



THE TRAVEL ATLAS

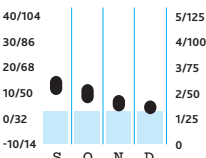
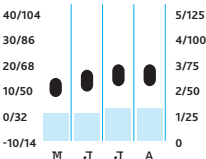
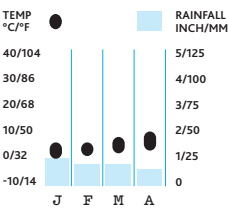


THE ULTIMATE ATLAS
FOR GLOBETROTTERS

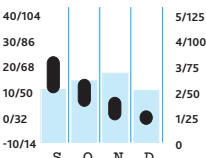
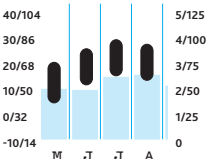
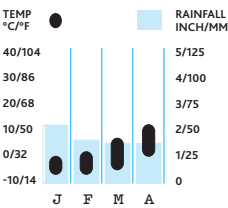
Britain & Ireland

CLIMATE CHARTS

EDINBURGH



LONDON



Buckingham Palace, Stonehenge, The Beatles, tartan kilts, St Patrick's Day and pint of Guinness: Britain and Ireland do icons like nowhere else and travel here is a fascinating mix of famous names and little-known discoveries. Britain comprises England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with the latter three enjoying devolved governments of some type. Ireland, independent since the early 1920s, has a unique culture with a strong musical and literary heritage. Geographically, Britain and Ireland are separated by the Irish Sea and the Channel divides Britain from France. Britain's highest landscapes are in Scotland and to the north of Wales. These may be compact countries but don't underestimate the amount to see and do.



CASTLES

Centuries of tribal, familial and national conflict mean castles pepper these lands. Some of the most impressive are Cahir Castle in Ireland, Caernarvon Castle in Wales, Leeds and Warwick castles in England and Stirling Castle in Scotland.



LITERATURE

Be inspired by British and Irish writers. Take a Joycean tour of Dublin. London's literary heroes include Charles Dickens. Oxford has fantasists such as JRR Tolkien and Philip Pullman, Stratford William Shakespeare. Edinburgh inspired JK Rowling and Irvine Welsh.



WHISKY

The 'water of life' (*uisge beatha* in Gaelic) flows here. Scotland is a famed source: Laphroig distillery on Islay for a distinctive briny blast, on Speyside try Aberlour and Cardhu. Or visit Bushmills Old Distillery in Northern Ireland and Penderyn in Wales.



FESTIVALS

Watch torch-lit processions on the Shetland Islands at the Up-Helly-aa festival and burning effigies at Lewes' Bonfire Night. See a goat crowned at Puck Fair in Killorglin, Ireland, and longboats at Jorvik Viking Festival in York. Or sing out at Eisteddfod, Wales.



SPORT

Britain has invented – or codified – many world sports. The home of golf is St Andrews in Scotland. The 'Cradle of Cricket' is Hambledon, a sleepy village in Hampshire, England. Rugby was invented at Rugby School. Football's first governing body was English.



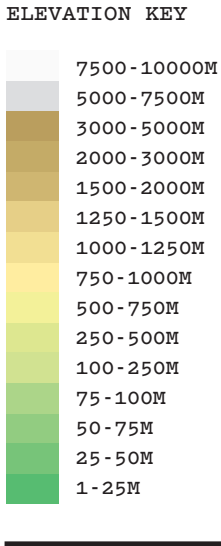
GARDENS

Gardens, whether grand or quirky, are an obsession here. Some amazing green spaces are the sub-tropical Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall and Inverewe Garden, Scotland. Watery Stourhead in Wiltshire and Powerscourt Garden in Ireland are worth visiting.

Right: A view along Duddon Valley in Britain's Lake District.



Britain & Ireland



TRANSPORT

B8, C6, C7, D5, D8, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, F9

C7, C8, D3, D5, D7, E2, E9, F1, F7, G9

Below: Victoria Square in Belfast (left) and (right) the London Eye in the British capital.

The two key transport hubs for Britain and Ireland are their capital cities. Few cities are as comprehensively connected to the world by air as London (and typically at competitive fares), which has two large airports at Heathrow and Gatwick. Onward travel around the British Isles requires leaving London by train in any direction (including mainland Europe) or driving. Dublin, the Irish capital, receives many more flights from the Americas these days. Although there are mainline train routes across Ireland – north, south, east or west – driving is an appealing option. In Britain, motorways run the length of the nation, north to south and also out to Wales and the south coast. Train travel is expensive so many people drive.

