



YOUR O.A.T. ADVENTURE TRAVEL PLANNING GUIDE®

Scotland's Legends & Lochs: From Glasgow to Edinburgh 2021

Small Groups: 8-16 travelers—guaranteed! (average of 13)

Overseas Adventure Travel®

The Leader in Personalized Small Group Adventures on the Road Less Traveled

Dear Traveler,

We can dream, can't we? That's what I've been doing these past months, as I look forward to traveling as soon as it's safe to do so. I know you're eager to get out there again soon, too, and our ***New! Scotland Revealed*** itinerary described inside is an excellent way to start.

Exactly how your adventure unfolds is up to you, because you have many choices to customize it. You can arrive early and stay later—perhaps by adding a pre- or post-trip extension, spending time in a Stopover city, or combining 2 or more trips. Plus, your itinerary is laced with free time, so you'll have opportunities to do your own thing. More than 80% of the travelers who reserve this trip choose to tailor their adventure. In fact, O.A.T. is the only travel company to offer such flexibility and choice for an experience that is truly personalized.

As for *New! Scotland Revealed*, thanks to your small group of 8-16 travelers (average 13) you can expect some unforgettable experiences. Here are a few that stood out for me:

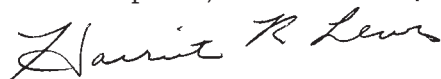
Gain insights into a tight-knit Scottish community during *A Day in the Life* of Gartmore Village, a small town whose residents banded together to purchase the local pub and general store when the store owners retired. We'll learn about the village's unique system for tracking purchases, which is based entirely on trust. But the most moving stories of all are the ones you'll hear directly from the local people. You'll meet them, too, and hear their personal experiences when we meet the man who orchestrated this community buyout. As he guides us on a walking tour of the village, we'll also have a chance to meet some of the local residents.

You'll also have the rare opportunity to learn about daily life in Glasgow when we share a meal with a local family in their home. Gain insights into their evening routing and experience the traditional flavors of Scotland when we sit down with our hosts for a homecooked dinner.

The way we see it, you've come a long way to experience the true culture—not some fairytale version of it. That's why we don't shy away from controversial topics, and why all our Trip Experience Leaders are "insiders" who live in the country. At times you may be nudged out of your comfort zone. But you will also be inspired by the resilience and humanity of the wonderful people you meet. And that's what adventure travel is all about.

Thanks for letting me dream along with you about *New! Scotland Revealed*. I'm optimistic that soon we won't just be dreaming, but experiencing the enrichment that only travel can bring. Until then, feel free to call our Adventure Specialists at **1-800-955-1925**.

Love and peace,



Harriet R. Lewis
Vice Chairman
Overseas Adventure Travel

P.S. Due to the uncertainties of the continuing pandemic, we are **EXTENDING our Risk-Free Booking Policy through 12/31/21**. Please see details at www.oattravel.com/riskfree-booking.



USA Today
10Best Readers'
Choice Awards



"Best Tours"
Presented by
Solo Traveler

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EXPERIENCE THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

in Scotland

This adventure not only showcases iconic sights, but takes you beyond them to experience the culture through unique activities, engagement with the natural world, and authentic encounters with local people. Since our founding in 1978, O.A.T. has become America's leader in personalized small group journeys on the road less traveled.

SMALL GROUPS: 8-16 TRAVELERS (AVERAGE OF 13)—GUARANTEED

The world feels more intimate and engaging when your experience of it is also personal and genuine. That's why our groups never exceed 16 travelers. This gives you access to people and places larger groups simply can't reach. More authentic interactions. Deeper bonds with your travel mates. Personal service from your Trip Experience Leader. Smoother transitions. And a far more satisfying experience than any traditional tour offers.

THE BEST TRIP EXPERIENCE LEADERS

Your English-speaking, O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader is a resident of the region you are visiting, so you will get a true insider's perspective that brings each place alive—the stories, food, customs, hidden treasures and more.

AUTHENTIC CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Engage with local people through visits to farms, factories, markets, and artisans' studios; school visits; Home-Hosted meals; and more.

LOCAL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

To see the world like the locals, you should travel like one. Our small group size allows us to take the roads and waterways that are less traveled, and we often follow them using the same unique modes of transportation that the locals use—be it a canoe, a camel or a vintage cab.

UNIQUE LODGINGS

Our lodgings reflect the local character, from smaller family-run hotels and historic manors to comfy inns. Occasionally, larger hotels closer to city centers are used. Wherever you stay, you're assured fine comfort and hospitality.

OUR WORLDWIDE OFFICES

With 36 regional offices around the world, we are perfectly poised to leverage our local relationships to deliver an excellent experience and value. During this trip, you'll be supported by our team in the United Kingdom.



Explore the Isle of Iona, Scotland



Connect with local people in Aberdeen, Scotland

THE PILLARS OF DISCOVERY

Enriching. Inspiring. Unforgettable. These features form the foundation of your *Scotland Revealed* adventure.

GRAND CIRCLE FOUNDATION (GCF) VISIT

GCF was established in 1992 to help change people's lives in the world where we live, work, and travel. To date, we have pledged or donated \$200 million worldwide.

You'll see GCF's work in action when we visit the Shakti Women's Aid, a non-profit organization that provides vital services for immigrants who are survivors of domestic abuse. Donations from the Foundation will be used to furnish their Edinburgh drop-in center and buy toys for the children of survivors.

CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

Every culture has its joys and achievements, and we celebrate them all. But every place also has its challenges, and to gloss over them would not do justice to those whose stories need to be told—nor to you, as a traveler who deserves more than a sugar-coated version of things. So our Trip Experience Leaders will lead frank discussions on controversial issues, and introduce you to people whose stories will expand your understanding.

For example, we'll learn about the deep religious divide in Glasgow during a conversation with two locals, a devout Catholic and a Protestant with strong anti-Catholic views. We'll hear tales of violence, death, and deeply-entrenched prejudices that still linger in the city today and they will speak candidly of their own beliefs and their hopes for their city's future.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Do you ever wonder, "What would it be like to live here?" when you visit new lands? Let's find out during your O.A.T. *A Day in the Life*, an exclusive, immersive experience that places you in the heart of a community where you'll meet various people where they live, work, and play; visit the neighborhood school; lend a hand with daily chores; and break bread with our hosts.

This adventure includes *A Day in the Life* of Gartmore Village, a small town whose residents came together to purchase local business when their owners retired. We'll meet the local man who orchestrated this community buyout and learn about the village's unique "tic" system to keep track of purchases. This system is based entirely on trust and is only possible because of the tight-knit spirit of the village.

HOME-HOSTED EXPERIENCES

Stories shared. Differences solved. Taste buds engaged. Good will extended. It's amazing the things that can happen across a kitchen table, so we'll break into groups of 5-6 to join a local family in their home for a snack or a meal. This is a rare opportunity to witness family life, learn local customs, and taste some home-cooked fare.

On this adventure, we'll learn more about the rich culture of Scotland when we share a meal with a local family in their home. We'll see the family go about their evening routine and get an authentic look into what life is really like in Glasgow as we enjoy a simple, hearty dinner showcasing the traditional flavors of Scottish cuisine.

GRAND CIRCLE FOUNDATION

Changing people's lives, one village, one school, one person at a time

Dear Traveler,

In 1992 we established Grand Circle Foundation, an entity of the Lewis Family Foundation, as a means to give back to the world that had already given us so much. We've pledged or donated more than \$200 million worldwide to support the education of young people and the preservation of international treasures and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Of course, none of this would be possible without your help. A portion of the proceeds of every adventure is donated to Grand Circle Foundation—so just as your life will be enriched by the discoveries you'll make on your journey, you'll also help to enrich the lives of the people you'll meet along the way.

Thank you for traveling with us, and for helping to change people's lives.

Love and peace,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair, Grand Circle Foundation



GIVING BACK TO THE WORLD WE TRAVEL

Since our inception in 1992, the Grand Circle Foundation has pledged or donated more than \$200 million to projects around the world.

JOIN OUR GENEROUS TRAVELERS

We consider each and every one of our travelers to be partners in our worldwide giving. Some travelers, however, are so inspired by the schools and villages they visit, they are compelled to give more. In fact, our travelers have donated more than \$1 million in 2019 alone. And because we have no administrative costs, 100% of donations are used to help change people's lives.

BETTER OUR OWN COMMUNITIES— ALL AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to the destinations where we travel, we strive to better the communities where we work—from our headquarters in Boston to our 36 offices around the world. In Boston, more than 99% of our associates participate in community service each year. Worldwide, nearly all of our offices organize annual community service events of their own..

How you can help

To learn more about ongoing Foundation projects, you can sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, the Inside Scoop, at www.oattravel.com/community/the-inside-scoop. When you do, you'll not only receive updates on Grand Circle Foundation, but the latest news and discoveries on all things Grand Circle and Overseas Adventure Travel.

THE LEADER IN SOLO TRAVEL in Scotland—and Around the World

ON THIS ADVENTURE ...

FREE Single Supplements: We don't charge a single supplement on this adventure and optional trip extensions—a savings of \$575–\$1,195 per person compared to other travel companies. But single spaces fill quickly, so early reservations are advised.

Travel Solo, But Never Alone: On average, half of your group will also be traveling independently, so it's easier to forge special bonds as you experience unforgettable moments together during your adventure. Plus, your Trip Experience Leader can help connect you with fellow travelers who share your common interests.

You'll be in good hands, thanks to your dedicated local Trip Experience Leader (a resident of Scotland), and the expertise of our regional office team in the United Kingdom.

Increased Single Space: In 2021, we have 470 single spaces, with up to 8 single spaces per departure. See available FREE single space at www.oattravel.com/sco2021.

Exclusive Women's Departures: We are thrilled to offer one women-only departure of *Scotland Revealed: October 11, 2021*. Space is limited so don't delay. Join our traveling sisterhood today!

The leader in solo-friendly travel for Americans— by the numbers

More than **50,000** solo travelers joined us in 2018 and 2019—on their own or with a friend or relative

20,000 single spaces with a FREE or low-cost Single Supplement in 2021—a 25% increase from 2019

More than **90%** of solo women travelers rated their adventure excellent

38 exclusive women's departures featured on 23 of our most popular adventures—8 of which are single-only departures



Solo doesn't mean "alone." Three out of eight O.A.T. travelers join our small groups as solos, so you will be in good company.

Lower prices than last year—a value of \$1000 per couple

New! Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes

Small Group Adventure

Scotland: Glasgow, Oban, Inverness, St. Andrews, Edinburgh

Countries: 1 | Cities: 5

Small groups: 8–16 travelers—guaranteed!
(average of 13)

15 days from **\$5095**
Includes international airfare
Travel from only **\$340** a day

14 days from **\$4095**
Without international airfare
FREE Single Supplement

Maximize Your Discoveries & Value

Optional extensions:

Inverness and the Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris
6 nights pre-trip from **\$3395**
Travel from only \$566 per night

New! The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions

5 nights post-trip from **\$2995**
Travel from only \$599 per night

New! Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England
5 nights post-trip from **\$2495**
Travel from only \$499 per night

It's Included

- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation
- Accommodations for 13 nights
- 26 meals—13 breakfasts, 5 lunches, and 8 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 7 small group activities
- **Explore in a small group of 8–16 travelers (average group size of 13)**
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next O.A.T. adventure—an average of \$387



To get a richer view of the Included Features on this adventure, watch our Trip Itinerary video at www.oattravel.com/sco2021

Iona Abbey, Isle of Iona, Scotland



Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive Inverness, Scotland • Overland to Nairn

Day 3 Overland to Portree, Isle of Skye

Day 4 Portree • Isle of Skye tour • Explore clearance village

Day 5 Outer Hebrides • Isles of Harris and Lewis

Day 6 Stornoway • Callanish Standing Stones • Weaving Demonstration

Day 7 Stornoway • Meet *guga* hunter

Day 8 Fly to Glasgow • Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S. for Glasgow, Scotland

Evening: You depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Glasgow, Scotland. You will most likely have one connection in London, with about a 2-hour layover.

