August:

- **Fireworks Fantasia, Birmingham**

September:

- **Art Fest, Birmingham**
- **Gardener's Weekend, Birmingham** - Mid Sept at Kings Heath Park
- **Heritage Open Week, Coventry** - Chance to see inside historic houses that aren't normally open to the public.

December:

- **Christmas Markets** - Festive markets held across the West Midlands

Self Drive Tours around The West Midlands



Stoke-On-Trent to Ludlow

Explore the western scenery on this route that takes you from Stoke-On-Trent to the lovely town of Ludlow. Start in the town of Stoke-On-Trent, where you can visit the Wedgwood Visitors centre and see where some of the world's best fine bone china is produced.

Head south west to the pretty Medieval town of Shrewsbury, with narrow cobbled streets, and home to the Abbey that was built in 1083. Also explore the Castle and Regimental Museum and the Wroxter Roman Vineyard. Drive south on the A49 to the town of Ludlow. This lively, unspoilt market town is perched on a cliff above the River Teme, and has wonderful churches, a stunning castle and great Georgian architecture. Ludlow is also reputed to have some of the best regional cuisine and festivals in England.



Shrewsbury

Coventry to Worcester

This country route takes you through some of the loveliest countryside in the West Midlands. Begin the tour in the town of Coventry. Here you'll find plenty of museums and galleries, great restaurants and pubs plus the Coventry Cathedral. Drive south on the A46 through Warwick, where you can see the magnificent Warwick Castle surrounded by beautiful manicured gardens.

From Warwick, head south west to the city of Stratford-upon-Avon, which is the birthplace of Shakespeare and home to Anne Hathaway's cottage. You can also explore the lovely city's fine historic houses and glorious gardens, visit the Royal Shakespeare Company or perhaps cruise the Avon River by row boat.

Drive west through magnificent countryside through the towns of Oversley Green, Kington and Churchill until you come to Worcester. This beautiful town offers a host of historical attractions to see, including Worcester Cathedral and the Royal Worcester Porcelain, as well as great shopping, boat trips and riverside walks.



Stratford-upon-Avon

Northwest England

The Northwest encompasses Liverpool and Manchester and is one of the most popular destinations to visit in England. The Northwest boasts world class historical attractions, excellent shopping facilities, arts and culture and spectacular coasts and countryside. Liverpool and Manchester are also home to a diverse variety of fantastic indoor and outdoor events which are sure to keep you entertained all throughout the year.

What's On...

March:

- *March through to August, Lakes Alive, Crow Park.*

July:

- *Jazz Festival in Manchester.*

August:

- *The Mathew Street Music Festival, Liverpool.*

September:

- *BBC wildlife photographer of the year exhibition, Liverpool.*
- *Illuminations – Visit the seaside town of Blackpool with an amazing free light show for one month only.*

October:

- *Manchester Food and Drink Festival.*
- *Manchester Comedy Festival.*

December:

- *Christmas markets in Manchester.*
- *Liverpool Santa Dash.*

Best Things to See & Do

Liverpool

Visit the Liverpool Cathedral - The largest Anglican Church in Britain.

Spend the day at the Haydock Park Racecourse - A 30 minute drive out of the city and the most visited racecourse in the country.

Take a Beatle Tour - A bus tour which takes you around to all the Beatles city areas.

Explore the McCartney Home - The childhood home of Beatles Star Paul McCartney has been maintained by the National Trust and is available for public tours.

Visit the World Museum Liverpool - A popular tourist attraction which features numerous historical artifacts of Liverpool.

Manchester

Shop till you drop - No trip to Manchester is complete without a spot of shopping. Visit the Trafford Centre, the Lowry Outlet Mall to grab a bargain or the Orient to experience food from all over the world.

Experience arts and architecture - For some of the best visual and performing arts head to The Quays or for a more traditional experience, visit the Manchester Art Gallery.

Take the Manchester City Football Club Stadium Tour.

Visit the Imperial War Museum North Manchester.



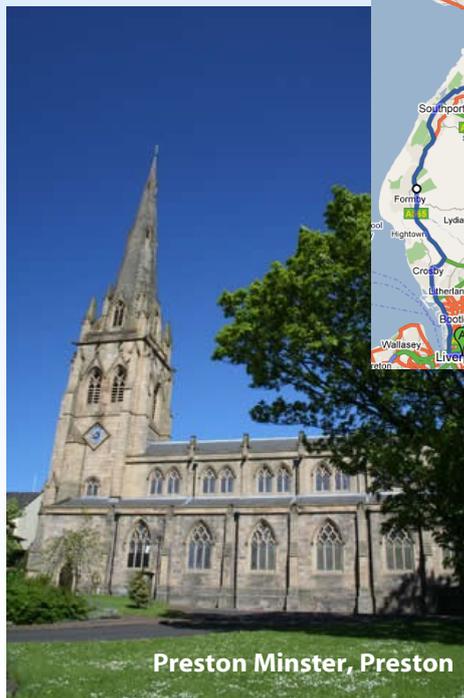
Liverpool

Self Drive Tours around Northwest England

Liverpool to Blackpool

This tour begins in the buzzing city of Liverpool. See where the Beatles originated, tour the famous Liverpool Football Club, enjoy the superb restaurants, clubs, museums and galleries and see why Liverpool was voted The European City of Culture in 2008.

Drive north to the coastal town of Crosby and along the A565 to Southport. Explore Lord Street, play a round of golf or just enjoy the great views and relaxed atmosphere of this lovely seaside town. Drive northwest along the A69 to Preston, a beautiful town with a historical and cultural core, and where you can see the city museum, the Minster Church and the UK's National Football Museum. From Preston, head west to the resort town of Blackpool, and here you should visit the Blackpool Tower and Circus, Sandcastle Waterworld, and walk along at least one of its three piers and Pleasure Beach.



