

# Welcome to Great Britain

*Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge, Manchester United, The Beatles – Britain does icons like nowhere else, and travel here is a fascinating mix of famous names and hidden gems.*

## Variety Packed

From the graceful architecture of Canterbury Cathedral to the soaring ramparts of Edinburgh Castle, via the mountains of Wales and the picture-postcard landscape of the Cotswolds, Britain's astounding variety is a major reason to visit. The cities tempt with top-class shops and restaurants, and some of the world's finest museums, while cutting-edge clubs and world-famous theatres provide endless nights to remember. Next day, you're deep in the countryside, high in the hills or enjoying a classic seaside resort. In Britain, there really is something for everyone, whether you're eight or 80, going solo, or travelling with your friends, your kids or your grandma.

## Time Travel

A journey through Britain is a journey through history. But not dull and dusty history – this is history you can immerse yourself in. You can lay hands on the megaliths of a 5000-year-old stone circle, or patrol the battlements of a medieval fortress – just as they were patrolled by chain-mail-clad soldiers many centuries ago. Fast-forward to the future and you're admiring 21st-century architecture in Glasgow or exploring the space-age domes of Cornwall's Eden Project.

## English Spoken Here

While Britain has a complex culture and esoteric traditions, it feels familiar to many visitors – on the surface, at least – thanks to a vast catalogue of British film and TV exports. And for most visitors, Britain's national language – English – is equally familiar, and one more reason why travel here is a breeze. Of course Wales and Scotland have their own languages, but everyone speaks English too – and all visitors (even Brits) get a little confused by local accents in places such as Devon, Snowdonia and Aberdeen.

## Easy Does It

A final thing to remember while you're planning a trip to Britain: getting from place to place is pretty straightforward. Although the locals may grumble (in fact, it's a national pastime), public transport is pretty good and a train ride through the British landscape can be a memorable experience in itself. Whichever way you get around in this compact country, you're never far from the next town, the next pub, the next national park or the next impressive castle on your hit-list of highlights. The choice is endless.



## Why I Love Great Britain

By Neil Wilson, Writer

In a word: variety. Few countries pack so much into a small space. Landscapes that range from the sand dunes of South Wales to the snowfields of the Cairngorms, from the lush, quilted farmland of Kent to the naked limestone scarps of the Yorkshire Dales. Three nationalities, two dozen dialects, more than 60 proudly individual cities, 1000 breweries, 5000 castles – all in a country you could drive across in a day. Plus weather that can offer four seasons in a single afternoon (but remember the old Scandinavian proverb – there's no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes).

**For more about our writers, see p1056**