Day 2 Arrive in Glasgow, Scotland • Visit Willow Tea Rooms

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Apex City of Glasgow Hotel or similar

Morning: You'll arrive in the lively city of Glasgow in the late morning or early afternoon, depending on your specific flight arrangements. Upon arrival, expect to spend about 45 minutes clearing customs and completing any health guidelines your airline requires. Travelers who

have reserved their airfare with O.A.T. will also have their temperature checked by your Trip Experience Leader or O.A.T. representative before boarding your transfer vehicle, per our NEW health and safety protocols; those who do not reserve airfare with us will have their temperature checked upon arrival at the hotel. You will then be escorted to your hotel near the city by private car in groups of 2-3 or by private minivan in groups of 4-5, depending on the number of travelers who arrived with you. The transfer is approximately 30 minutes, depending on traffic.

Upon arrival, we'll check in, receive our room assignments, and meet up with our Trip Experience Leader and those travelers who took our *The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris* or our New! *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions* pre-trip extension.

Depending on where we stay, hotel amenities may include an on-site restaurant and bar, while each of the hotel's air-conditioned rooms typically features coffee- and tea-making facilities, a safe, TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom. You'll have some free time to settle in and unpack.

Lunch: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide you with recommendations.

Afternoon: Around 1:30pm, we'll gather for an orientation walk around the vicinity of our hotel. During this time, our Trip Experience Leader will point out ATMs, restaurants, pharmacies, and spots to explore during your free time. Around 2:30pm, we'll return to our hotel and you'll have some free time to rest or explore.

Then, around 6:30pm, we'll regroup in the hotel lobby and set out on a 10-minute walk to reach the Willow Tea Rooms. Tea rooms have a long and storied history in Glasgow, dating back to the temperance movement in the late 19th century when they emerged as an alternative gathering place to pubs. The Willow Tea Rooms are particularly beloved by the city as they are the last remaining tea rooms designed by noted Scottish architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh. When we arrive, we will be greeted by Gordon, a trustee of the building and a passionate admirer of Mackintosh's. Gordon will take us on a tour of the tea rooms to show us the original Mackintosh features, and explain the importance of the tea rooms not only to him, but to the people of Glasgow.

Dinner: Around 7:15pm, we'll sit down to a Welcome Dinner at the Willow Tea Rooms, featuring an array of Scottish dishes to welcome you to the country. Our Trip Experience Leader will also hold a welcome briefing during dinner. During this briefing, we will review our itinerary in more detail (including any changes

that may need to occur). Our Trip Experience Leader will also discuss logistics, safety and emergency procedures, and answer questions we may have.

Evening: We'll walk back to our hotel, arriving by about 8:30pm. You have the freedom to retire to your room for the night to rest, or to experience Glasgow's nightlife. You might like to find a local pub where you can grab a pint with your fellow travelers.

Freedom To Explore: During your three days in Glasgow, you have the freedom to explore this fascinating city on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Visit the **Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum:** Witness a fantastic display of around 8000 pieces spread out in 22 galleries. The museum showcases artifacts, war remnants, and paintings like Salvador Dali's "Christ of St John of the Cross."
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute taxi ride, about \$15 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** 10am-5pm, Monday-Thursday and Saturday; 11am-5pm, Friday and Sunday.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Discover **Glasgow Cathedral:** Explore the only surviving cathedral on mainland Scotland that withstood the changes of the Protestant Reformation. As you walk around the medieval cathedral, built in the 13th century, look up to find spectacular stained glass windows.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute taxi ride, about \$15 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** 9:30am-5:30am, Monday-Saturday; 1pm-5pm, Sunday.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Soak up the natural splendors of the **Glasgow Botanic Gardens:** Stroll around the 50-acre property to see an abundance of plants and

flowers, and venture into Kibble Palace—the ground’s greenhouse—to get a glimpse of tropical rain forest flora.

- **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute taxi ride, about \$15 USD one way.
- **Hours:** 7am–dusk, daily.
- **Cost:** Free.

Day 3 Explore Glasgow • Grand Circle Foundation visit: Invisible Women of Scotland • Controversial Topic: The deep religious divide in Glasgow today with Marie Doherty (Catholic) and Bill Madden (Protestant) • Home-Hosted Dinner

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

Exclusive O.A.T. Activities: During today’s discoveries, we’ll first visit the **Grand Circle Foundation** site, Invisible Women of Scotland, to learn about its efforts to combat gender stereotypes and promote equality, representation, inclusion and diversity for women from different backgrounds, age, societal class, and ethnicity. Then, we’ll delve into the **Controversial Topic** of bigotry and the segregation of schools in Glasgow. We’ll be joined in the private area of a pub by two locals, Marie and Bill. As lifelong Glaswegians, they can offer personal perspectives that only locals can. We will hear from them harsh and uncomfortable truths, including tales of violence, death, and long-held prejudices that still linger over the city today. Read more about these two experiences below. Tonight, a local Scottish family will invite us into their home for a traditional **Home-Hosted Dinner**. Expect simple, hearty fare as you enjoy this unique opportunity to experience a slice of everyday Scottish life.

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: Around 9am, we’ll set off to visit the **Grand Circle Foundation** site, Invisible Women of Scotland. Supported by the National Lottery Community Fund, the Invisible Women of Scotland project is a charity focused on raising awareness of social issues faced by women that both limit and inhibit their ability to develop and evolve in the tourism industry. The project also aims to eradicate stereotypes, gender biases, and inequalities faced by homeless women across the country by striving to promote equality, representation, and inclusion for women from different backgrounds, age, societal class, and ethnicity. Through their training, Invisible Women of Scotland hope to empower homeless women by assisting in their personal growth and development by encouraging them to actively participate in the project themselves—fostering a sense of belonging while increasing their independence. Their training will focus on transferable skills as they prepare these women to become tour guides in Glasgow, but should they wish to do something different, they will also get support to help them access other employment opportunities.

We’ll arrive at the Invisible Women of Scotland’s hub around 9:15am and meet with Zakia, one of the women being supported by the charity. We will learn about the project from Zakia, who will also share her firsthand experience of how Invisible Women is helping both her and other homeless women to turn their lives around.

Then around 10:15am, we’ll embark on a guided tour of Glasgow with one of the women from the training program. As we’ll see, Glasgow gives off an old-world feel with its commanding cathedral and Victorian buildings, while still retaining the buzzing atmosphere

of a major city—it is, after all, the largest city in Scotland. While parts of Glasgow have made strides toward modernity, it still takes pride in its past, which will be on full display as we explore this morning. Glasgow also has around 6,000 homeless people—double than the second largest city in Scotland, Edinburgh. Our guide will then show us parts of Glasgow not normally be seen on a city tour—areas which hold a personal story for her and other guides.

We'll cap off our tour around 11am at the University of Glasgow, where our guide will lead us around the historic and stately campus—a place she is proud to share with us and one she never imagined guiding visitors through. As we walk, keep your eyes peeled for examples of Renaissance architecture. Our tour will come to an end around noon, after which we'll walk to a nearby pub.

Lunch: At about 12:30pm at a local pub, featuring hearty Scottish fare.

Afternoon: After our lunch concludes around 1:30pm, we'll be joined by two local Glaswegians, Marie and Bill, for a conversation about the **Controversial Topic** of the deep religious divide in Glasgow today. Religious segregation has a long and bloody history in Scotland, rife with bible smuggling, royal intrigue, and—more recently—football hooligans.

This religious rift is most present in Scotland's ongoing school segregation. In a country of 6 million people, the city of Glasgow contains 1.6 million. Catholics make up around 26% of this population—yet only 15% of the schools in Glasgow are Catholic, while 85% of the schools are either Protestant or non-denominational. This creates both an imbalance in school choice for Catholic families and fewer opportunities for Protestant and Catholic children to interact. This religious division is felt even more acutely when it comes to the rivalry between the

supporters of the two main football clubs, the Celtics and the Rangers (known collectively as “The Old Firm”).

We'll sit down in the Wintersgills Pub, a typical Glasgow pub commonly frequented by fans of the Catholic football team, the Celtics. After our conversation, our Trip Experience Leader will extend the opportunity to visit a pub popular with the rival Protestant team, the Rangers. In a private room in the back, we'll talk with two locals—Marie Doherty, a devout Catholic, and Bill Madden, a Protestant with strong anti-Catholic views—on how religious tensions have affected their lives and families. During our hour-long conversation, both Marie and Bill will speak candidly of their own deeply-held beliefs and their hopes for their city's future. As we'll find out, Scotland has a long way to go to overcome religious discrimination: The country remains one of the few in Europe where children are still segregated in schools based on religion, and violent assaults between Catholics and Protestants are sadly all too common.

Marie will share with us the rifts that have occurred in her family, caused by “mixed marriages”—when a Catholic marries a Protestant. She will go into detail about how religious bigotry in general, and the violence that often goes hand in hand with the local football culture, has personally affected her and her family. She will also talk about the impact growing up in segregated schools has had on her, and how it now continues to affect her children. We come to understand the huge religious divide throughout the city and the pain it has caused Marie personally.

On the other side of the religious spectrum, Bill will engage us in a frank and honest discussion about his deep-rooted stance against Catholics. A proud supporter of the Glasgow Rangers, the Protestant football team, Bill will tell us how and why he took part in anti-Catholic

protests at football matches, and that his involvement in these protests eventually led to a criminal record.

In a city this religiously divided, it is not surprising that faith is the main deciding factor for which football team you root for. 74% of Celtic supporters are Catholic, with only 10% of fans identifying as Protestant. For Rangers fans, the figures are similarly balanced—65% of their fans are Protestant, with only 2% Catholic. At the Rangers' Ibrox Stadium, the Union Flag and Ulster banner are displayed, while at Celtic Park, the Irish tricolor flag waves. When the two teams compete, the tension is palpable.

This rivalry is a long-standing one. During the late 19th century, Irish Catholic immigrants seeking refuge from economic difficulties at home settled in Glasgow's east end. Soon, they founded the Celtic football club, with a distinct Irish Catholic identity. This drove local Protestants to create their own team, the Rangers, and have since cultivated a strongly Protestant, Unionist identity, even going so far as to refuse to sign Catholic players. This position has since been overturned by the Rangers football club, but many fans continue to embrace a zealous form of football identity politics, occasionally with violent results. In 1995, 16-year-old Mark Scott, a Celtics fan, was murdered by a Rangers fan after a match.

As lifelong Glaswegians, Marie and Bill can offer perspectives on this situation that only locals can. We will hear from them harsh and uncomfortable truths, including tales of violence, death, and deeply-entrenched prejudices that still linger over the city today. After our interactive conversation, you'll also have 30 minutes to ask Bill and Marie any questions you may have. While this **Controversial Topic** may be emotionally

challenging, it's necessary to understand the real Scotland, and travelers often find it a rewarding and eye-opening experience.

We'll return to our hotel around 2pm via subway and you have the rest of the afternoon to make your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll choose to go back to the 13th-century Glasgow Cathedral. Step inside the medieval chapel and look up to witness stained glass windows.

Around 6:15pm, we'll meet up in the hotel lobby and board our private motorcoach for a 15-minute drive to the Glasgow's south side. Here, in a suburb of the city, we'll break into smaller groups of no more than 5 for what many travelers report is a highlight of their time in Scotland: A meal with a local family.

Dinner: Around 6:30pm we'll be welcomed into the home of a local family. Our hosts are likely from middle-class backgrounds; many are teachers (or former teachers) and have school-aged children at home. For our **Home-Hosted Dinner**, we'll share a home-cooked meal that the family would typically have on a weeknight—such as meat and potatoes. Expect simple, hearty fare showcasing the traditional flavors of Scottish cuisine.