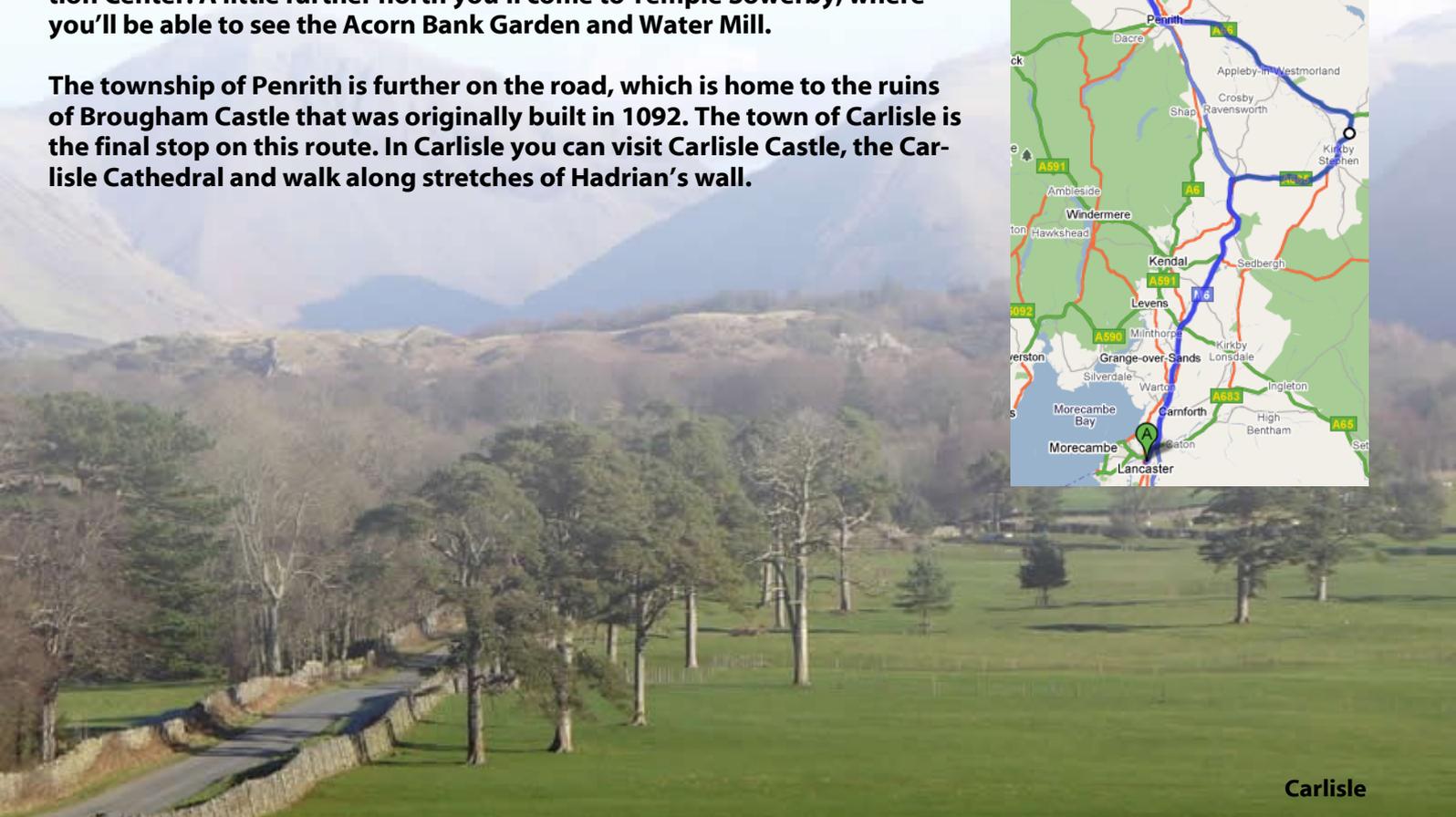
Preston Minster, Preston



Lancaster to Carlisle

Start this tour in Lancaster where you can see the Lancaster Castle, the Maritime Museum and Williamson Park. Drive north to Appleby, which is home to 11th century Appleby Castle on a beautiful riverside and Conservation Center. A little further north you'll come to Temple Sowerby, where you'll be able to see the Acorn Bank Garden and Water Mill.

The township of Penrith is further on the road, which is home to the ruins of Brougham Castle that was originally built in 1092. The town of Carlisle is the final stop on this route. In Carlisle you can visit Carlisle Castle, the Carlisle Cathedral and walk along stretches of Hadrian's wall.



Carlisle

Yorkshire & Humbershire

Yorkshire and Humberside are one of the nine government office regions of England and one of the premier tourist destinations to visit. Whether you're looking to spend the weekend or the month, Yorkshire and Lincolnshire are chockfull with activities and events to keep you entertained. If you're after a cultural experience, the hundreds of museums and galleries will not disappoint and if you'd rather escape the city for the weekend, the picturesque countryside will be sure to delight.

What's On...

January:

- *Harrogate Pavilions Winter Antiques and Fine Art Fair, Yorkshire.*

February:

- *Continental Market, Parliament Street, Yorkshire.*

April:

- *Easter Fun Day, Newby Hall, Yorkshire.*
- *Harrogate Spring Flower Show, Yorkshire.*

May:

- *Classic Car and Motorcycle Show, Yorkshire.*
- *Flower Parade, Lincolnshire.*

September:

- *Country Food and Craft show, Yorkshire.*

November:

- *Bonfire and Fireworks Spectacular, Lincolnshire Showground.*

Best Things to See & Do

Yorkshire

Go on a ghost tour of York - The tour takes you to many supposedly haunted locations in the city.

Visit the York Minster - Spectacular Church of England Cathedral which dates back to the 14th century.

Spend the day at the Harrogate Turkish Baths and Health Spa.

Explore the York Castle Museum - Living history museum of everyday life during Victorian and Edwardian England.

Tee off at the Ganton Golf Club.

Visit the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden.

Lincolnshire

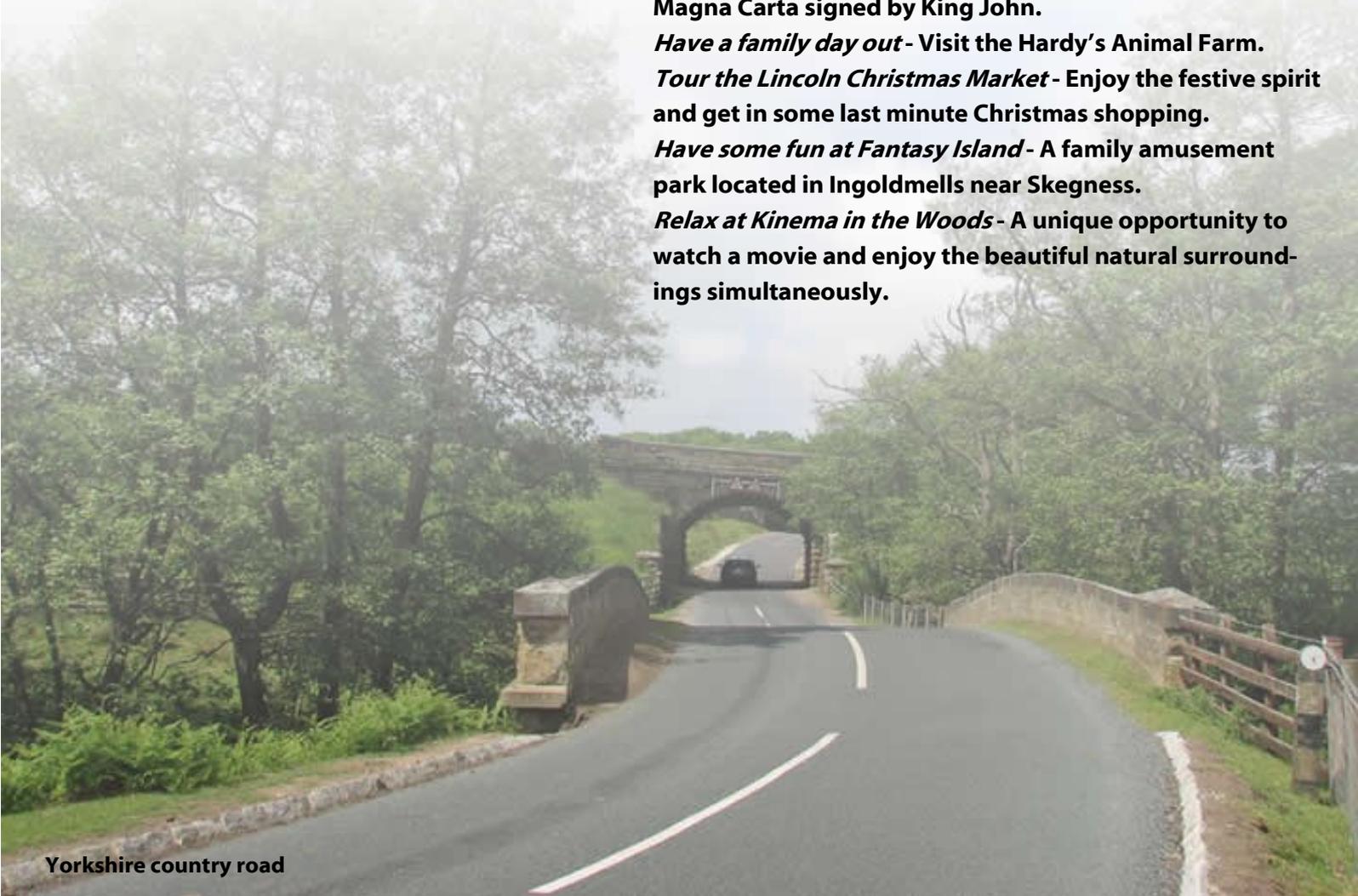
Explore the Lincoln Castle - This medieval fortress was built by William I and is home to one of the only surviving Magna Carta signed by King John.