1
London (see p420-421 for city map)
One of the world’s most visited cities, London has something for everyone. Most international visitors arrive via one of five airports: Heathrow, to the west; Gatwick to the south; Stansted to the northeast; Luton to the northwest; and London City in the Docklands. An increasingly popular form of transport is the Eurostar – the Channel Tunnel train – between London and Paris or Brussels.

2
Cardiff
The Welsh capital has embraced the role with vigour. Cardiff Airport is 12 miles southwest of Cardiff, past Barry. Trains from major British cities arrive at Cardiff Central station, on the southern edge of the city centre.

3
Edinburgh
Scotland’s capital, filled with quirky, come-hither nooks, begs to be discovered. It is well served by air, road and rail. Flight time from London is around one hour. There are fast and frequent rail connections to London, York, Newcastle and Glasgow.

4
Dublin
A small capital with a huge reputation, Dublin’s mix of heritage and hedonism will not disappoint. Almost all airlines fly in and out of Dublin Airport, 13km north of the city centre. Ferries from the UK arrive at the Dublin Port terminal; ferries from France arrive in the southern port of Rosslare. Dublin is also the nation’s rail hub with two main train stations: Heuston and Connolly.

5
Glasgow
Glasgow International Airport lies ten miles west. Glasgow Prestwick Airport, 30 miles southwest, is used by low-cost carriers. The two main train stations are Glasgow Central station and Queen Street.

6
Birmingham
Renewal continues in Britain’s second-largest city in its former industrial heartland. Birmingham Airport, eight miles east of the centre, has flights to cities in the UK and Europe as well as some long-haul routes. Most long-distance trains arrive at New St station.

7
Manchester
The uncrowned cultural capital of the north is both historic and hedonistic. Its international airport is 12 miles south of the city. Manchester Piccadilly is the main station for most mainline train services across Britain; Victoria Station serves destinations in the northwest.

8
Belfast
Belfast International Airport is located 30km northwest of Northern Ireland’s transformed capital; flights serve the UK, Europe and the USA. George Best Belfast City Airport is located 6km northeast of the city centre. Car ferries to and from Scotland and England dock at Larne, 37km north of Belfast. For trains, Belfast Central Station is east of the city centre.

9
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Newcastle is on the main rail line between London and Edinburgh. Newcastle International Airport, seven miles north of the city, has direct services to UK and European cities.





SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- SEE
- DO

ITINERARY

- 1
- 2

Orkney: The interior of the Italian chapel was decorated by Italian prisoners of war in 1943.

1

Cairngorms National Park
Britain's largest, highest national park is a wild granite landscape that supports rare birdlife and alpine vegetation. The harsh mountain environment gives way lower down to scenic glens softened by open forests of Scots pine. It's prime hill-walking territory with many Munros (hills over 3000ft in elevation) to bag.

2

West Highland Way
The most popular long-distance walk in Britain reaches from Glasgow's outskirts to Fort William, the west coast's adventure capital. The 96-mile path takes a week to walk; hikers pass Loch Lomond. Fort William, at the foot of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak, is a magnet for mountain bikers.

3

Rosslyn Chapel
Scotland's most enigmatic chapel was built in the 15th century, and the ornate interior is a monument to the mason's art. As well as flowers, vines and angels, the carved stones depict the pagan 'Green Man'; other figures represent the Knights Templar. Note also carvings of plants from the Americas that predate Columbus' voyage of discovery.

4

Balmoral Castle
The upper valley of the River Dee was made famous by the monarchy – today's royal family still holiday at Balmoral Castle, built for Queen Victoria in 1855. Balmoral sparked the revival of the Scottish Baronial style of architecture of so many of Scotland's 19th-century country houses. Only the ballroom is open to the public but there are waymarked walks within the Estate.



5

Loch Ness
The cold waters of deep and narrow Loch Ness have been extensively searched for Nessie, an elusive monster. Keep an eye out from the quieter B862 road along the eastern shore and stop at the Dore Inn, a beautifully restored country pub with loch views specialising in quality Scottish produce.