This experience offers us a rare opportunity to connect with local culture on a more intimate level: In our hosts' homes, we'll see the family go about their evening routine and get an authentic look into what life is really like in Glasgow. There will be plenty of time to ask our hosts any questions we may have. Perhaps you'd like to know how they celebrate Burns Night, or how they feel about the sectarianism we learned about yesterday.

Evening: We'll say goodbye to our new friends around 8:00pm and return to the hotel by private motorcoach about 15 minutes later. From there, the rest of your evening is

free—you may choose to enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar, or you may retire to your room to pack for our overland journey to Oban tomorrow.

Day 4 Glasgow • Ayrshire Cooking Lesson

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Apex City of Glasgow Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll depart our hotel around 9am and drive by private motorcoach for one hour to reach Alloway. Here, we'll discover one of Scotland's national treasures: Robert Burns. A beloved author and poet, Burns is celebrated for works like *Auld Lang Syne*, the famous song sung around the world when the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve. The Scots even have an annual holiday dedicated to the literary giant: On Burns Night (celebrated on January 25), Scottish friends and families come together to read Burns's poetry and share a meal of haggis. We'll arrive in Alloway around 10am, where a local guide will lead us to the local church to witness the writer's memorial. Next, we'll walk to Burns Cottage, the humble home where he was born and raised, which has been converted into a museum. Here, we'll see handwritten manuscripts and other historical artifacts that will offer us a glimpse into his life.

Around 12:15pm, we'll board our private motorcoach and drive about 45 minutes to the coastal county Ayrshire. Here, we'll get a taste of the local cuisine during a cooking lesson led by sisters Ann and Mary, two avid cooks, at Ann's home. Today, Ann and Mary will teach us how to make one of Ann's favorite dishes, Ayrshire potato salad, using potatoes from Ann's own garden. The sisters will welcome us into the kitchen and assist us with the dicing,

slicing, and spicing of the meal. As we work, we'll have a chance to learn more about life in Ayrshire from our hosts, who were born and raised in the area and, when they're not cooking, work in their family's fencing business.

Travelers who would prefer not to cook are invited to take a walk along the beach near Ann's home during the cooking demonstration. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to accompany you on your beach walk to point out notable flora and fauna.

Lunch: Around 1pm, we'll all meet up for lunch at Ann's house, consisting of the meal we helped to prepare. Continue getting to know our hosts while you dine—Ayrshire does not receive many American visitors, so Ann and Mary will be only too happy to share their traditions and perspectives with you.

Afternoon: We'll say farewell to Ayrshire around 3pm and set out on a 45-minute drive back to our hotel where you'll have some free time to relax or continue exploring Glasgow at your own pace. You may choose to venture to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum where you can see an impressive display of 8000 paintings, historical artifacts, war remnants, and more. Or, perhaps you'll take a stroll through the Glasgow Botanic Gardens where you can enjoy the serenity of nature.

Dinner: On your own this evening. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for their suggestions.

Evening: You can get some sleep back at the hotel before our explorations tomorrow, or perhaps you'll enjoy an evening stroll around the city.

Day 5 *A Day in the Life* of Gartmore Village

• Overland to Oban

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

Exclusive O.A.T. Activity: Today our discoveries will include *A Day in the Life* of Gartmore village—a chance for us to truly immerse ourselves in the daily activities small town life. The 475 residents who live here have a strong tradition of looking out for one another—so much so that when the local pub and general store owners retired, and no buyers came forward, the community chipped in to buy the businesses and run them themselves.

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–8:30am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll bid farewell to Glasgow around 8:30am and begin our overland journey to Oban by private motorcoach. Around 10am, we'll make a stop for an immersive experience in a local community during *A Day in the Life* of Gartmore Village.

Small and quaint, Gartmore Village has a palpable sense of community. The 475 residents who live here have a strong tradition of looking out for one another—so much so that when the local pub and general store owners retired, and no buyers came forward, the community chipped in to buy the businesses and run them themselves.

Throughout our time in Gartmore, we'll be accompanied by a local man named Peter Sutherland. Peter was the driving force behind this community buyout, the first in Scotland's history. Peter's success made the residents of the village so confident in his efforts, that they encouraged him to take over managing the buyout. He remains very passionate about the village, and invests most of his free time its

ongoing success. Around 10am, Peter will take us on a walking tour of the village, pointing out the local pub, school, gardens, and the general store. As we walk, Peter will explain the “tic” system the village uses to keep track of expenses. Since the pub and general store are run by volunteers, there is not always someone on hand to assist with purchases. To solve this issue, each home in the village has a book in which they mark up (or “tic”) purchases they make; at the end of each month, locals settle up their bills. This system is based entirely on trust and is only possible because of the tight-knit spirit of the village.

You may get to meet some residents during our walking tour—Gartmore is rarely visited by Americans, and so the locals may be quite eager to chat with us to hear where we're from and learn what brought us to their village. Feel free to continue this cultural exchange by asking them any questions you may have about life in Gartmore, or about the community buyout.

Next, around 11am, we'll visit Gartmore House, a non-profit organization that aims to train teens in the area with learning and social disabilities to get jobs in the gardening industry. We'll have time to wander the sprawling grounds and admire the teens' handiwork. It may also be possible to chat with the teens while they work, but due to the nature of their disabilities some can be shy and uncomfortable talking to strangers; it is important to respect their boundaries.

Then we'll walk back to the community-owned pub for lunch.

Lunch: Around noon, enjoy a meal of homestyle pub dishes at the pub. Our lunch will be prepared and served to us by volunteers for the community; if you'd like, you can roll up your sleeves and help them to serve drinks or set tables to get a feel for the work they do here. This is also a great opportunity to continue

getting to know the people of Gartmore: You can ask them about their experience working as volunteers, and about how life in the village has changed since the community buyout.

Afternoon: We'll depart Gartmore at about 1pm and continue our journey to Oban, arriving around 4:45pm. We'll check in to our hotel and you'll have some free time to settle in. Depending on where we stay, our hotel may feature a restaurant and bar. Typically, each of the hotel's rooms includes a TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom. We'll gather around 6pm for an orientation walk around the vicinity of our hotel led by our Trip Experience Leader. During our walk, we'll acquaint ourselves with the area, while our Trip Experience Leader points out restaurant recommendations, ATMs, and suggestions for free time activities. Our walk will end at a local seafood restaurant.

Dinner: Around 6:30pm at the seafood restaurant. We'll get the chance to see why Oban has earned its title as the seafood capital of Scotland during our meal of fresh fish and chips, and we'll also enjoy traditional Scottish music as we eat.

Evening: On your own—you may choose to retire to your room to get some rest, or perhaps you'll set off on an evening stroll around Oban.

Freedom To Explore: During your three days in Oban, you have the freedom to explore this culturally-rich town on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Dive into Oban's history at the **War & Peace Museum:** Trace the fascinating history of this port town, from its establishment to its World

War II involvement to present day. You'll discover displays of artifacts and photographs that provide a glimpse of historical Oban.

- **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute walk.
- **Hours:** 10am-6pm, Monday-Thursday; 10am-4pm, Friday-Sunday.
- **Cost:** Free.
- Discover **Dunnollie Castle:** Comprised of moss-covered ruins that seemingly rise from the trees and a simple house, this castle was once inhabited by the Clan McDougall. Explore the castle grounds, and enter the Laird's House to learn about the history of the McDougalls' residency here.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute taxi ride, about \$10 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** 10am-5pm, Monday-Saturday; 12pm-5pm, Sunday.
 - **Cost:** About \$8 USD.
- Explore **McCaig's Tower:** Evocative of Rome's Colosseum, this majestic structure was established by a banker, John Stuart McCaig. The tower was built to create more jobs for the locals of Oban and to serve as a memorial for the McCaig family. Take in panoramic views of the city below as you stroll around the property, or relax in the gardens located in the center of the monument.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - **Cost:** Free.

Day 6 Explore Oban • **Controversial Topic:** The quest for independence with Scottish National Party member Campbell Cameron

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

Exclusive O.A.T. Activity: Today will feature the **Controversial Topic** of Scottish independence. We'll meet with local Campbell Cameron who

has been involved in Scottish politics for over 20 years and brings his extensive experience to our conversation. His personal opinion will also inform how you gauge this divided subject as we continue our journey through Scotland. Read more about this informative conversation below.

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: At about 9:30am, we'll walk to the offices of the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) for an hour-long conversation about a **Controversial Topic**—the quest for Scottish independence—with Campbell Cameron, the chairman the local Oban branch of the SNP. Now in his mid-60s, Campbell has been involved in politics for over 20 years, and brings his extensive experience to our conversation.

Since Scotland first formed as a nation under the House of Alpin in the ninth century, it has maintained a fierce independent streak, defending its sovereignty against English invasion in two wars of independence. Although Scotland formally joined the United Kingdom in 1707, attitudes among the people continue to be divided, with many people today yearning to be a separate nation once again. Campbell shares this desire, as he'll tell us during this one-hour conversation.

We'll have an exclusive opportunity—made possible by O.A.T.'s local connections in this country—to take a deep dive into the pro side of this issue with Campbell, who will talk about his passion for Scottish independence and his wish to keep the beauty and resources of the country for Scots alone. He'll also explain the work he does to make it a reality, traveling around the country to rally support for the cause, and spreading the word on Oban FM, the local radio station.

As recently as 2011, the SNP won a majority of seats in Scotland's devolved parliament, and the governments of the United Kingdom and Scotland agreed to hold a referendum on the question: "Should Scotland be an independent country?" The vote was held in 2014, and its results reflected the people's strong, yet divided, opinions about this thorny issue. With a record-breaking turnout of 85%, the "no" option prevailed with 55.3% of the vote, while "yes" received 44.7%. Scotland would remain part of the United Kingdom.

While the results of the vote are binding, and Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon—the first woman to hold the office—has called the referendum a "once in a generation" event, the issue is far from settled. The success of the United Kingdom's 2016 Brexit referendum has raised the question of Scottish independence once again. During that contentious vote, every single district in Scotland elected to remain in the EU, deepening the divide between the Scottish people and their neighbors to the south who forced them to leave. Campbell and his peers believe that an independent Scotland would mean they could control their own political destiny. Not only could Scotland have opted to remain in the EU, the country would also be able to utilize its own resources, such as the rich oil reserves in the North Sea, and no longer need to house the UK's stock of nuclear missiles.

After our interactive conversation, we'll have 30 minutes to ask questions, such as how Campbell has seen the Scottish people's attitude towards independence shift over time; what are the next steps toward achieving it after the failed referendum of 2014; and how do split attitudes over independence affect personal relationships between the Scottish people?

Keep Mr. Campbell's thoughts in mind as you continue your adventure. Later, when we explore Aberdeen on Day 11, we'll meet Liam Kerr—a conservative politician—to learn what the other half thinks as we hear the case for remaining in the United Kingdom. In the meantime, be sure to talk to local people—including your Trip Experience Leader—as you travel across Scotland to hear what they think about independence, and to gauge their opinion for yourself.

After our conversation, around 10:30am, we'll join Mr. Campbell for on a walking tour of Oban. As a lifelong resident of this town, and beloved member of the community, he'll give us an exclusive insider's view. A town once quiet and unknown, Oban's steady rise from obscurity occurred in the 18th century when the town's first distillery opened its doors and the town was recognized as a gateway for ships to major cities like Glasgow and the Scottish Isles. Exports like whisky and the construction of striking features like McCaig's Tower supported Oban's growth.

During our tour, we'll see locals going about their daily routines, and we'll discover some of the town's highlights, including the aforementioned tower. This building, constructed in the 19th century, calls to mind another famous European landmark: Rome's Colosseum. While it is believed to have been inspired by Italy's famous structure, the tower was never intended to host gladiator battles or similar events. Established in the 19th century under the direction of a local banker by the name of John Stuart McCaig, the tower's two purposes were to create construction jobs for the people of Oban and to have the McCaig name cemented in stone. Today, the monument boasts expansive views of the town below and a tranquil garden.

Our tour of Oban ends around 11:30am.