Have a family day out - Visit the Hardy's Animal Farm.

Tour the Lincoln Christmas Market - Enjoy the festive spirit and get in some last minute Christmas shopping.

Have some fun at Fantasy Island - A family amusement park located in Ingoldmells near Skegness.

Relax at Kinema in the Woods - A unique opportunity to watch a movie and enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings simultaneously.



Yorkshire country road

Self Drive Tours around Yorkshire & Humbershire

York to Whitby

This is one of England's most interesting regions, and perfectly suited for a self-drive holiday. Begin this tour in the ancient walled town of York, where you can explore the myriad of narrow streets, magnificent Gothic cathedral, great museums, restaurants and pubs. Drive north to the small town of Thirsk, with lovely cobbled squares and pretty streets. Head east along the A170 through the beautiful Yorkshire countryside through Pickering and then onto the seaside town of Scarborough. Here there are white sand bays, lovely Edwardian buildings and amusement arcades.

From Scarborough drive north, following the coast through the North Yorkshire Moors and along to the charming town of Whitby. This is one of Northern England's most beautiful coastal resort towns, with an old abbey overlooking the picturesque harbour, narrow streets with quaint shops, traditional pubs and restaurants, and it's reputed to have the best fish and chips in England!



Leeds to Haworth

Start this tour with a day or two in the city of Leeds, shopping in fantastic retail outlets, eating in chic and funky restaurants and enjoying the glamorous urban buzz, as well as seeing the Leeds Castle and the Town Hall. From Leeds head west to the city of Bradford, home to the Saltaire, a 19th century industrial town within the city of Bradford.



From Bradford get ready to explore the surrounding Bronte country. Head towards the township of Haworth and then south to the university town of Hebden Bridge, and nearby Heptonstall, where the church of St Thomas is nestled in quiet streets and centuries old cottages. Make Haworth your base so you can explore the surrounding countryside, and see for yourself the beauty of which the Bronte sisters wrote in their famous novels.



Leeds Castle

Northeast England

The Northeast is one of the nine official regions of England and encompasses Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne & Wear and the Tees Valley. The northeast is a diverse and unique region which offers something for everyone.

What's On...

April:

- *The Wear Valley Food Festival, Durham.*
- *EAT! Food festival, Tyne and Wear.*

June:

- *Wylam Summer Fair, Tyne and Wear.*

July:

- *Brass-Durham International Festival.*

August:

- *Saltburns Annual Art Exhibition, Tees Valley.*

September:

- *The Durham Regatta.*

October:

- *Sugar and Spice Festival, Tyne and Wear.*

Best Things to See & Do

Northumberland

Visit Hadrian's Walls - A world famous attraction which was once occupied by soldiers from the Roman Empire
Explore the Holy island of Lindisfarne - A wildlife haven and a place of pilgrimage.
Visit the spectacular Warkworth Castle.

County Durham

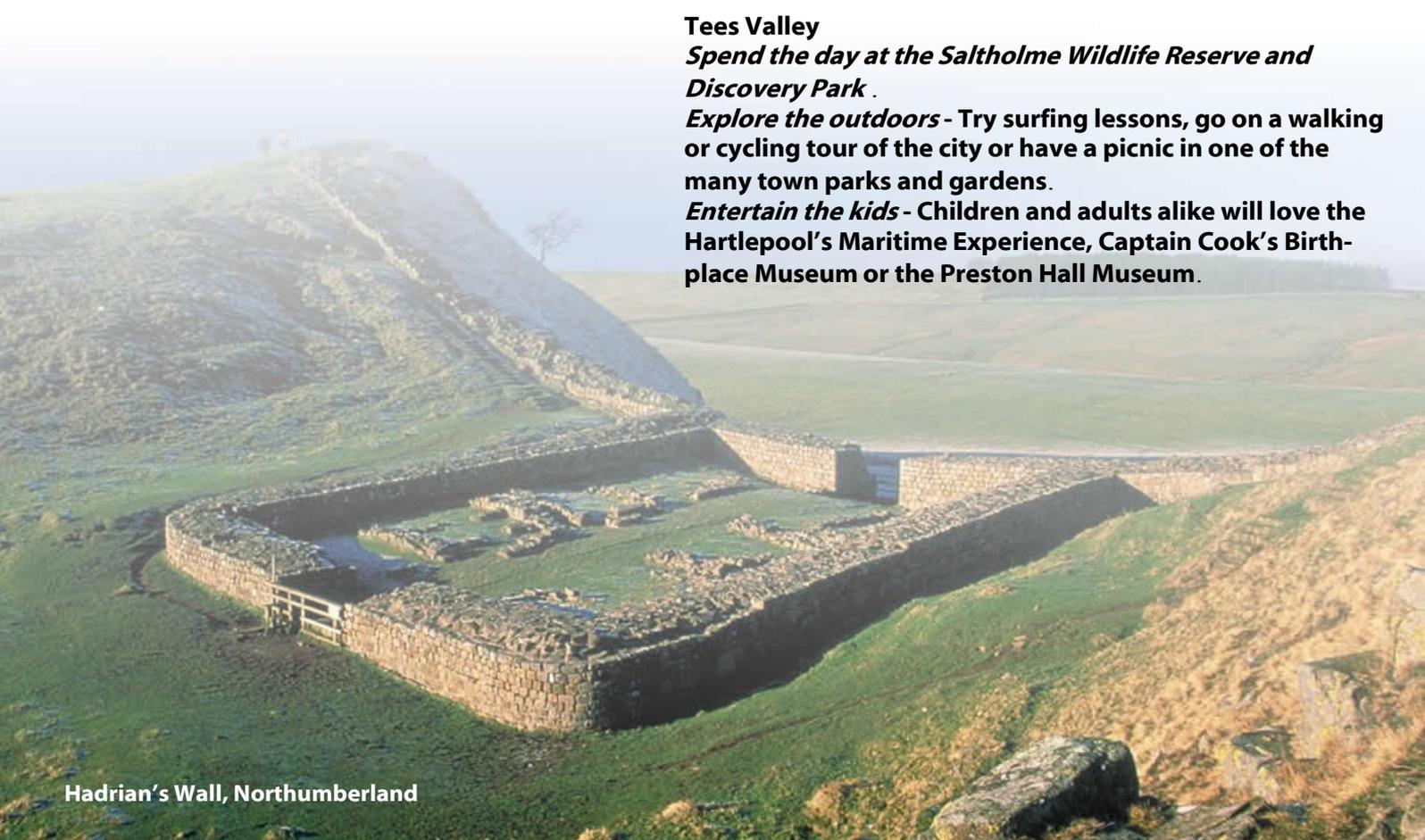
Visit the Cathedral and the Castle - A world heritage site and one of the most exquisite examples of Romanesque architecture.
Experience the outdoors - Visit the High Force waterfall, explore the heritage coast or take a walk along the banks of the River Wear.
Tour the Escomb Saxon Church - A gem of Durham and over 1300 years old.

