



GREAT BRITAIN

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

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Welcome to Great Britain

Windsor Castle, Oxford Colleges, Stonehenge: icon-rich Britain is a fascinating mix of famous names and hidden gems, which means that when travelling this compact country you're never far from the next stop on your highlights hit-list.

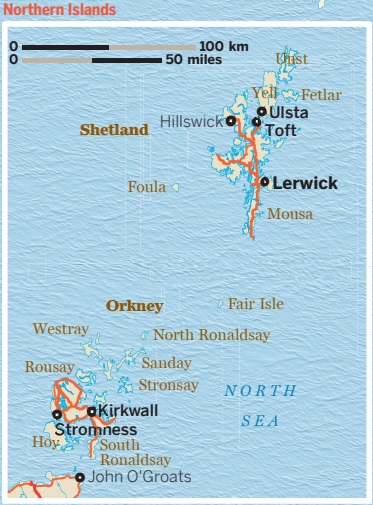
From the soaring ramparts of Edinburgh Castle, via the mountains of North Wales and the picture-postcard landscape of the Cotswolds, Britain's astounding diversity is a major reason to visit. The cities tempt with some of the world's finest museums, shops and restaurants, while cutting-edge clubs and world-famous theatres provide endless nights to remember. Next day, you're deep in the countryside, high in the hills or delighting in salt-tanged shores.

Indeed, a journey through Britain is a journey through history, culture and new experiences. Stroll beside the megaliths of a 5000-year-old stone circle, punt a boat past exquisite Cambridge colleges or see the school room where Shakespeare learned to use a quill. In Bath you can explore a city flush with gorgeous Georgian architecture, then head off to marvel at the aristocratic ostentation of Blenheim Palace. Scotland's Highlands and islands beckon you away from city streets, as do English lakes rich in literary links, and Welsh mountains alive with adventure sports.

In Great Britain variety rules – here the countless castles, pubs and stately homes are ringed by lush farmland, snow-covered slopes or wind-whipped moors. Few countries pack so much into such a small space.

a journey through Britain is a journey through history, culture and new experiences

0 100 miles 200 km



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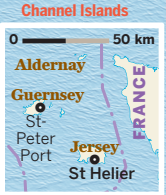
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Sculpted archway in the
Natural History Museum (p75)

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The Scottish Highlands

Scenic grandeur and echoes of the past

The Highlands abound in breathtaking views. From the regal charm of Royal Deeside, via the brooding majesty of Glen Coe, to the mysterious waters of sweeping Loch Ness – these are landscapes that inspire awe. The region is scattered with fairy-tale castles and the hiking is suitably glorious. Add the nooks of warm Highland hospitality found in classic rural pubs and romantic hotels, and you have an unforgettable corner of the country.



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Stonehenge

Massive and mysterious, Stonehenge is utterly compelling

Stonehenge is Britain's most iconic ancient site. People have been drawn to this myth-laden ring of bluestones for 5000 years, and we still don't know why it was built. Most visitors gaze at the megaliths from the path, but with enough planning you can book an early-morning or evening tour and walk around the inner ring. Experiencing this ethereal place, in the slanting sunlight, away from the crowds, will always stay with you.



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Yorkshire

Roman and Viking history; dramatic moorland views

Yorkshire's capital, York, is rich in Roman remains and Viking heritage. It's also home to York Minster – the biggest medieval cathedral in all of northern Europe. With ancient city walls and a maze of medieval streets, the city is a living showcase for the highlights of English history. Yorkshire can also claim some of Britain's finest scenery, with brooding moors and green dales rolling down to a dramatic shore. Top: Chapter house ceiling, York Minster (p176); Above left: Small town in the Yorkshire Dales (p189); Above right: A clock on a church facade in York (p182)

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Plan Your Trip

Need to Know



When to Go



High Season (Jun–Aug)

- The best weather. Accommodation rates peak around August school holidays.
- Busy roads, especially in coastal areas, national parks and big-draw cities.

Shoulder (Mar–May, Sep & Oct)

- Crowds reduce. Prices fall.
- Weather often good. March to May: sunny spells and sudden showers; September to October: chance of warm, late summer. For many Scottish outdoor activities, May and September are the best months.

Low Season (Nov–Feb)

- Wet and cold. Expect snow falls; especially in mountain areas and the north.

Currency

Pound; also called 'pound sterling' (£)

Language

English; also Scottish Gaelic and Welsh

Visas

Generally not needed for stays of up to six months. Not a member of the Schengen Zone.

Money

Change bureaux and ATMs widely available, especially in cities and major towns.

Mobile Phones

The UK uses the GSM 900/1800 network, which covers the rest of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, but isn't compatible with the North American GSM 1900.

Time

Britain is on GMT/UTC. The clocks go forward for 'summer time' one hour at the end of March, and go back at the end of October. The 24-hour clock is used for transport timetables.