Lunch: On your own around 11:30am. You may seek out a traditional restaurant that serves regional dishes like *hotch-potch*, a beef-stock soup made with a variety of diced vegetables.

Afternoon: After a couple of hours to yourself, we'll depart around 4:30pm for a 15-minute drive to Kilbride Graveyard, where Liam, the local man responsible for the site's revival, will give us a tour. After purchasing the house next door for their retirement, Liam and his wife Myra discovered the overgrown graveyard was actually the final resting place of the chief of the Clan McDougal, who once ruled the area. Liam and Myra were saddened to see how the graveyard had fallen into such disrepair, so they established a team of volunteers known as the Friends of Kilbride to clean up and restore the historical site. They have since devoted much of their retirement to the project and are passionate stewards of the graveyard and its inhabitants; they even allow descendants of the buried to visit their property as a way of preserving the dignity of the dead.

During our visit, Liam will give us a tour of the graveyard, telling us colorful tales about the souls who are buried here. We'll also hear about his discovery process and enjoy a short film about the site. If the ghost stories have you feeling peckish, Myra will be on hand with tea and her homemade shortbread.

Then, a 10-minute drive takes us to the local pub near Liam and Myra's house, where we'll share dinner with the couple.

Dinner: Around 6:15pm in a local pub, featuring Scottish classics. As regulars of the pub, Liam and Myra can suggest dishes, and perhaps even introduce you to the pub's other patrons. This is sure to be an evening of good food and better company. We'll depart for the brief 10-minute drive back to our hotel around 7:30pm.

Evening: You are free to relax at the hotel and get some rest before our discoveries tomorrow, or you may head back out to find a pub where you can enjoy live music—perhaps you’ll raise your glasses and say *slàinte mhath*, pronounced “slange var,” which is a traditional toast that translates to “good health.”

Day 7 Oban • Explore Isle of Iona

- Destination: Oban
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: The Scot or similar

Activity Note: Depending on weather, we may enjoy alternate activities on this day.

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–8am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: Around 8am, we’ll begin our journey to the Isle of Iona. We’ll walk about 10 minutes to the local ferry station, where we’ll first catch a ferry to the Isle of Mull. Upon arrival on Mull around 9:30am, we’ll drive through the island’s villages to a pier where we’ll board another ferry. Our total journey will take around three hours. Along the way, you can soak up views of white sand beaches and rugged cliffs cloaked in green vegetation.

Upon arrival on the Isle of Iona around 11:45am, we’ll enjoy a guided tour of the island’s historic abbey led by a local guide who studies theology. In the sixth century, St. Columba of Ireland traveled to the small Scottish island to spread Christianity. Here, he built a Celtic church where the famous *Book of Kells* is believed to have been written. The church went through centuries of changes as it was rebuilt as a Benedictine Abbey, abandoned during the Scottish Reformation, and then finally restored in the 20th century. We’ll dive deeper into the abbey’s history today during our explorations.

Lunch: We’ll enjoy a boxed picnic lunch around 1pm during our visit to the Isle of Iona. You’ll have until about 2:15pm to enjoy your picnic and explore on your own. Perhaps you’ll settle in at the pub with a pint, visit one of the local shops, or go for a walk along the beach.

Afternoon: We’ll return by ferry to Oban around 2:30pm, arriving back at our hotel around 6:15pm. The rest of the day is on your own to make your own discoveries or relax at the hotel. You may choose to visit the War & Peace Museum where you can learn more about the history of this port town, and its involvement in World War II.

Dinner: On your own. You may ask your Trip Experience Leader where you can find regional dishes like an Arbroath smokie, which is smoked haddock.

Evening: You may want to indulge your sweet tooth by finding a bakery where you can grab dessert. Perhaps you’ll try Scotland’s famous deep-fried Mars bar or a traditional tea cake.

Day 8 Oban • Travel to Inverness • Urquhart Castle Visit • Cruise Loch Ness

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Best Western Palace Hotel & Spa or similar

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: Around 9am, we’ll say *beannachd leibh*, or goodbye, to Oban and begin our private motorcoach journey to Inverness, dubbed the capital of the Scottish Highlands. We’ll make a brief stop in the village of Spean Bridge around 10am where you’ll have some time to stretch your legs and take in views of the surrounding countryside. Then, we’ll continue on to the village of Fort Augustus, located on the shores Loch Ness, arriving around 11:30am.

Lunch: On your own in Fort Augustus upon arrival around noon. Perhaps you'll have a bowl of homemade soup with a savory scone at one of the many cafés and tearooms in the village.

Afternoon: Around 1pm, we'll continue our discoveries on our way to Inverness when we see the ruins of the medieval Urquhart Castle. Our Trip Experience Leader will be with us to provide an insider's knowledge of the castle's 1000-year-old history as we take a self-guided tour. Perched atop a cliff, the ruins boast expansive views of Loch Ness. Covering an area of nearly 700 miles, this is one of the largest bodies of freshwater in Great Britain. We'll have the chance to see Loch Ness up close when we set off on an hour-long cruise around 2:30pm. We'll soak up the serenity of the lake as we cruise past rolling hills blanketed with greenery, and we'll learn about the folklore surrounding Nessie, an aquatic monster that is believed to live in the lake—keep your eyes peeled for this legendary creature.

Because Loch Ness runs through Inverness, our cruise will end here. Located in the northern Highlands, Inverness is a quaint city of modest stone homes and a castle that appears to be straight from a storybook. We'll board our private motorcoach and drive for about 30 minutes to our hotel, arriving around 4pm.

Depending on where we stay, our hotel may feature a restaurant, pool, and sauna, and typically each room includes wireless Internet access, coffee- and tea-making facilities, and a private bathroom. Enjoy some free time this afternoon to get settled in or start exploring on your own before we meet our Trip Experience Leader at 4:30pm for a vicinity walk around the area to locate ATMs and convenience stores, and get suggestions for free time activities. Our walk will conclude at a local restaurant.

Dinner: At a local restaurant around 6:30pm. We'll have the opportunity to savor a traditional meal of fish and chips tonight.

Evening: On your own with the freedom to make your own discoveries, or you can retire to your room to get some sleep.

Freedom To Explore: During your two days in Inverness, you have the freedom to explore this scenic city on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Ascend to the **Inverness Castle Viewpoint:** Soak up stunning panoramic views of Inverness and the River Ness from the top of this lookout point.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** Daily (times vary based on the month).
 - **Cost:** About \$7 USD.
- Stroll through **Cavell Gardens:** Edith Cavell, a nurse during World War I, was killed by German soldiers for aiding POWs. This garden is dedicated to her and her heroic work. Enjoy the serenity of the gardens during your visit, and learn more about the history of Edith Cavell.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Visit the **Velocity Café and Bicycle Workshop:** Grab a coffee and relax in the café, or head to this site's workshop to learn about the services it provides to local bikers. You may even be able to join a bike group that is riding that day for an exploration of the city.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 9am-4pm, Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday; 9am-9pm, Thursday; 10am-5pm, Sunday.
 - **Cost:** Free.

Day 9 Inverness • Visit Culloden Battlefield • Brodie Castle Tour

- Destination: Inverness
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Best Western Palace Hotel & Spa or similar

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll discover a bloody chapter of Scotland's history today when we depart our hotel around 9am and drive for about 30 minutes aboard our private motorcoach to the Culloden Battlefield. On April 16, 1746, the last major battle fought on mainland British soil occurred here, and as a result more than 1500 soldiers perished. This battlefield was the site of the final Jacobite uprising, an effort to restore the House of Stuart to the British throne. The battle only lasted one hour and came to a close when Government forces led by the Duke of Cumberland crushed the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart.

We'll conclude our discoveries here around 11:45am and drive for 45 minutes to the 16th-century Brodie Castle, once the home of one of Scotland's powerful clans. We'll explore this well-preserved mansion, and get a glimpse of noble Scottish life as it once was. Here, a woman who is a third-generation worker on the property will give us an intimate glimpse of what life was like on this property back in its historical heyday as well as the upkeep of the castle today.

Lunch: Around 1:45pm at Brodie Castle, featuring traditional dishes.

Afternoon: Around 2:30pm, we'll make our 45-minute return trip back to the hotel, and you have some free time to relax or explore Inverness on your own. Perhaps you'll take a walk through Cavell Gardens. Here, you'll learn about the nurse who this garden is dedicated

to—a woman who sacrificed her life to help POWs. Or, you may choose to ascend the Inverness Castle Viewpoint to take in sweeping views of the city below.

Dinner: On your own—perhaps your meal will come full circle if you choose to seek out a local restaurant that serves Scottish salmon.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the evening as you wish. You can return to your room to pack before we leave Inverness tomorrow morning, or head to a nearby pub where you can grab a pint.

Day 10 Overland to Aberdeen • Visit barrel cooperage & whisky distillery

- Destination: Aberdeen
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Sandman Signature Aberdeen Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–8:30am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll board our private motorcoach and set out for Aberdeen, Scotland's third largest city. Our total transfer time will be about three hours total, however we'll break up our journey with stops along the way to explore notable sites in the region.

First, around 9:45am, we'll stop in Speysides to visit one of the last family-owned cooperages in Scotland. Here, coopers make barrels in which whisky is aged and stored. During our 1-hour visit, we'll learn about the modern challenges facing this ancient craft: Due to the cheaper cost of imported barrels, many whisky companies are now choosing to source their barrels from outside the country instead of supporting local coopers; as a result, the Scottish cooper industry is dying out. We'll meet with a member of the family that owns the cooperage to hear how the tradition of

barrel-making has been passed down from generation to generation, and get his or her thoughts on the future of the industry. If you'd like, you can try your hand at being a cooper by fastening a stave (or specially-cut plank of wood) to the barrel.

From there, we'll take a short 5-minute walk to a nearby distillery. Whisky connoisseurs will know that the area of Speysides is famous for producing single malt Scotch whisky; in fact, the two best-selling single malt whiskies—the Glenfiddich and the Glenlivet—are distilled right here in Speysides. We'll visit a smaller distillery to get an intimate look at production of this world-renowned spirit. In the company of a whisky expert, we'll tour the distillery's facilities, including the room where the barley is "malted" and the warehouse where maturing whiskies are stored in oak barrels. Finally, we'll conclude our tour with a lesson in "nosing" (sniffing) and tasting a sampling of aged whiskies produced here.

After we've had our fill, we'll drive about an hour to Ballater, a quaint Victorian village in a protected scenic area known as the Royal Deeside. (Balmoral, the royal family's summer residence, is located nearby.)

Lunch: On your own in Ballater upon arrival, around 1pm. Local specialties to try include the Aberdeenshire beef pie and Cullen skink, a hearty fish stew traditionally made with smoked haddock and potatoes.

Afternoon: Continue exploring Ballater during free time until about 2:30pm. The main street is lined with pretty shops selling traditional handicrafts; you might like to pop into one to chat with the shopkeeper and shop for mementos. Or, perhaps you'll visit the Glenmuich church to view its colorful stained-glass windows and impressive organ.

Then, we'll continue our transfer to Aberdeen, driving for about another 1.5 hours. Upon arrival, we'll check into our hotel and receive our room assignments. Depending on where we stay, our hotel will likely feature an on-site restaurant and bar, and typical rooms are equipped with a TV, wireless Internet, minibar, and en suite bathroom. You'll have some free to settle in or begin getting acquainted with the city on your own until 4:45pm, at which point your Trip Experience Leader will lead an optional 30-minute orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity. During this walk, they will point out nearby conveniences including ATMs, pharmacies, and recommended restaurants for meals on your own.