Tyne & Wear

Visit the Angel of the North - An exquisite statue that people come from all over the world to see.
Explore the Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art - An international centre for contemporary art.
Tour the Belsay Hall and Gardens - Two historic towers linked by a quaint garden sprawled over more than 30 acres of landscaped grounds.

Tees Valley

Spend the day at the Saltholme Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park .
Explore the outdoors - Try surfing lessons, go on a walking or cycling tour of the city or have a picnic in one of the many town parks and gardens.
Entertain the kids - Children and adults alike will love the Hartlepool's Maritime Experience, Captain Cook's Birth-place Museum or the Preston Hall Museum.



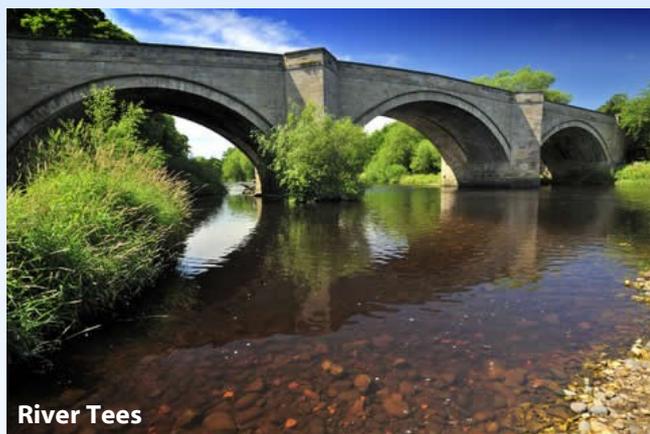
Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland

Self Drive Tours around Northeast England

Tees Valley

Explore the beautiful Tees Valley and the birthplace of Captain James Cook. Begin this tour at Middlesbrough, and see the Captain Cook Birthplace Museum, then skip over to Stockton-On-Tees to step aboard a full size replica of his ship, the Endeavour.

Drive west on the A66 through Elton and Sadberge and onto the town of Darlington, home of the Darlington Railway Museum where you can see the first passenger engine Locomotion No. 1. Back in the car, keep driving west along the A67 through Gainford and Winston and onto Barnard Castle. This magnificent old castle was built in the 12th century by Bernard de Balliol, and is perched on a large rock above the River Tees, close by to an attractive market town.



River Tees



Essential Northeast Britain Tour

Begin this tour in the town of Durham, where you must visit the spectacular 1,000 year old Durham Cathedral and climb the 300 steps of the main tower for unsurpassed view of the surrounding county. See Durham Castle and Crook Hall, and walk the lovely streets of the old town. From here you can take the more rural route along the A691 through to Consett and on to Hexham, or you can head north from Durham on the A1 up to Newcastle. Here you should see the Tyne Bridges, the Seven Stories, the remains of the Castle Keep and Segedunum. For a little more modern culture, do some shopping in the Central Arcade, visit great art galleries and top restaurants or even catch Newcastle United play at St James Park.

Take in the rural countryside as you head to historic market town of Hexham. From here you can drive west along the A69 to Hadrian's Wall. This is a World Heritage Site that stretches over 80 miles of Northumberland on the border with Scotland. You'll also be able to see excavated Roman forts at Vindolanda, Chesters and Housesteads.



Durham Cathedral and Castle

Scotland

The country of Scotland forms part of the United Kingdom and occupies the northern third of the island of Greater Britain. Its capital city is Edinburgh which also doubles as one of Europe's largest financial districts. Although Scotland is picturesquely beautiful all year round, the best time to visit is in August. The annual festivals and events are in full swing and you'll never run short of things to keep you busy.

Best Things to See & Do

Take a tour of the Edinburgh Castle - A thousand year old castle which houses an assortment of national and military artifacts.

Visit the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow - Scotland's most visited tourist site and home to a huge national history museum and impressive art gallery.

Tour the city - Take a ride on an Edinburgh City Hop-on Hop off tour.

Go Nessie Hunting - The first sighting of the Loch Ness Monster was in 1871 and with another famous encounter in 1961, visitors from the world are fascinated by 'Nessie'.

Play a game of golf - If you love golf, you will love Scotland. There are hundreds of spectacular courses including the famous Old Course at St Andrews.

What's On...

January:

- *Hogman, across Scotland – New Years Eve Festivities*

April:

- *International Science Festival, Edinburgh – Held over two weeks*
- *Baltane Fire Festival, Calton Hill, Edinburgh*

May:

- *Perth Festival.*
- *Orkney Folk Festival, Edinburgh*
- *Spirit of Speyside Whiskey festival, Edinburgh – Four days of whiskey tastings and distillery tours*

June:

- *Flavor of Shetland*
- *Riding of the Marches, across Scotland – Parades, horse riding displays*
- *West End Festival, across Scotland – Two week party with music and arts*

August:

- *Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival*
- *Edinburgh International Festival*
- *Edinburgh Military Tattoo*
- *Edinburgh Comedy Festival*
- *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*

September:

- *Linlithgow Folk Festival.*

October:

- *The Doric Festival.*

Edinburgh Castle

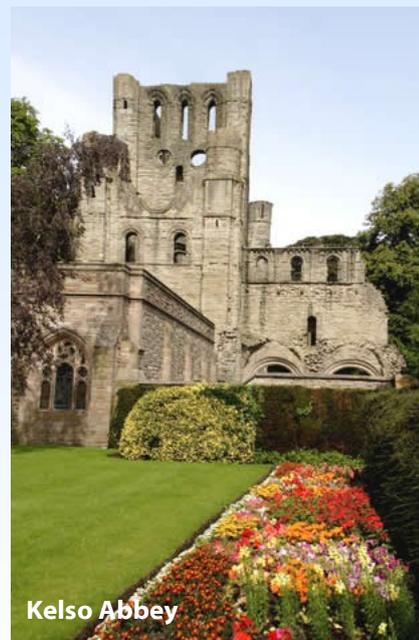
Self Drive Tours around Scotland

Tour the Valley of the Tweed

Follow the beautiful River Tweed on this delightful drive, stopping at pretty villages along the way. Begin in the town of Kelso which has a lovely cobbled square surrounded by Georgian buildings and a great atmosphere. Head west through Maxton and Newstead to Melrose. This lovely town is at the junction of three Eildon Hills that are covered with heather and perfect for long walks, and is home to the Melrose Abbey and Abbotsford House.

Follow the River Tweed through the villages of Selkirk, Walkerburn and Kirkburn to the town of Peebles. This attractive and bustling town lies at the confluence of three rivers amongst rolling wooding hills, and at its center has

lovely town squares and plenty of historic monuments to keep you busy.