6

Glen Coe
Scotland's most famous glen entered the history books in 1692 when the resident MacDonald clan was murdered by Campbell soldiers. Climb to the Lost Valley, a magical mountain sanctuary haunted by the ghosts of MacDonalds who died here escaping the massacre. Glen Coe's eastern approach is guarded by the rocky pyramid of Buachaille Etive Mor (the Great Shepherd of Etive).

7

Isle of Mull
Pack binoculars and hiking boots: Mull

claims some of the finest scenery in the Inner Hebrides. Birds of prey soar over the ridges of Ben More, the black basalt crags of Burg and the white sand and emerald waters that fringe the Ross. Tobermory is the bright little port from where whale-watching boats depart.

8

Isle of Skye
Skye (*an t-Eilean Sgiathanach* in Gaelic) takes its name from the old Norse *sky-a*, meaning 'cloud island', a Viking reference to the mist-shrouded Cuillin Hills. It offers some of Scotland's finest (and most challenging) walking. The reward is a dram of the single malt whisky from local distillery Talisker.

9

Glasgow
Glaswegian architecture is a match for rival Edinburgh. Charles Rennie Mackintosh's sublime designs dot the city, his greatest being the Glasgow School of Art (1896–1909). The city's Gothic cathedral has a timelessness, its imposing interior conjuring medieval might. Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is a grand Victorian cathedral of culture with a bewildering variety of exhibits. And Zaha Hadid's modern Riverside Museum at the harbour covers the Clyde's shipbuilding heritage.

10

Orkney archipelago
Predating Stonehenge and the pyramids of Giza, extraordinary Skara Brae on Orkney is one of the world's most evocative and best-preserved prehistoric villages. Even the stone furniture survived 5000 years. It's not Orkney's only ancient site: Maeshowe is a Stone Age tomb complete with Viking graffiti. Don't miss the WWII Italian chapel on Lamb Holm.

1

5-day itinerary
The Borders

Scotland's borders testify to a past of battles and bandits. From **Edinburgh** drive south to Sir Walter Scott's former home at **Abbotsford**, followed by a flying visit to the Border abbey of **Melrose** (the town is a charming place to overnight). Then head west to Moffat, passing the glorious scenery of **St Mary's Loch**, and continue to **Dumfries**, once home to national poet Robert Burns. Detour first to **Caerlaverock Castle** then again to refuel at the food town of **Castle Douglas** then bear northwest to **Alloway** (Burns' birthplace) then onto **Wemyss Bay** and the ferry to **Rothesay** to see the stately home of Mount Stuart. Return to the mainland and the city of **Glasgow**.

2

7-day itinerary
The Islands

This route is usually done by car, but it also makes a brilliant cycling tour (270 miles, including the 60 miles from Ullapool to Inverness train station, making both start and finish accessible by rail). From **Oban** it's a five-hour ferry trip to **Barra**; spend the night here (book ahead). On day two, after a visit to Kisimul Castle, take the ferry to **South**

Uist. Walk the wild beaches of the west coast, sample the seafood and perhaps go fishing on the trout lochs. Continue through **Benbecula** and **North Uist**, birdwatching country. Overnight at Lochmaddy on North Uist (if camping or hostelling, a night at Berneray is a must) before taking the ferry to **Harris**, whose west coast has some of

Scotland's most spectacular beaches. The road continues north from Tarbert, where you'll find good hotels, through rugged hills to **Lewis**. Don't go directly to Stornoway, but loop west via the **Callanish Standing Stones** and Arnol Blackhouse museum. Spend a final night in Stornoway, then take the ferry to **Ullapool** for the scenic drive (or ride) to Inverness.



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- SEE
- DO

ITINERARY

- 1
- 2

Peak District National Park: Hayfield village and looking towards the classic Peak District scenery of Kinder Low's moorland.

1

Lake District National Park
Feel what inspired England's 19th-century Romantic poets among the craggy peaks, mountain tarns and chilly lakes of the Lake District. The park is awash with outdoor activities, from lake cruises to mountain walks (Scafell Pike, Catbells and Haystacks are classics). But many visit for the literary links: William Wordsworth lived in Dove Cottage by Grasmere; Beatrix Potter's Hill Top farmhouse sparked her tales.

2

Hadrian's Wall
Named after the emperor who commissioned it, Hadrian's Wall was one of Rome's greatest engineering projects. The 73-mile wall was built across Britain's narrow neck between AD 122 and 128 to separate Romans and Picts. Sections survive, punctuated by forts such as Housesteads.