Dinner: On your own whenever you'd like, after about 5:15pm if you join the orientation walk. Continuing a theme from earlier in the day, you might like to try beef with whisky sauce.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

Freedom To Explore: During your two days in Aberdeen, you have the freedom to explore this coastal city on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Dive into the past at the **Aberdeen Maritime Museum**: Situated on a three-story replica of a North Sea oil-production platform that overlooks the bustling harbor, Aberdeen Maritime Museum explores the city's long history with the sea. The museum itself is contained in a range of historical buildings, including a former church and the 16th-century Provost Ross' House, the second-oldest house in Aberdeen. From thoughtfully-curated displays depicting the North Sea oil industry to old oil rig models and commercial trawlers, visitors gain an understanding of the pivotal role the marine environment has

played here—both as a source of income, as well as the nucleus of local culture. Plan to spend approximately 1 hour exploring the museum.

- **How to get there:** A 10-minute walk.
- **Hours:** 9am–5pm, daily.
- **Cost:** Free.

- Stop to smell the roses at the **Cruickshank Botanic Gardens:** Presented to the University of Aberdeen in 1898 by the first female lecturer, Anne Cruickshank, the gardens were intended as a gift to commemorate her late brother. The 11-acre garden is located in a low-lying area of the city, less than 1 mile from the North Sea. Today, it is still partly owned and financed by the university, as well as the Cruickshank Botanic Gardens Trust. In keeping with its academic beginnings, the gardens largely remain in use for educational purposes, whether it be for teaching or research. In fact, an undergraduate student, specializing in botany, is welcomed to the grounds every summer and given the opportunity to gain work experience in their field. Points of interest within the gardens include an extensive arboretum, rock and water garden, rose garden, and birch lawn. Visitors should plan to spend approximately 2 hours exploring the grounds.

- **How to get there:** A 10-minute walk.
- **Hours:** 7:30am–7:30pm, daily.
- **Cost:** Free.

- Take a stroll through the **Countesswells Forest Park:** Formerly belonging to the prominent Burnett family estate, this extensive swath of land is located on the outskirts of Aberdeen and features a variety of mature woodland flora. Visitors stroll amongst massive conifers—spruce, pine and others—and enjoy sweeping views of gently rolling farmland. The centuries-old history of the land is even traceable in the tree species present today. For example, the towering

beech trees that still stand were planted in the 1870s, only to produce timber over a century later. The paved trails here range in length from approximately 1.25 miles to almost 3 miles and are composed of mostly firm gravel surface.

- **How to get there:** A 10-minute walk.
- **Hours:** Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **Cost:** Free.

Day 11 Explore Aberdeen • **Controversial Topic:** The fight for unity in the UK with Scottish Conservative Party member Liam Kerr

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

Exclusive O.A.T. Activity: Today’s discoveries will once again feature the **Controversial Topic** of Scottish independence—this time, the case against it. We’ll talk with Liam Kerr, a member of Scotland’s conservative party, who will give us a deeper understanding of this complicated issue that we first discussed on Day 6. Read more about this in-depth conversation below.

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We’ll begin our discoveries around 9am with a walking tour of Aberdeen led by a local guide. Known as “the Granite City” for its primary building material, Aberdeen is characterized by its stately, silvery-gray architecture. The city was an important political, ecclesiastical, and cultural center dating back to the late Middle Ages; today, it’s a center of the Scottish fishing industry as well as the North Sea petroleum and oil industries, which have brought much wealth to Aberdeen.

In the company of our local guide, we'll explore the city center on foot. Our walk takes us down Union Street, Aberdeen's main thoroughfare, where we'll see notable sights such as St. Nicholas Church and the Mercat Cross, a 17th-century outdoor sculpture depicting portraits of the royal Stuart family. Then, we'll make our way to Footdee, or as the locals call it, "Fittie," an old fishing village that sits at the east end of Aberdeen's harbor. The neighborhood's narrow, cobbled streets are lined with colorful, ramshackle cottages, and despite its proximity to the city center, it has preserved its history and charm.

At around 10:30am, gain a richer understanding of the **Controversial Topic** of Scottish independence—in this case, the argument against it. We'll have an hour-long conversation with Liam Kerr, a member of Scotland's conservative party, elected to the country's devolved parliament in 2016. In 2019, he rose to the rank of Deputy Leader, in part due to his advocacy for the "Better Together" movement—the campaign against Scottish Independence. We'll sit down with Mr. Kerr for this conversation at Footdee's constituency offices of the local Scottish conservative party. Mr. Kerr, now in his mid-40s, served as the Deputy Leader of the Scottish Conservative Party from 2019 to 2020. He has also been the Scottish Conservatives Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Justice since 2017, and a Member of the Scottish Parliament for the North East Scotland region since 2016. Mr. Kerr's years of experience give him a deeply informed knowledge of this topic.

During your conversation with Mr. Kerr, you'll learn why approximately half of Scotland's people wish to remain part of the United Kingdom. Mr. Kerr and others point to a decline in Scotland's education system, economic prosperity, and public services, that in their

opinion can best be remedied with a strong, healthy partnership with their neighbors in Great Britain.

In particular, you'll talk about how the oil and gas industry has suffered in the wake of Brexit. With Aberdeen's location on the coast of the North Sea, where a great deal of oil and gas mining takes place, the local population relies heavily on this industry to make a living, and many believe that the political fracture caused by an independent Scotland will threaten their livelihoods even further.

Mr. Kerr will share other issues he believes will arise from a split with the UK, such as a loss of the international clout being part of Great Britain provides. Should Scotland leave, they would have to reapply to enter the European Union—an entry which is not guaranteed. Plus, an independent Scotland would need to devise its own form of currency. While Scottish politicians would like to continue using the British pound even if they gain independence, London politicians would most likely reject this request, leaving Scotland scrambling to develop its own form of currency which could lead to economic turmoil during the transition. Further, Mr. Kerr will argue that during such an upheaval, Scotland would also suffer the loss of businesses pulling out of the country. In fact, insurance company Standard Life has already warned that it will relocate its headquarters in the event of a "yes" vote for Scottish independence—which would mean the loss of around 5,000 Scottish jobs.

You'll have 30 minutes to ask Mr. Kerr questions during our interactive conversation. You might choose to recall the pro-independence arguments put forth by Campbell Cameron during your time in Oban; now is an excellent opportunity to hear a rebuttal from an expert with deep knowledge, strong opinions, and personal ties to this

Controversial Topic, and to draw your own conclusions from your newly-gained well of knowledge.

We'll finish up with Mr. Kerr around noon, and then you can choose to walk about 15 minutes back to the city center or drive about 5 minutes by private motorcoach back to the hotel. Either way, you'll have about the next 4 hours free to do as you'd like.

Lunch: On your own, whenever you'd like. Aberdeen has no shortage of restaurants, from cafés for a quick sandwich to gastropubs for a sit-down meal; ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions that fit your mood.

Afternoon: Enjoy some free time for independent explorations. Perhaps you'd like to learn more about the city's connection with the sea at the award-winning Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Exhibitions include features on shipbuilding, fishing, and the North Sea oil and gas industries; the museum also boasts fine views of the Aberdeen harbor.

Or, if the weather is nice, you might like to spend time in the great outdoors at Duthie Park. With Victorian fountains and boating ponds and one of Scotland's most visited indoor gardens, the park is beloved by Aberdonians and visitors alike.

Around 4pm, our small group will reconvene back at the hotel lobby and board our private motorcoach for a 30-minute drive to Grace Farms, a family-owned farm nestled in Aberdeen countryside. Here we'll meet Grace Noble, the owner of the farm, and learn about the Highland cattle that inspired her love of farming before we have a chance to meet these gentle, wooly beasts for ourselves.

After about 1.5 hours of exploring the farm, we will join Grace in her home where we'll meet her two children. Perhaps you'll take this opportunity to ask the family questions about rural life in the Scotland.

Dinner: At the farm around 6pm with Grace and her children, featuring barbecued Scottish meats such as premium Highland beef from the farm.

Evening: We'll board our private motorcoach around 7:30pm and return to Aberdeen, arriving at our hotel around 8pm. The remainder of the evening—our last in “The Granite City”—is free for you to do as you'd like.

Day 12 Overland to Edinburgh • Explore St. Andrews

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

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: Today we set off around 9am for a 1.5-hour drive to St. Andrews. Quaint stone buildings, cobbled streets, and crumbling ruins instantly transport you back to the old days of this historically-rich city. Considered to be the ecclesiastical capital, St. Andrews was the first location to feel the stark changes of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The introduction of the new ideas of Protestantism and the traditional beliefs of Christianity ignited conflict within Scotland and the country's ruling parties. We'll take a deep dive into this period of Scotland's history as we explore St. Andrews today with a local guide.

We'll also have the opportunity to visit Scotland's oldest university and one of the oldest colleges in the world, the University of

St. Andrews. The school was founded in 1413 because of Scotland's lack of higher education opportunities. Notable alumni include Kate Middleton and Prince William. During our time here, we'll meet with a scholar who attended the university and served on its board of trustees; he will tell us about how this college paved the way for other higher education opportunities in Scotland. We'll dive into the school's history and discover how it has transformed into the university it is today by learning about the resources that it offers its students. Our walking tour will wrap up around 12:30pm.

Lunch: On your own in St. Andrews after 12:30pm. You might like to seek out *bridie*, a popular meat pie that is typically served with beans.

Afternoon: You'll have some time to make your own discoveries in St. Andrews. Golf fans might like to visit the Old Course, where the game of golf originated in the 15th century. Follow in the footsteps of some of this sport's greats, like James Braid or Old Tom Morris, by taking a few swings at the putting green. You can also learn more about the history of the game by stopping by the Gold Museum.

We'll regroup around 3:30pm and drive about 1.5 hours to our hotel in Edinburgh. Depending on where we stay, amenities may include a swimming pool, restaurant, bar, and gym. Typically, each of the hotel's rooms features a TV, coffee- and tea-making facilities, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom. After checking in to our hotel, you'll have some free time to unpack, settle in, or begin exploring on your own.

Then, at about 6pm, we'll take a short orientation walk around the vicinity of the hotel, ending at a local bus stop. Tonight, we'll travel as the locals do—on the public bus. Our destination is the Sheep's Heid Inn & Pub, a

legendary spot in the center of town. According to local legend, there has been an inn on the site since 1360.

Dinner: At the Sheep's Heid around 6:45, featuring the traditional Scottish dishes we have come to know.

Evening: We'll return to our hotel by bus, arriving around 8:30. Or, if you'd like, you can remain in the city center to take advantage of the capital city's nightlife.

Freedom To Explore: During your three days in Edinburgh, you have the freedom to explore this capital city on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Set off on an **Invisible City Tour:** Join a tour group that is making a difference in Edinburgh and shining a light on the struggles that locals without homes face. These tours are led by homeless people, and not only provide insight into the history of the city, but also what it's like to sleep on the streets.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute taxi ride, about \$15 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** Tours run daily.
 - **Cost:** About \$13 USD.
- Visit **Roslyn Chapel:** Built in the 15th century, this historical site took around 40 years to finish. As you explore the church, notice the impressive number of stone carvings that depict nature and sacred symbols. The church is an active site of worship and is still in use today.
 - **How to get there:** A 35- to 45-minute bus ride, about \$7 USD one way.
 - **Hours:** 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.
 - **Cost:** About \$9 USD.
- See the inner workings of **Parliament:** Discover the moving parts of Scotland's government during a visit to Parliament. Scottish Parliament can be traced back to the

13th century, and today you'll learn how this body of government has changed since its establishment. You may even have the opportunity to meet with a member of Parliament to get an authentic glimpse of this Scottish authority.

- **How to get there:** A 25- to 30-minute taxi ride, about \$13 USD one way.
- **Hours:** 10am-5pm, daily.
- **Cost:** Free.

Day 13 Explore Edinburgh

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

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am-9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll kick off our discoveries in Scotland's capital around 9am when we set off on a tour of the city led by a local guide. As we explore by motor coach and on foot, we'll see the stark contrasts between Edinburgh's labyrinthine Old Town and organized New Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll drive through the New Town where we'll notice neoclassical buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries. Then, we'll say goodbye to our motor coach and begin our explorations of the Old Town on foot. We'll be transported back into Edinburgh's history as we stroll the winding cobbled streets and down the Royal Mile, a stretch of the city that extends from Holyrood Road to Edinburgh Castle—our next destination.