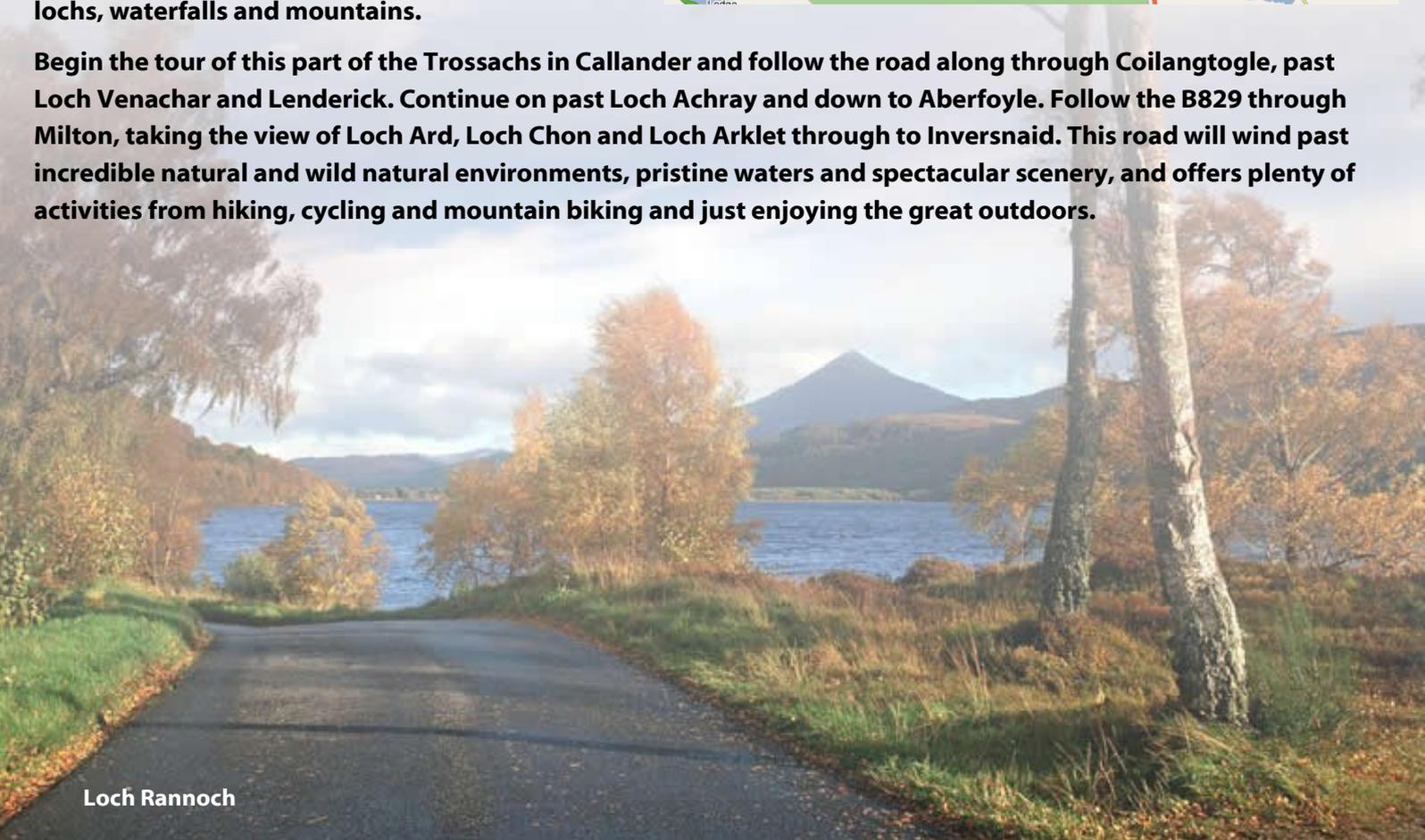


Experience the Trussocks

Tour the wonderful Trossachs and see for yourself why Queen Victoria called the area 'lovely' back in 1869. The Trossachs are located at the narrowest point of the mainland just north of Glasgow, while the whole area of Callander is a maze of rivers, lochs, waterfalls and mountains.



Begin the tour of this part of the Trossachs in Callander and follow the road along through Coilantogle, past Loch Venachar and Lenderick. Continue on past Loch Achray and down to Aberfoyle. Follow the B829 through Milton, taking the view of Loch Ard, Loch Chon and Loch Arklet through to Inversnaid. This road will wind past incredible natural and wild natural environments, pristine waters and spectacular scenery, and offers plenty of activities from hiking, cycling and mountain biking and just enjoying the great outdoors.



Loch Rannoch

Wales

Wales is located in the west coast of Mainland Britain, and bordered on the east with England. Cardiff is located in the south of Wales and is the capital, largest and most popular city of Wales. Visitors are attracted to the beautiful natural scenery, its distinct culture and wealth of history and architecture. Cardiff is known for its lively and diverse atmosphere and whilst the city boasts a vibrant nightlife, exciting events and a wealth of things to see and do, the city has managed to retain its 'small town' vibe.

What's On...

July:

- *Cardiff Castle Open Air Theatre*
- *Cardiff International Food and Drink Festival.*

August:

- *Admiral Cardiff Big Weekend.*
- *Classic Car Rally.*
- *Frocester Beer Festival.*

September:

- *The World's Greatest Elvis Tribute Artist Concert.*
- *Cider and Beer Festival.*

October:

- *31st, Halloween at Cardiff Castle.*

Best Things to See & Do

Visit the Cardiff Castle - Take a guided tour through 2,000 years of history.

Tour the National History Museum, St. Fagan's - Commonly referred to as the Museum of Welsh life due to its comprehensive collection of historical artifacts.

Spend the day at Cardiff Bay - Dine at one of the many restaurants or pubs, take a stroll along the boardwalk, visit the museums or take a look at the shops.

Visit the National Museum and Art Gallery - Featuring a spectacular collection of Impressionist and Post- Impressionist art.

Tour Techniquest - A science museum packed with hands on exhibits and exciting things to do.

Visit the Millennium Sports Stadium - One of the UK's best and biggest sporting stadiums.

Walk around the Gower Peninsular - Sandy beaches, limestone cliffs and easy walking trails

Brecon Beacons National Park - See all the natural color and splendor on rolling hills and grassy moors.

Visit the resort town of Llandudno - Relax by the seaside or take on some extreme sports in the twin mountains, the Great Orme and Little Orme.