3

Kirkgate Market, Leeds
Leeds embodies rediscovered northern self-confidence and it has the market to match: Kirkgate, Britain's largest covered market, selling fresh meat, fish and fruit and vegetables, and now boasting a popular street-food hall.

4

York
This city of cultural and historical wealth has lost little of its lustre. A ring of 13th-century walls encloses a medieval web of lanes with York Minster, one of the world's prettiest Gothic cathedrals at its heart. York's Viking history is brought to life at Jorvik. Prefer trains to boats? Then admire steam-powered Mallard and the Flying Scotsman at the National Railway Museum.

5

Whitby
Whitby is both busy fishing port with a quayside fish market and traditional seaside resort, complete with a sandy beach and amusement arcades. Overlooking it is a ruined abbey, the inspiration for part of Bram Stoker's Gothic horror story Dracula and now focal point for Whitby Goth Weekends.

6

Liverpool
Find the real Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane in the home of the Fab Four. Start at the Beatles Story on the Albert Dock: fans should book a tour to Mendips and 20 Forthlin Road, the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Then shop for memorabilia in the Cavern Quarter.

7

Manchester
Explore Manchester's distinct blend of history and culture at the Manchester Art Gallery and the People's History Museum. Old Trafford may interest soccer fans. But what makes the north's uncrowned capital really fun is the swirl of hedonism that lets you dine, drink and dance yourself into happy oblivion.

8

Peak District National Park
This is one of the most popular



walking areas in England, with vistas of moors and dales. Ancient stone villages are folded into creases and hillsides are littered with stately homes. Mountaineers train in this area, which offers technical climbing on exposed tors (crag). Cyclists test themselves on off-road trails. And hikers hit the Pennine Way, which runs north from Edale to the Scottish Borders.

9

Alnwick Castle
Set in parklands designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the ancestral home of the duke of Northumberland has changed little since the 14th century. It's a favourite set for film-makers. Six rooms are open to the public, displaying incredible Italian paintings. Below the castle lies the maze of cobbled lanes of Northumberland's historic Alnwick.

10

Isle of Man
This semiautonomous island is home to the world's oldest continuous parliament, the Tynwald, a type of tail-less cat, and beautiful scenery that was designated a Biosphere Reserve by Unesco in 2016. The bucolic charm is shattered during the summer season of Tourist Trophy (TT) motorbike racing.

11

Castle Howard
Theatrical grandeur and audacity make this breathtaking stately home one of the world's most beautiful buildings. When the Earl of Carlisle hired his pal Sir John Vanbrugh to design his new home in 1699, he was hiring a man who had no formal training. Luckily, Vanbrugh hired Nicholas Hawksmoor, who was Christopher Wren's clerk of works. The result was this great baroque house, filled with treasures.

1

5-day itinerary
The Northeast

Tear yourself away from **Durham's** river and fabulous castle and cathedral and head north to **Beamish Open-Air Museum** to experience the Northeast's industrial age. Pass Anthony Gormley's **Angel of the North** sculpture on your way to the nightlife capital of **Newcastle**. After partying here, continue north to **Alnwick Castle** (aka Harry Potter's Hogwarts School). Then take the coast road, past beaches and more castles at Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh to **Lindisfarne**, the Holy Island, an other-worldly pilgrimage site and an important Celtic Christian centre founded in the 7th century by Saint Aiden. Return to Newcastle via wild **Northumberland National Park**.

2

10-day itinerary
The Northwest

Manchester is the gateway to England's Northwest. From this vibrant city head north through former industrial heartlands to **Haworth** on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Home to the Brontë sisters in the 19th century, it lies on the south edge of moors and stone-walled fields. Overnight here then continue a short drive north to **Bolton Abbey**, the atmospheric ruins of a 12th-century monastery and onward to the handsome market town of **Harrogate**. Cross the **Yorkshire Dales National Park** diagonally, stopping for hikes and staying overnight in villages such as Grassington and Hawes. Cross the Cumbrian border and into the **Lake District National Park** via Kendal, an outdoor activities hub. If you're not hiked out, seek some of Britain's most scenic views. Otherwise go boating on lakes such as Derwentwater or visit arts attractions such as Brantwood, the home of Victorian art critic John Ruskin, or Blackwell, an Arts and Crafts house, or places associated with Beatrix Potter and the Romantic Poets. Return south to Manchester on the M6 motorway.



SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- SEE
- DO

ITINERARY

- 1
- 2

1

Bath
Bath's grand Georgian architecture – exemplified by the Royal Crescent, a terrace of town houses built between 1767 and 1775 – and one of the world's best-preserved Roman bathhouses have been drawing attention since the 18th century. The heart of Bath's Roman spa is the geothermally heated Great Bath.

2

Oxford
The world's most famed university city is a wonderful place to wander. The elegant honey-toned buildings of the scattered colleges (not all are open to the public) wrap around tranquil courtyards, spires twirl into the sky. Parks, pubs, rivers and museums, especially the Ashmolean and the Pitt Rivers, round out a weekend.

3

The Cotswolds
This tangle of golden villages, thatched cottages and old mansions of honey-coloured stone rolls across gentle hills and fields. Handsome Stow-on-the-Wold is still an important market town; Painswick is one of the Cotswold's most unspoiled towns; and bucolic Slad was the home of Laurie Lee.

4

Stratford-Upon-Avon
William Shakespeare was born in Stratford in 1564 and died here in 1616. Take in a play by the world-famous Royal Shakespeare Company at several theatres, where Lawrence Olivier, Judi Dench and Patrick Stewart have trod the boards.

5

Cambridge
The tight-packed core of ancient colleges features such gems as Trinity College's Tudor gateway and vast Great Court, Kings College's Gothic chapel (its choir sings evensong during term time), and the Bridge of Sighs. 'The Backs' along the River Cam offer green spaces.

6

Stonehenge
Britain's most iconic archaeological site is not just a ring of monolithic stones but part of a complex of ancient monuments. No one knows for sure what drove prehistoric Britons to start building around 3000BC, or how they managed to drag massive stones from many miles away.

7

Cornwall's North Coast
Immerse yourself in the classic Cornish combination of cliffs, sandy bays and white-horse surf. Newquay is the surfy, party hub but the coast also includes atmospheric Arthurian Tintagel Castle and the culinary capital of Padstow.

8

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
The city's maritime heritage features three historic ships: HMS Victory was Lord Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). The raising of the 16th-century warship the Mary Rose revealed Henry VIII's favourite ship. HMS Warrior is a floating Victorian-era fortress.

9

Brighton
Raves on the beach, Graham Greene, mods and rockers, party weekends, Green politics and the UK's biggest gay scene: bohemian Brighton is where Britain's seaside experience turns cool. Hit the Lanes for eclectic shopping.

10

Windsor Castle
The world's largest and oldest continuously occupied fortress, a vision of battlements and towers, is one of the Queen's principal residences. Take a tour of the gilded State Apartments and elegant chapels. The Changing of the Guard at 11am is a fabulous spectacle.





4-day itinerary
The Southeast

Leave London by its southwestern corner – both rail and road connections are good here. Head first for Jane Austen’s house at **Chawton** and the collection of women’s writing at nearby Chawton House Library. Continue southwest to **Winchester**, capital of an ancient kingdom. The beautiful cathedral is Jane Austen’s resting place. Now bear east through

the towns and villages of the **South Downs National Park**, stopping at **Singleton’s** Open-Air Museum of historic buildings and **Chichester**, a city with bracing beach walks on its doorstep. Continue to bohemian **Brighton** for a night out, then make your way to **Beachy Head’s** white cliffs – next stop France – before returning north to London.



10-day itinerary
The Southwest

The southwest of England takes a bit of effort to reach but repays in full with a green landscape of hills and moors, surrounded by sparkling seas. Start in **Bristol**, an enthralling port city, then saunter down through Somerset to **Glastonbury** – famous for its annual music festival and the best place to stock up on candles or crystals at any time of year. South

leads to Dorset, where highlights include picturesque **Shaftesbury**. West leads to heathery **Exmoor National Park**, then it’s onwards into Devon, where there’s a choice of coasts, as well as **Dartmoor National Park**, the highest hills in southern England. Cross into Cornwall to explore the space-age biodomes of the **Eden Project**. Nearby, but in

another era entirely, is **Tintagel Castle**, the legendary birthplace of King Arthur. Depending on your tastes, you can hang ten in surf-flavoured party town **Newquay**, or browse the galleries at **St Ives**. **Land’s End** is the natural finish to this wild west meander, where the English mainland comes to a full stop. Sink a drink in the First & Last Inn at nearby Sennen.