Edinburgh Castle, perched atop Castle Rock—an extinct volcano—is a mighty presence in the city. Once used as the royal residency for Scottish monarchs, a fortress for armies, and a prison for pirates and POWs, the castle now serves as one of Edinburgh's leading attractions. A visit to the castle would not be

complete without discovering St. Margaret's Chapel—the oldest surviving building in the city, which dates back to the twelfth century.

We'll conclude our morning's discoveries with a walk to Shakti Women's Aid—arriving around 10am.

In recent years, Scotland has seen an increase in both immigration and domestic abuse. Domestic abuse survivors who are also immigrants face particular challenges: Without strong community ties, knowledge of their rights in Scotland, or fluency in the language, it can be especially difficult for these women to access the help they need.

Shakti Women's Aid, as we'll learn during our 1-hour visit to the Edinburgh drop-in center, was established in 1986 to fill that gap for immigrant women. Serving primarily Black minority ethnic (BME) women and their children, this non-profit organization provides multilingual support and resources for survivors of domestic abuse. Survivors can "drop in" any time they are in need, or they can call an anonymous hotline if they feel unsafe. The volunteers then work with these women (and often, their children) to provide counseling, legal services, and assistance with temporary housing. In addition, Shakti also acts as a support network and community center for survivors, many of whom are now single mothers. The organization helps these women find gainful employment, integrate into society, Scottish and get back on their feet after leaving abusive relationships.

Shakti is run by an all-female staff, and during our visit we'll take a tour of the facilities led by one of the volunteers. We'll learn more about the problem of domestic abuse in Scotland and hear what the government as well as organizations like Shakti are doing to combat the issue. We'll also learn about the specific challenges faced by single mothers and by

immigrant mothers. Our volunteer guide will share her experience working with this vulnerable population, and add more insight into the challenges they face. We may also be able to speak with a survivor at the center, but because of the sensitive nature of this topic this cannot be guaranteed. Regardless of who we speak to, your time at the center is likely to be eye-opening—if at times, uncomfortable.

Shakti Women's Aid is only in its second year and, as a charity, relies entirely on donations. Grand Circle Foundation is proud to partner with this organization to support its life-saving work. Donations from the Foundation will be used to furnish the Edinburgh drop-in center and buy toys for the children of survivors.

Lunch: On your own around 1pm. Your Trip Experience Leader can provide you with recommendations.

Afternoon: The rest of the day is free for you to relax or explore more of the city on your own. You can visit Roslyn Chapel, a 15th-century church known for its impressive stone carvings. Or, you may choose to visit Scottish Parliament where you can get a glimpse into the local body of government.

Dinner: On your own—perhaps you'll find a restaurant that serves traditional dishes like *haggis* with *neeps* and *tatties*, or turnips and potatoes.

Evening: You are free to spend the evening as you wish. You may join your fellow travelers for a nightcap at the hotel bar, or you can retire to your room to get some sleep.

Day 14 Edinburgh • Visit Falkirk Wheel

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

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am–9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: We'll begin our discoveries today with a 1-hour drive to the Falkirk Wheel, arriving around 10am. This rotating boat lift connects the Forth and Clyde Canal with the Union Canal. Opened in 2002 as part of the Millennium Link project, the wheel is the only one of its kind in the world. We'll take a 35-minute tour of the wheel led by a local guide, during which we'll witness a full revolution, learn about how it utilizes Archimedes Principal, and have the opportunity to ask questions about how it came to be. If the sky is clear, we can also enjoy panoramic views from atop the structure.

We'll depart the wheel around 11:30am for a 15-minute drive to reach the Kelpies. This dynamic 30-meter high sculpture depicts two horse heads situated near a new extension to the Forth and Clyde Canal and near River Carron. This massive sculpture is part of The Helix, an initiative to connect the 16 communities in the Falkirk Council Area with a focus on art and nature. Our Trip Experience Leader will provide more detail on the project and the striking sculpture.

Around 12:15pm, we'll embark on a 45-minute drive back to Edinburgh.

Lunch: On your own, beginning around 1pm.

Afternoon: You'll have a few hours of free time to do any last-minute sight-seeing. At 5:30pm, our small group will meet at the hotel lobby and walk about 15 minutes to our Farewell Dinner.

Dinner: Around 5:45pm in a local restaurant. During our Farewell Dinner, we'll enjoy traditional Scottish dishes and toast to the experiences we've shared.

Evening: We'll depart the restaurant around 7:30pm for the 10-minute drive back to our hotel. Your final night is free. Choose to retire early to pack before tomorrow's flight, or stop at pub for one final dram of whisky or pint of ale.

Day 15 Return to U.S. or begin your post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: Served at the hotel from 7am-9am, with Scottish and American options available.

Morning: Travelers joining us on our post-trip extension to New! *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions* will transfer about 30 minutes by motorcoach to the airport in Edinburgh for their flight to the Shetland Islands this morning. Travelers on our New! *Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England* post-trip extension will transfer about 10 minutes by motorcoach to Edinburgh's Waverley Station to begin their train transfer toward Wales.

Lunch: On your own. Travelers who are returning home can grab something to eat in Edinburgh this afternoon.

Afternoon: You'll check out of the hotel and transfer about 30 minutes to the airport for your return flight home.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions*

Day 1 Fly to Shetland Isles • Farm shop lunch • Lerwick

Day 2 Bressay farm visit • Explore Lerwick

Day 3 Visit Sumburgh Head • Shetland pony visit • Transfer to Brae

Day 4 Explore Eshaness • Detling Galley Shed visit

Day 5 St. Ninian's Isle • Fly to Edinburgh • Farewell Dinner

Day 6 Return to U.S.

OR

6 nights in *Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England*

Day 1 Transfer to Betws-y-Coed, Wales • Explore Conwy • Arrive Betws-y-Coed

Day 2 Explore Snowdonia National Park • Welsh government conversation

Day 3 Visit the Isle of Anglesea • **Home-Hosted Lunch**

Day 4 Visit local sheep farm & woolen mill • Visit Chester, England • Transfer to Liverpool

Day 5 Explore Liverpool • Farewell Dinner

Day 6 Transfer to Manchester • Return to U.S.

PRE-TRIP

The Gaelic Island Culture of the Scottish Hebrides: Skye, Lewis & Harris

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Accommodations: 1 night in Inverness at the Golf View Hotel or similar, 2 nights in Portree at the Cuillin Hills Hotel or similar, and 3 nights in Stornoway at the Cabarfeidh Hotel or similar
- » 11 meals—6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 3 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Rambling rocky coastline surrenders to secluded, scenic beaches ... harbors fringed by the sloping terrain of the highlands breathe mystery and allure into remote villages and mystifying monuments. Journey to off-the-beaten locales in the verdant slopes and wild waters of Scotland's Inner and Outer Hebrides.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your flight from the U.S. to Inverness, Scotland.

Day 2 Arrive Inverness, Scotland • Overland to Nairn

- Destination: Nairn
- Accommodations: Muthu Newton Hotel or similar

Morning: Depending on your specific flight arrangements, you will arrive in Inverness, Scotland throughout the morning or afternoon. An O.A.T. representative will greet you and assist with your transfer to our hotel in Nairn, a small seaside town is nestled in the heart of the highlands along the shores of the Moray Firth. Depending on the hotel, amenities may include a restaurant, bar, spa, gym, and a swimming

pool. Typical rooms are equipped with a safe, TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom.

Lunch: On your own—you can enjoy a meal at the hotel restaurant as you settle in from your international flight.

Afternoon: Following some free time to relax, we will gather as a group around 3pm to introduce ourselves and meet our Trip Experience Leader. Then, we will get acquainted with the coastal landscape and neighborhood around our hotel during an orientation walk. Following our orientation walk, maybe you'll venture out on your own to explore this fishing village's sandy beaches, or take in local history at the Nairn Museum.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations near the hotel.

Evening: You are free to explore on your own. Perhaps you'll join your fellow travelers in a local pub to discuss your upcoming discoveries over a pint.

Day 3 Overland to Portree, Isle of Skye

- Destination: Portree
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Cuillin Hills Hotel or similar

Activity Note: Today our transfer from Inverness to Portree will involve a long train and then bus ride that will last nearly 5 hours. We will break up the long transfer with stops along the way.

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: Around 8:15am, we will check out of our hotel and take a 30-minute drive to the train station to begin our journey to Portree. After our train departs around 9am, we'll enjoy the shifting scenery of the Scottish Highlands as we venture towards the Isle of Skye. Our train arrives at Kyle of Lochalsh at approximately 11:45am, after which we'll continue the remaining leg of our journey by bus. We'll pause along the way to admire a stunning castle located on the shores of Loch Duich and for lunch afterwards.

Lunch: Around 1:30pm at a local restaurant located in Aros Centre, featuring hearty Scottish dishes.

Afternoon: Then, we will depart at 2:30pm for the remainder of our bus ride to Portree, the capital town of the Isle of Skye. Upon arrival around 4pm, we'll check in to our hotel. Depending on where we stay, our hotel may feature a restaurant, bar, and lounge. Typical

room amenities include wireless Internet access, TV, coffee- and tea-making facilities, and a private bathroom.

After some free time to acquaint ourselves with our new lodging, we will set out on a discovery walk of Portree immediately following check in. We'll marvel at this small town's idyllic harbor fringed by flourishing cliffs. The vibrant pastels of the homes stacked along the winding harbor are quite a contrast to the verdant hue of the highlands.

Dinner: Around 6:30pm at the hotel's restaurant. We'll enjoy traditional dishes and toast to the discoveries to come during this Welcome Dinner.

Evening: You have the freedom to explore this small town on your own this evening. Perhaps you'll grab a drink in one of the local pubs with your fellow travelers to discuss today's explorations.

Freedom To Explore: During your two days in Portree, you have the freedom to explore this scenic city on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Hike in **The Quiraing:** Explore a park unlike any you've seen before as you walk along endless stretches of lush green hills. Perhaps you'll discover the park on foot, or you may choose to rent a bike.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - **Cost:** Free.

- Discover the **Centre for Contemporary Arts**: Experience a variety of artistic mediums that put Glasgow’s culture on full display. Enjoy films, art pieces, theater shows, festivals, and more.
 - **How to get there:** A 20- to 25-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 10am–12am, Monday–Thursday; 10am–1am, Friday–Saturday; and 12pm–12am, Sunday.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Visit the **Skyeworks Gallery**: Explore the island’s largest gallery, which showcases art pieces from local artists. Discover paintings, as well as wearable art made from wool, and you can bring a piece of Scotland home with you when you shop for souvenirs here.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 10am–5pm, Monday–Saturday.
 - **Cost:** Free.

Day 4 Portree • Isle of Skye tour • Explore clearance village

- Destination: Portree
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Cuillin Hills Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7:30am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: We’ll board our bus around 8:45am to begin the day’s journey with an hourlong film viewing in Aros Centre around 9am, detailing the rich legacy of the area. This island—although modest in size—offers a diversity of landscapes and wildlife. The island transforms from rugged, barren terrain to rolling hills and secluded beaches. Following the film around 10am, we’ll depart for a tour of Skye led by a local guide beginning with St. Columba’s Isle. Peppered with ancient ruins and graves dating back to the 11th century,

this historic area was previously the center of Christianity in the Hebrides. We’ll spend 30 minutes or so exploring the area before stopping to witness a Pictish stone. These ancient memorials are bedecked with symbols and inscriptions typical of the Iron age, such as geese, cauldrons, and hounds, and are a unique representation of the Scotland of yore.

At approximately 11:45am, we’ll depart by bus for a 30-minute drive to our next tour stop: Erisco. After we arrive around 12:15pm, we’ll embark on a walk around this “clearance village,” learning about the controversial history of the area as we go. The Highland Clearances took place between 1750 and 1860, forcing families to abandon their homes to accommodate greater numbers of sheep for the sake of agricultural improvement at the order of their landlords. This period saw the deconstruction of the region’s traditional clan system as well as a longstanding pattern of rural depopulation. As we wander through the now-abandoned village, we will witness how this movement still influences Scotland today. We’ll depart Erisco at about 1:30pm and take a 15-minute drive to a local community center for lunch.