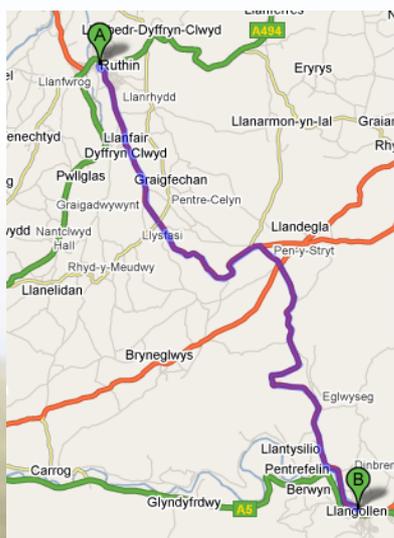


Cardiff Castle

Self Drive Tours around Wales

Snowdonia

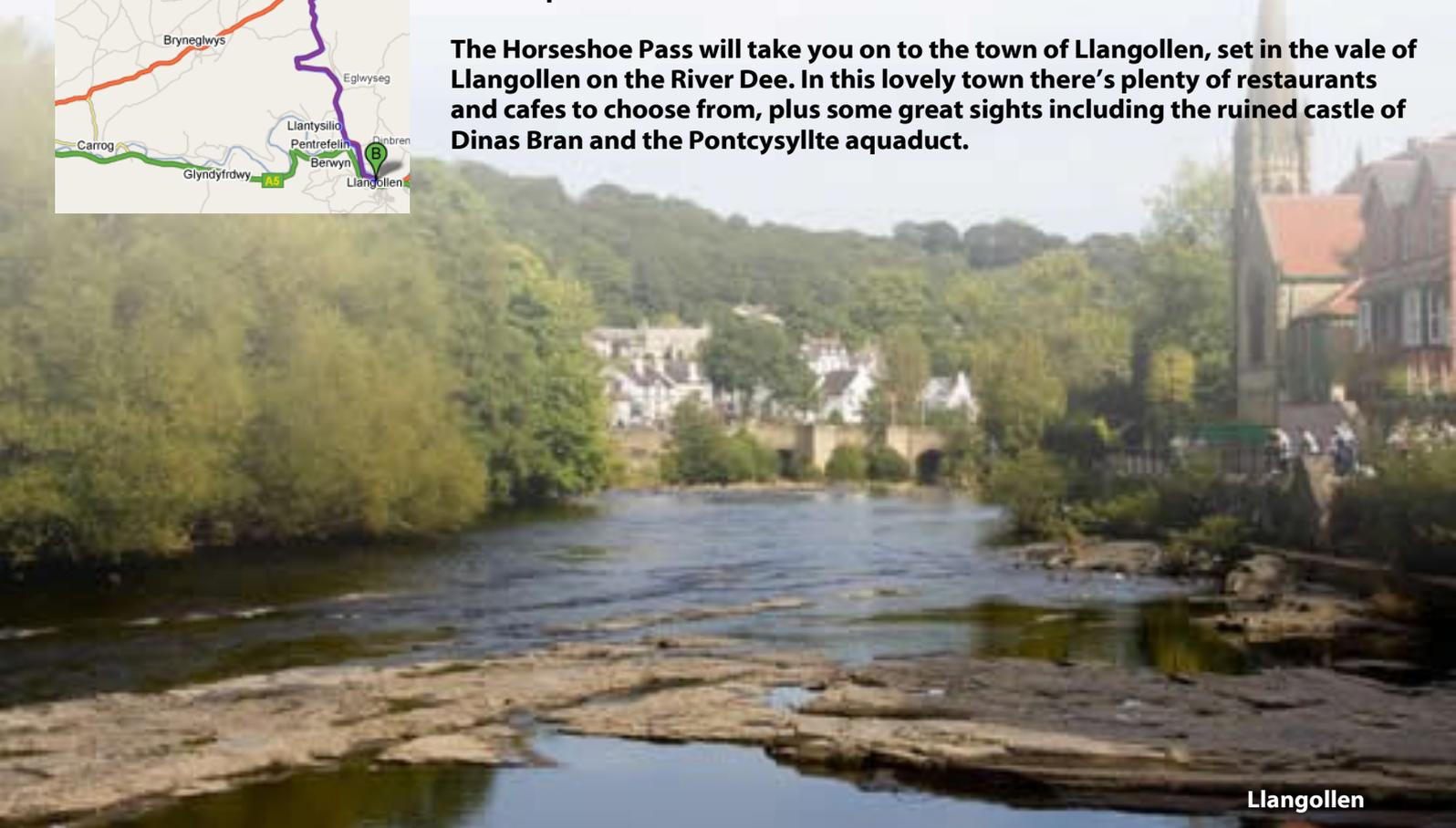
Drive along the Llanberis Pass in Snowdonia, an area of rugged natural beauty with mountain ranges carved by the twin lakes of Llyn Padarn and Llyn Peris. Drive from the town of Caemarfon along the A4086 which will take you through Pont Rug and Llanberis. Here you'll see the remains of historic Dolbadarn Castle. You will pass Pentre Castell and Nant Peris into the park. There are plenty of outdoor activities, particularly hiking and rock climbing, as well as enjoying the stark and rough-hewn mountains and valleys.



The Horseshoe Pass

Travel through one of Wales' most popular natural attractions along the Horseshoe Pass. This drive follows the A542 from Ruthin to Llangollen through the Clwydian range. Begin the tour in Ruffin, which is a small but attractive little town set in the Vale of Cwlyd and has plenty of interesting historical sites to keep you busy. Head south on the A542 along the Horseshoe Pass, enjoying the views with rolling mists and unique scenery, taking care with the climb and the hairpin bends.

The Horseshoe Pass will take you on to the town of Llangollen, set in the vale of Llangollen on the River Dee. In this lovely town there's plenty of restaurants and cafes to choose from, plus some great sights including the ruined castle of Dinas Bran and the Pontcysyllte aquaduct.



Llangollen

Northern Ireland

Be welcomed into Northern Ireland by some of the most charming and friendly people in the world. Northern Ireland consists of the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone. Discover the delights of Northern Ireland with its unique blend of ancient heritage, unspoiled landscapes and cosmopolitan cities. From the famous Giant's Causeway, the birthplace of the Titanic, the rivers, loughs and majestic coastlines that decorate the landscape, to the small, quaint villages and cosy pubs – there is so much in Northern Ireland to see and do, for the young and the young-at-heart.

What's On...

May:

- *Carnival of Colors, St Columb's Park, Co. Derry.*

July:

- *Lady of the Lake Festival, Co Fermanagh.*

August:

- *Hillsborough International Oyster Festival, Co Down.*

September:

- *Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival, Co. Tyrone.*



Best Things to See & Do

Belfast City – St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast City Hall, Belfast Castle, St George Market, Take the Titanic Boat Tour or wonder through the Belfast Botanic Gardens.

The Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim – One of Northern Ireland's most famous landmarks, the Giant's Causeway is made up of thousands of interlocking basalt columns, the result of an ancient volcanic eruption.

The Walled City of Derry, Co. Londonderry – Situated on the banks of the River Foyle, Derry is the only fully walled city in Ireland.

Ulster American Folk Park, Co. Tyrone – In open air museum illustrating the story of emigration from Ulster to the US during the 18th & 19th centuries.

Drive the Causeway Coastal Route, Co. Antrim – Drive along one of the worlds most spectacular and scenic roads, and marvel and the wonder of nature.

Tour the Lakelands, Co. Fermanagh – The Lakelands are a haven for both wildlife and sports enthusiasts, offering spectacular scenery & woodlands.

Discover the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down – Believed to be the inspiration behind CS Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, Majestic mountains, natural beauty and native wildlife.

Round of Golf, Co.'s Antrim & Down – Pack the golf clubs and take a swing on such famous fairways as Royal Portrush, Co. Antrim and Royal County Down, Co. Down.

Visit the Bushmills Distillery, Co. Antrim – Built in 1608, this is Ireland's oldest operating distillery.

Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim



Self Drive Tours around N. Ireland



The Inishowen, Derry

The Inishowen, Co. Derry

Discover the beauty and charm of the northern most peninsular in Ireland. Begin your tour at Bunrana with its long sandy beach and ruins of Bunrana Castle that dates back to the 16th century as well as Doherty Castle. Head north along the R238 to Mamore Gap and take in the magnificent view of the steep, northerly coastline, and onto the seaside town of Dunaff. Here you can see the Fort Dunree Military Museum that overlooks Lough Swilly, as well as the Old Fort Hospital. Driving east, you'll see fantastic beaches and stunning scenery as you travel through Clonmany and Ballyliffin, where there is a unique outdoor museum showcasing life in the area from 1840-1970.

Further on the R238 you'll hit Carndonagh with great ancient monuments, including the 10 arch stone bridge that crosses Trawbrega Bay in Malin. Stand on Ireland's most northerly point at Malin Head, and further east you'll find the Wee House of Malin, a hermit's rock cell cut into a cliff beside a cottage ruin. Drive further south east to the resort village of Culdaff, and enjoy the seascape as you head along down to Greencastle, home to the Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium. Follow the R241 onto Merville, then through Redcastle, Muff and down to the walled city of Londonderry.



The Causeway Coastal Route:

This is rated as one of the top 5 scenic drives in the world, running from Belfast Lough to Londonderry with an incredible mosaic of fishing villages, quiet beaches, rugged coastlines, mountains and magnificent scenery. Leave Belfast and join the Causeway Coastal Route at Newtownabbey. Enjoy the view of Belfast Lough to the right as you head further west toward the seaside town of Carrickfergus, which is home to the well-preserved 12th century Norman castle. Drive on through Kilroot and to Larne, the gateway to the beautiful Glens of Antrim, and follow the Antrim Coast Road where you can enjoy the breathtaking scenery. Take time to explore any of the nine glens, particularly Glenarm with its fabulous walled garden and beautiful harbour.

Drive on through to the lovely town of Cushendun and Torr Head, along to Ballintoy where you can walk across the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge spanning a 24 metre chasm. If you veer inland you can visit the world's oldest licensed distillery in the village of Bushmills. From there you can head back to the coast to the World Heritage listed site of the Giant's Causeway, which are 40,000 interlocking basalt columns that, according to folklore was created by legendary giant Finn McCool as a causeway to Scotland.



See the romantic ruins of Dunluce Castle near Bushmills, and drive on to Portrush and Portstewart, lively seaside resorts, then to the beautiful Bann Valley and market town of Ballymoney. Visit Mussenden Temple along by Castlerock towards Limavady, then take a walk on the remote beaches at Benone or Downhill. You can then travel on through the lovely Roe Valley, through Limavady and on to Londonderry, which is the only completely walled city in the British Isles.



Carrick-a-Rede, Ballintoy

Getting into the UK

UK Airport Information

England

Heathrow

24 km west of Central London
Ph: +44 20 7222 1234
www.tfl.gov.uk

Gatwick

45km south of central London
Ph: +44 845 850 1530
www.gatwickairport.com

London City Airport

10km east of the city of London
Ph: +44 20 7646 0088
www.londoncityairport.com

Stansted

48km northeast of central London
Ph: +44 844 335 1803
www.stanstedairport.com

Luton

51km northeast of London
Ph: +44 1582 40510
www.london-luton.co.uk

Birmingham

13km southeast of Birmingham city
Ph: +44 844 576 6000

Manchester

17km southwest of Manchester city
Ph: +44 8712 710 711
www.manchesterairport.co.uk

Newcastle

10km northwest of Newcastle city
Ph: +44 871 882 1121
www.newcastleairport.com



Northern Ireland

Belfast

29km northwest of Belfast city
Ph: +44 28 9448 4848
www.belfastairport.com

Belfast City Airport

Located in Belfast Harbour
Ph: +44 28 9093 9093
www.belfastcityairport.com

Scotland

Edinburgh

12km west of the city centre
Ph: +44 844 481 8989
www.edinburghairport.com

Glasgow

14km west of Glasgow city
Ph: +44 844 481 5555
www.glasgowairport.com

Wales

Cardiff

19km southwest of Cardiff city
Ph: +44 1 446 711 111
www.cwlfly.com

Aberdeen

11km northwest of Aberdeen city
Ph: +44 844 481 6666
www.aberdeenairport.com

Inverness

14km east of Inverness city
Ph: +44 1667 464 000
www.invernessairport.com

UK Ferry Port Information

Auto Europe can organize all your ferry needs between mainland UK and the island of Ireland with Stena Line and Irish Ferries. For more information, go to www.autoeurope.com

Main England Ports:

Dover: www.doverport.co.uk

Harwich: www.harwich.co.uk

Holyhead: www.holyheadport.com

Main Wales Ports:

Fishguard and Holyhead:

www.holyhead.com

Pembroke: www.mhpa.co.uk

Northern Ireland Port:

Main Scotland Ports:

Aberdeen: www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk

Cairnryan: www.cairnryanportdevelopment.co.uk

Lerwick: www.lerwick-harbour.co.uk

Oban, Rosyth and Stranraer: <http://stranraer.ports-guides.com>



Accommodation Ideas

Motorhomes

All the convenience of accommodation and transport in one! Rent a motorhome from Auto Europe. For more information, go to www.autoeurope.com/motorhomes.cfm

From all levels of style and luxury, the UK has many hotel options to choose from. You'll be warmly greeted by the friendly people at the front desk who will make sure your room is to your liking. You will receive the best information from the local staff about the closest pub offering local specialties, best shopping spots, family activities and the best places to enjoy the nightlife.

Castles

Experience the splendor and magnificence of staying in an historic castle in the UK. It's not every day that you get to wake in the grandeur of ancient tapestries, stone columns, high vaulted ceilings, spectacular gardens and lakes, right at your doorstep. Live like a king!

Self Catering

There is self catering accommodation all across the UK suitable for those that would like to come and go as they please, including self contained apartments, houses, cottages and caravans.

Bed & Breakfasts

One of the best ways to experience the United Kingdom is to stay at a Bed & Breakfast. Be welcomed by families that open their homes to guests, and who will be more than happy to impart their knowledge of the local areas and customs. The rooms are normally slightly smaller than guest houses or hotels, but this is possibly the cheapest and friendliest way to tour the UK. Enjoy a home cooked breakfast and friendly hospitality.

Guest Houses

Guest houses in the UK are usually larger than B&Bs even though they are still family run. Most have between 5 and 15 guest rooms. Often guest houses are purpose built so that the rooms are generally larger and the facilities are more generous than B&Bs. You can expect to pay about the same as a 3 star hotel but with a more cozy and comfortable atmosphere.

Farmhouse Holiday

A farmhouse holiday is a great way to meet the locals and is especially suitable for children. Leave the hustle and bustle of the big cities and towns behind and enjoy the everyday life on the farm.

Camping & Caravanning

There are hundreds of caravan and campsites across the UK, with the majority being open from May to September. Take the opportunity to enjoy the very best of the country and outdoors at its best.

Youth & Backpacker Hostels

There are over three hundred youth hostels across the UK, which range from basic accommodation to modern hostels.

University Dorm

Stay in great locations with simple furnishings in relatively cheap accommodation, in such hallowed halls as Oxford or Cambridge. This option is usually available over the holiday periods Easter and Christmas.

Holiday Camps

Holiday camps offer accommodation, food and a huge range of activities, normally all at an all-inclusive price. This is a great option for families, with activities for children, kids clubs and babysitting options usually available.



Stay Healthy

Your comprehensive travel insurance will cover any medical costs including medical evacuation. Make sure that your insurance covers you for the whole time you'll be away and be clear on what is not included. In case of an emergency, go to your nearest hospital for treatment. For non-urgent ailments, go to the local medical center or NHS walk in center, where you will be cared for but you will be billed for the treatment. Vaccinations are not required for travel to the United Kingdom, but check with your GP before you travel for travel vaccination updates.