Lunch: Around 1:45pm with members of the local community over traditional Scottish dishes in the village hall.

Afternoon: Following lunch around 3pm, we will venture back to the Isle of Skye, arriving around 4:15pm.

Dinner: Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to offer you some recommendations for dinner on your own tonight.

Evening: Enjoy the freedom to explore on your own. Perhaps you’ll venture through the charming streets of Portree or enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers on the sprawling lawns of our hotel.

Day 5 Outer Hebrides • Isles of Harris and Lewis

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

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: Around 9:30am, we'll enjoy a scenic 1-hour hike led by our Trip Experience Leader along Scorrybreac Trail, which is located right outside our hotel. We will have an opportunity here to take in the natural landscape and also perhaps run into locals who are also out and about appreciating nature. After returning at 10:30am to gather our things, we'll check out of our hotel and board our bus around 11am. After arriving at the ferry terminal, we will embark on our journey to Stornoway. Experience the rocky peaks and slanting slopes of the Scottish Highlands from a distance as we venture to the shores of the Isle of Harris and the Isle of Lewis. The Isle of Harris is actually joined to the Isle of Lewis, and they are known as the Western Isles or Outer Hebrides—*hebrides* meaning “long island” as they stretch for 100 miles.

Lunch: Around 1:15pm on your own on the ferry.

Afternoon: We'll dock about 5pm and take an approximately 1-hour and 15-minute bus drive to reach our hotel in Stornoway—the largest town of the Outer Hebrides. Depending on where you stay, your accommodations may feature on-site amenities, such as a restaurant and bar. Typical rooms may include a TV, wireless Internet access, and a private bathroom. We'll check in here at 6:15pm or so.

Dinner: Around 7pm at a local restaurant, featuring a spread of Scottish favorites.

Evening: This evening is free for you to make your own discoveries. Maybe you'll take a stroll past the town's shops or relax in the hotel bar over a drink recapping today's discoveries.

Freedom To Explore: During your three days in Stornoway, you have the freedom to explore the Outer Hebrides' largest town on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Enjoy several artistic mediums at the **An Lanntair Gallery**: This creative space has a little something for everyone as it offers an art gallery, theaters for plays and films, a dance studio, a concert venue, and more.
 - **How to get there:** A 5- to 10-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 10am-late, Monday-Saturday; 1:30pm-5pm, Sunday.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Explore **Lewis Castle**: Trace this Gothic-style castle's history back to the 1800s, and learn about how it served as a hospital in World War II, a university, and now, a museum. You can also stroll around the property, take in views of the harbor, and enjoy the serenity of the property's gardens.
 - **How to get there:** A 10- to 15-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 10am-5pm, Monday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Visit the **Iolaire Monument**: Discover the dark history of a local ship returning home after World War I that crashed, resulting in the deaths of more than 200 men. Learn more about this piece of history here, and take in sweeping views of the countryside.
 - **How to get there:** A 40- to 45-minute walk.
 - **Hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - **Cost:** Free.

Day 6 Stornoway • Callanish Standing Stones • Weaving Demonstration

- Destination: Stornoway
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Royal Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: Around 9am, we will depart for a 45-minute bus ride to a village of traditional black houses. The thatched roofs and dry-stone walls of these homes once dotted the Hebridean landscape. They served as one-room abodes for families and their livestock. In the late 1800s, as locals started moving into more modern homes, or white houses—due to their construction with lime mortar—and health regulations became stricter, these traditional homesteads became vacant. Unbelievably though, some of the black houses were still inhabited until the mid-1970s. We'll sip tea and coffee as we watch a film about the history and preservation of these houses before being led through the village by a local guide.

At around 11:15am, we'll depart for a 30-minute ride to the Callanish Standing Stones. Built around 3000 BC, these mysterious megaliths are assumed to have been used mainly as a hub for ritual activities, but their exact purpose has been lost to history. These towering stones evoke a similar feeling to Stonehenge but predate it by 2000 years. We will explore the local legends and lore surrounding this mystifying monument with our Trip Experience Leader. We'll take the 45-minute drive back to Stornoway around 12:15pm.

Lunch: At approximately 1pm at a local restaurant, featuring regional specialties.

Afternoon: We will depart the restaurant by bus at about 2:25pm and take a 30-minute drive to meet a local weaving artisan in her

studio. Here, we'll enjoy an hourlong lecture and demonstration about this longstanding art form and see firsthand how to make Harris' eponymous tweed, which is only available on the island. We'll take a 30-minute drive to back to our hotel around 3:45pm, after which you'll have the afternoon free to discover the area on your own. Perhaps you may visit the Lanntair Gallery to catch a performance of exhibition, a hub for creatives in the outer Hebrides.

Dinner: On your own this evening, perhaps you'll seek out a dish unique to the area.

Evening: On your own—you have the freedom to make your own discoveries. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for some evening entertainment in the area.

Day 7 Stornoway • Meet *guga* hunter

- Destination: Stornoway
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Royal Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: Around 9am, we will depart our hotel for a 1-hour bus ride to the Port of Ness. Our small groups allow us the unique opportunity to meet with a local *guga* hunter; we'll share a conversation with him around 10am. A small island off the Port of Ness, Sula Sgeir, is home to thousands of gannets, known locally as *guga*, and they are harvested annually by the local people, *guga* hunters, as a main staple of their diet. In more recent years, this has become a controversial topic due to a push for the protection of these birds and a ban on this long-established practice. We will discuss the challenges these hunters have faced in more modern times and the intimate history of their practice dating back to the 15th century. Then, we will journey back to the hotel around 11:30.

Lunch: On your own. You are free to discover some of the local spots or enjoy some of our hotel's options.

Afternoon: Around 2pm, we'll arrive at the expansive Lewes Castle for a 2-hour tour led by your Trip Experience Leader. Discover this Victorian era castle through various walking paths and sprawling green lawns. After, the rest of the day is free for you to make independent discoveries.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide a recommendation for one final dinner in Stornoway.

Evening: You're free to retire to your room, enjoy a drink at the hotel bar, or venture into Stornoway for the evening. Your Trip Experience Leader is always ready with suggestions.

Day 8 Fly to Glasgow • Join main trip

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: Served buffet-style at the hotel beginning at 7am, featuring a selection of Scottish dishes.

Morning: Depart this morning for our flight from Stornoway to Glasgow, where we'll meet up with our fellow travelers on our main trip, *Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes*.

POST-TRIP

The Remote Shetlands: Wildlife, Nature & Time-Honored Traditions

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Accommodations: 2 nights in Lerwick, 2 nights in Brae, and 1 night in Edinburgh
- » 10 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 4 dinners
- » 3 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Journey to the northern reaches of Scotland to the remote, windswept Shetland Islands, an archipelago in the North Sea where sheep outnumber people and the green, rugged landscape gives way to glorious coastal views. We'll get to know the warm, hearty people who populate these islands—including crofters (or farmers) and a traditional Fair Isle knitter—and see the time-honored traditions they're working to keep alive. We'll also spend time immersing ourselves in the Islands' natural splendor with visits to towering coastal cliffs where seabirds flourish. Finally, we'll cap it all off with a night in the lively city of Glasgow.

Day 1 Fly to Shetland Isles • Farm shop lunch • Lerwick

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Morning: After concluding our main adventure, we'll transfer to the Edinburgh airport by private motorcoach and catch a late-morning flight north to the Shetland Islands, a windswept archipelago halfway between Scotland and Norway.

Upon arrival at around noon, we'll drive to a nearby farm shop for our first taste of life on the Shetlands.

Lunch: At the farm shop around 1pm, featuring an organic farm-fresh lunch.

Afternoon: Around 2pm, we'll drive about 5 minutes down the road to meet a traditional Fair Isle knitter. Named after Fair Isle (an island in the Shetlands), this knitting technique features colorful patterns with two (or more) colors of yarn in the same row. Fair Isle knitting became popular outside the Shetlands after the Prince of Wales was seen wearing a Fair Isle sweater in 1921. We'll watch a demonstration of the technique by a local knitter, and perhaps even have a chance to try knitting ourselves.

Afterwards, we'll continue our drive around 3:15pm for a 30-minute drive to Lerwick, the largest town on the Shetlands. With gray stone buildings clustered around the harbor and sweeping coastal views in every direction, Lerwick is the perfect place to begin our Shetland discoveries.

We'll check into our hotel at approximately 4pm and receive our room assignments. Depending on where we stay, the hotel is likely to feature an on-site bar and restaurant, and typical rooms include wireless Internet, television, minibar, and en suite bathroom. After some time to unpack and settle in, your Trip Experience Leader will guide you on an orientation walk through the town around 5pm, pointing out convenience stores, ATMs, and other helpful locations. You'll then have some time to continue exploring Lerwick on your own.

Dinner: At a local restaurant featuring regional specialties around 6:30pm.

Evening: Free for you to continue discovering Lerwick, or to retire early to your room for a fresh start tomorrow.

Freedom To Explore: During your two days in Lerwick, you have the freedom to explore charming town on your own during your free time. Below are some recommended options for independent explorations:

- Delve into the Shetland Islands' elaborate history at the **Lerwick Museum and Archives Centre**: This museum chronicles the cultural and agricultural history of the islands, including the development of the flourishing knitwear industry here. There's also a local gallery onsite where local artists display and sell their work.
 - **How to get there:** An approximate 5-minute walk from the hotel.
 - **Hours:** 10am-6pm, daily.
 - **Cost:** Free; donations to the Shetland Amnesty Trust are welcomed.
- Gain insight on an artist's unique process at the **Aa' Fired Ceramics Studio**: Owned by a local Lerwick woman, this studio features an impressive array of unglazed pottery for you

to decorate yourself. Pottery is glazed the next day for you to take home as a hand-crafted Shetland treasure.

- **How to get there:** An approximate 5-minute walk from the hotel.
 - **Hours:** 9am-5pm, daily.
 - **Cost:** Free.
- Peruse the wares of a local jewelry maker at **Shet-Lynn Jewels**: This woman-owned business is known for unique jewelry designs made from authentic Shetland stones. You might chat with the owner about her experience running a business, as well as about her creative process and her knowledge of gemology.
 - **How to get there:** An approximate 5-minute walk from the hotel.
 - **Hours:** 9am-5pm, daily.
 - **Cost:** Free.

Day 2 Bressay farm visit • Explore Lerwick

- Destination: Lerwick
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 9am, featuring Scottish specialties.

Morning: This morning around 9:30am, we'll take a short drive to the Bressay Ferry Terminal. From there, we'll take a quick ferry ride from the harbor to the nearby island of Bressay, arriving around 10:15am.

Here, we'll be met by Chris the crofter, a local farmer on the island. Chris will drive us to his farm and lead us on an interactive tour of his property. We'll see Chris's pigs, turkeys, hens, and—most notably—his flock of sheep. The Shetland Islands are known for their katmoget, or "badger-faced" sheep, a special breed with a light-colored body and a darker belly and legs. We'll also see a variety of other sheep species, and the different colored wool and fleeces they produce.

As we walk, Chris will take us through his daily chores and explain how life on the farm changes in response to the seasons. We'll get to see the traditional crofting tools he uses and learn about the particular challenges of farm life in this climate. You'll have plenty of time to ask questions and see what life is really like on a working croft.

Lunch: In a local café around noon, featuring hearty regional fare.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll take a scenic tour of Bressay aboard our private motorcoach from 1pm to 2:15pm. Chris will join us for the ride, pointing out some of his favorite spots and places of interest. Then we'll return to Lerwick via ferry, where the remainder of the afternoon will be on your own beginning at around 2:45pm.

Dinner: On your own. Perhaps you'll indulge in a local classic—fish and chips.