Plan for the continuing care of pre-existing conditions before you leave. Bring your medications in their original and clearly labelled containers with a declaration from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medicines needed. If you wear contacts or glasses, bring a spare pair or bring a copy of your prescription.

Pharmacies and chemists carry most prescriptions, however it can be expensive, so it's best to have your scripts filled before you go, and carry these medicines along with a letter from your GP explaining your medical conditions.

Stay Safe

Traveling in the UK is not dangerous, but a level of caution should always be taken when touring in any foreign country. The majority of crimes tend to occur in the larger cities, such as London, where tourists can be targeted by crimes such as bag snatching and pick pocketing. The best advice is to keep your valuables close to your body and out of reach from potential thieves, avoid lonely streets out of hours and don't flash your wealth and make yourself an obvious target.

Car break-ins, theft, smash and grab and vandalism on tourists vehicles can occur, but can be prevented by keeping valuables or bags out of sight, securely locking cars or using off-street supervised parking. As a precaution lock your doors when driving in the larger towns, especially after dark.

In the unlikely event of theft or loss, be sure to inform all your credit card companies as soon as you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen. Most credit card companies have toll free numbers to call if your cards are lost or stolen, and they may be able to issue an emergency replacement card or wire you an cash advance.

Where to Get Help

England:

Embassy of the USA
55/56 Upper Brook Street
London, W1A 2LQ
PH: + 44 20 7499 9000

Scotland

US Consulate
3 Regent Terrace
Edinburgh, EH7 5BW
PH:+ 44 131 556 8315

Local Tourist Boards:

www.visitbritain.com
www.visitengland.com
www.visitscotland.com
www.visitwales.com
www.discovernorthernireland.com

Police, Ambulance or Fire Service:

Call 999 or 112 from any phone

Climate and Weather

The UK has a temperate climate with plenty of rainfall year round. Cloudy weather and light drizzle are common in almost all parts of UK at any time of the year. The temperatures inland will range from just below freezing at the depths of winter to a maximum of 86°f at the height of summer. Extreme weather is rare, however snow, hail, heavy rains and heatwaves can sometimes occur.

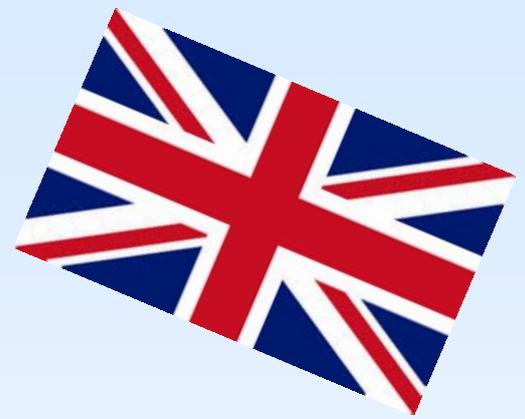
Public Holidays 2012

01 Jan	New Years Day	12 Jul	Battle of the Boyne (Northern Ireland only)
06 Apr	Good Friday	06 Aug	Summer Bank Holiday (Scotland only)
09 Apr	Easter Monday	27 Aug	Summer Bank Holiday (except Scotland)
07 May	Early May Bank Holiday	25 Dec	Christmas Day
04 June	Spring Bank Holiday	26 Dec	Boxing Day

Key Facts

Location: Northwest Europe
Area: 242,514 sq km
Capital: London

Largest City: London
Population: 60.8 million
Population Density: 250.7



Geography:

The total land area of the United Kingdom is about 245,000 square kilometres, and is composed of the countries of Great Britain, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK lies off the north-western coast of mainland Europe in the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. Most of England is relatively flat or low-lying with mountainous terrain in the north and northwest regions. Northern Ireland is mostly hilly, and Wales is mostly mountainous. Scotland's regions vary from lowlands in the south and east, and highlands in the north and west.

Language

English is the spoken in the majority of the UK. In Ireland, Gaelic is spoken in some counties.

Communications:

Telephone

Country code for the UK is 44. There are plenty of the public payphones available, where you can use pounds or euros, and many have credit/debit card facilities.

Mobile phones that have dual or trial band with GSM 900 or 1800 will work within the UK, but check with your mobile phone provider before you leave that the roaming function is activated on your phone. If not, you can purchase a prepaid, ready to use mobile phone for less than £50 from most major shopping centres in the UK.

Internet

Most urban areas have internet cafes, and there are a growing number of Wi-Fi hotspots. Most international airports will offer internet access.

Post

Post offices are located in almost all towns and cities across the United Kingdom. Post office hours are Monday to Friday 9:00am until 5:30pm, and Saturday 9:00am until 12:30pm.

Measurements

The United Kingdom uses the metric system of measurement:

1 millimeter (mm) = 0.03937 inches	1 milligram (mg) = 0.0154 grain
1 centimeter (cm) = 0.3937 inches	1 gram (gm) = 0.0353 oz
1 meter (m) = 1.0936 yd	1 kilogram (kg) = 2.2046lb
1 kilometer (km) = 0.6214 mile	1 tonne (t) = 0.9842 ton

Temperature is measured in degrees Celsius.

Shopping hours

In the UK most stores are open from 9:00 or 10:00 am to 6:00pm seven days a week, with longer trading hours until 9:00pm most Thursdays and Fridays in the larger cities.

Electricity

The voltage used in Britain is 240 volts AC at 50hz, with the power sockets designed for the standard 3-pin square plug. Plug socket adaptors can be purchased at most airports or electrical and hardware stores.

Smoking

Smoking is illegal in all public buildings, bus shelters and train stations. Most pubs and clubs have designated smoking areas. Non-smoking areas are well signposted.

Time Zone

GMT (GMT + 1 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

Money Matters

Currency

The currency of the United Kingdom is the pound sterling (£). Notes come in £5, £10, £20 and £50 denominations, and coins come in 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2. You'll often hear the pound referred to colloquially as a 'quid'.

Currency Exchange

Foreign currency can be exchanged at Bureau de Change at international airports and major city centers, as well as banks, post offices and some hotels.

Banking Hours

Standard banking hours are Monday to Friday 9:00-9:30am until 3:30-4:00pm, Many bank branches stay open late once a week until 5:30 or 6:00pm, and are often open on Saturdays as well (9:00-9:30am until 12:30-3:30pm). Banks in England and Wales remain open over lunch, but many banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland close for an hour at lunch.

ATM's

ATM's are located almost everywhere in the UK, except in the smallest villages.

Tax

Value Added Tax - VAT - is a mandatory up to 20% tax on most goods and services in the UK. Generally the VAT is included in the ticketed price, however some larger, more expensive goods may not have the VAT included and will display 'excl VAT'.

Credit & Debit Cards

American Express, Visa and MasterCard are all widely accepted across the UK. Credit cards can be used in larger businesses, while the smaller businesses prefer debit cards.

Traveler's Cheques

Traveller's cheques are widely accepted in the UK. Take traveller's cheques into the UK in pounds sterling to avoid additional exchange rate charges. You may need a form of photo identification to use traveller's cheques.

Tipping

Tipping is common practice in the UK. Restaurants and cafés that provide good service would expect around 10-15% tip. In pubs with food or drinks ordered and served at the bar no tip is required however meals brought to your table may require a tip.

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