Evening: Free—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 3 Visit Sumburgh Head • Shetland pony visit • Transfer to Brae

- Destination: Brae
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: St. Magnus Bay Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 8:30am, featuring Scottish specialties.

Morning: This morning around 8:45am, we set out on a scenic tour of the south and western parts of the island, traveling by private motorcoach.

We'll drive south through the rugged landscape to Sumburgh Head, a towering cliff on the island's southern tip where seals and puffins

frolic. The head itself is a 300-foot-tall rocky promontory that juts out into the sea, offering panoramic coastal views from its cliffs.

You'll have about an hour to explore this picturesque setting on your own; keep your eyes peeled for dolphins and whales, which can sometimes be spotted in the waters below. Indeed, Sumburgh Head is teeming with unique wildlife: At around 10:30am, we'll meet with a local ranger, who will provide insight on the many species of birds that flock to the area.

Lunch: On your own at the Sumburgh Head visitor center at around 12pm. If the weather is nice, you might enjoy bringing your food outside for a picnic on the cliffs.

Afternoon: After lunch around 1pm, we'll depart on an approximate one-hour scenic drive to a local farm for a special treat: the chance to meet the iconic Shetland pony. Known for their diminutive stature and heavy coats, these intelligent ponies are thought to have originated in the Shetland Islands in the Bronze Age. As a result of the Islands' harsh climate and scarce food supply, the ponies have developed into an extremely hardy breed. Perhaps because of this, Shetland ponies were first used for pulling carts, carrying peat and coal, and plowing farmland, and later were commonly used in coal mines as "pit ponies" to haul coal underground. Unfortunately, mine work was incredibly taxing to even the ponies' strong constitutions, and many pit ponies lived short lives of hard labor.

The ponies we will meet today are pets and considered part of the family by their owners. We'll have the chance to meet the ponies, pet them, and brush their shaggy coats while our hosts tell us about their temperament and unique characteristics. Ask any questions you'd like—this is sure to be a memorable afternoon.

After we bid the local people and ponies goodbye around 3:30pm, we'll continue our journey to Brae, arriving in the mid-afternoon. Depending on where we stay, our hotel will likely feature a restaurant and lounge on-site. Rooms are simple, with a television, wireless Internet, and an en suite bathroom.

After checking in, you can join your Trip Experience Leader on a short orientation walk around the village at around 5:30pm, followed by some free time for independent discoveries.

Dinner: At a local restaurant around 7pm, featuring fresh local food.

Evening: Free—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 4 Explore Eshaness • Detling Galley Shed visit

- Destination: Brae
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: St. Magnus Bay Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 9am.

Morning: At around 9:30am, we set out to explore the northern end of the island, beginning with a visit to the Eshaness geological site. In the Devonian period, some 350-400 million years ago, the Shetland Islands lay near the equator and boasted a tropical climate; the Eshaness we see before us was once a volcano. Today, the area consists of craggy coastal cliffs carved over the eons by powerful waves. A local guide will take us on a walk along the coastline to see the stacks and blowholes that have formed and share the area's unique geological makeup. As we walk, look out for fulmars cresting on air currents above the sea, and other seabirds nesting in the crannies of the rock face.

Lunch: On your own at the nearby Braewick Café after our explorations wrap up around 12:15pm.

Afternoon: At around 1:15pm, we'll embark on a scenic half-hour drive to the village of Brae, a local joining us along the way to share their wealth of knowledge about the region.

Then, around 2pm, we'll head to the Detling Galley Shed to learn more about a festival held on the Shetland Islands—Up Helly AA, a fire festival held annually from January to March in various locations around the islands to mark the end of the yule season. Each festival involves a torch-lit procession by costumed participants known as *guizers* that culminates in the burning of a Viking-style galley ship. The main festival held in Lerwick, Shetland's capital, involves a procession of up to a thousand *guizers* who march through the streets of Lerwick on the last Tuesday in January. Since its inception, women and girls have been excluded from participating as *guizers* in Lerwick, though are welcome in the rural festivals. This has become a controversial issue and is the subject of ongoing debate in Shetland. During our visit at the Detling Galley Shed where the Viking galley is constructed for each year's festival, we'll have time to ask any questions we may have about this unique celebration.

At approximately 3:45pm, we'll head to the Sullom Voe Terminal, an oil and gas terminal on the Shetland Islands, arriving around 4pm. The terminal manages the production from oilfields in the North Sea and East Shetland Basin, and stores it before it is transported by tanker. When Shetland was identified as a location to provide a pipeline terminal and support facilities for offshore oil installations in the North Sea, local corporations involved had expected to each build their own terminal facilities. However, wishing to minimize the

negative impacts of the industry, the Shetland Islands Council, with power granted to it by the UK Parliament, was able to contain all pipeline terminal facilities at the Sullom Voe site.

During our visit, we'll meet with a local who will discuss how the impact of oil and gas on the Island—an accommodation that was supposed to be temporary—has led to job losses. They will also explain how Brexit has impacted the oil and gas industry in general. During this conversation, we'll be able to ask any questions we may have.

We'll head back to the hotel at around 5pm.

Dinner: At a local restaurant at 6pm, featuring regional favorites.

Evening: Free—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

Day 5 St. Ninian's Isle • Fly to Edinburgh • Farewell Dinner

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

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 8am.

Morning: We'll check out of our hotel around 8:30am and begin our 2-hour and 15-minute journey to the airport, stopping en route in St. Ninian's Isle. Upon arrival around 9:45am, we'll take about a half hour to view this impressive locale. A series of excavations during the mid-20th century here uncovered what is now referred to as "St. Ninian's treasure:" 28 silver objects and the jaw bone of a porpoise.

We'll pick up our drive to the airport around 10:15am, arriving at around 10:45am for check-in.

Lunch: On your own. You might like to grab something at the airport to enjoy on the plane.

Afternoon: We'll arrive in Edinburgh in the mid-afternoon around 2pm and retrieve our bags. Around 3pm, we'll transfer a short 15 minutes to our hotel, which will likely be located in the city center. Typical rooms will feature minibar, wireless Internet, tea- and coffee-making facilities, television, and an en suite bathroom. After checking in, you'll have some time to settle into your room or hit the town.

Then, around 5:30pm, we'll gather in the hotel bar for a farewell drink, giving us the opportunity to toast to our adventure and the memories made.

Dinner: Our small group will share one final meal together at tonight's Farewell Dinner in the hotel restaurant around 6pm. Dine on the Scottish cuisine you've come to know and compare highlights with your fellow travelers.

Evening: Free. For your last night in Scotland, you might like to take advantage of Scottish nightlife with a nightcap in a local pub. *Slàinte Mhath!* (Or "cheers," as the Scottish would say.)

Day 6 Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. sometime this morning, depending on your individual flight arrangements.

POST-TRIP

Dramatic Landscapes of North Wales & Liverpool, England

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Accommodations: 3 nights in Betsw-y-Coed and 2 nights in Liverpool
- » 9 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 9 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Round out your discoveries of Great Britain by discovering a few of the highlights of Wales and England on this optional extension. Discover the natural beauty of Snowdonia National Park, and follow in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary, who used its mountain terrain as a training ground for his ascent on Everest. Learn about rural life during conversations with a sheep farmer and wool weaver, then travel to England where the Roman roots of Chester and scouser spirit of Liverpool await your discovery.

Day 1 Transfer to Betws-y-Coed, Wales • Explore Conwy • Arrive Betws-y-Coed

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Gwydyr Hotel or similar

Morning: We depart our Edinburgh hotel and ride by motorcoach to Waverley station. Here we'll board a train which will take you on a scenic journey to Preston, England. Enjoy the diverse scenery of the United Kingdom as we make our way south on this 2.5-hour journey.

Lunch: On your own—lunch is available for purchase onboard the train.

Afternoon: We arrive in Preston around 12:15pm, where our motorcoach will be waiting to take us on the rest of our journey to Betws-y-Coed. This charming walled market

town on the northern coast of Wales will serve as our base of exploration over the next three nights of our adventure.

Upon arrival in Conwy around 2pm, we'll have about an hour and a half to explore Conwy independently.

Then, we'll check drive to our hotel in nearby Betws-y-Coed around 4pm. Later, around 6:30pm, join our Trip Experience Leader for a short orientation walk of the surrounding neighborhood. Then, enjoy a few hours of free time to rest or explore independently before dinner.

Dinner: Included at a local restaurant at around 6pm.

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

Day 2 Explore Snowdonia National Park • Welsh government conversation

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Gwydyr Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 8:45am.

Morning: Today we set out by motorcoach around 9am to explore Snowdonia National Park, taking in the rugged natural splendor from several perspectives. First, we'll arrive at the Ffestiniog Railway, the oldest independent narrow-gauge railway in the world. It was built in 1832 to carry slate but has been carrying passengers since 1864. We'll board the train and ride a 13.5-mile route through some of Snowdonia's spectacular scenery.

Starting from sea level at the harbor town of Porthmadog, we'll ride along a stunning trail of pastures and forests, then rise 700 feet into the mountains, passing through tunnels and riding rails carved into the rock itself. As we ride, we'll be joined by a local Welshman who worked for the railway for 50 years, to offer an insider's perspective of the lands we'll be traversing, and about the historic train itself.

After our train ride concludes, we'll board a motorcoach to the hotel where we'll enjoy lunch, arriving around 12:30pm.

Lunch: Included at the historic Pen-y-Gwryd Hotel. Located at the foot of Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales, this is the hotel where Sir Edmund Hillary stayed while training for his first successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953. After lunch, we'll be joined by the hotel's owner—the granddaughter of the family who founded the hotel—and learn how the hotel has become a site of pilgrimage for mountaineers, and view some of the memorabilia that Hillary's expedition team left behind.

Afternoon: Around 1:30pm, we'll get a closer look at the mountaineering heritage of this region when we meet a member of the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team. We'll learn about how this volunteer organization of around 50 members assists climbers who get into trouble while attempting to climb Snowdon and other surrounding peaks. We'll even be invited to follow in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary himself on a short hike up the base of Mount Snowdon, led by a member of the team. This optional 2-mile hike lasts about 2 hours, and involves navigating small inclines—if you choose to participate, the motorcoach will pick you up at the search and rescue base at the conclusion of your hike.

We'll then depart Snowdonia around 3:30pm and ride back to Betsw-y-Coed, arriving at the hotel around 4pm.

Later around 5:30pm at the hotel, we'll meet with a member of the Welsh National Assembly (renamed Senedd Cymru, or “Welsh Parliament” in May 2020) for a conversation about the role of the Welsh government in local politics. Formally a part of the United Kingdom, Wales' parliament is granted a set of statutory powers via a process known as “devolution.” In the wake of Scotland's unsuccessful bid for independence in 2014, followed by Brexit in 2016, new questions have arisen about the role of Wales' devolved government. This conversation is an excellent opportunity to ask questions of an expert at the center of the issue, and to gauge the opinion of the Welsh people.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Enjoy time to make independent discoveries this evening.

Day 3 Visit the Isle of Anglesea • Home-Hosted Lunch

- Destination: Betws-y-Coed
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Gwydyr Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 8:45am.

Morning: Around 9am, we drive by motorcoach to Anglesea, an island off the Welsh coast connected to the mainland by bridge. We'll spend the morning exploring Beaumaris Castle. Construction on the fortifications began in 1295 under the English King Edward I, as the final piece of his "Iron Ring" designed to impress England's superiority over Wales. It is regarded today as a great unfinished masterpiece; although supplies ran out before the project could be completed, the work that was done is regarded by many as the pinnacle of English medieval construction.

We'll judge for ourselves as we explore the castle and the surrounding medieval village freely with our Trip Experience Leader, with audio guides available to provide commentary. Note its symmetrical design, and the concentric pattern of walls within walls, providing layers of protection from any who dared to assault it. The castle was planned by the architect James of St. George, and its design reflects the fruits of his many years of experience.

After exploring the castle for around 2 hours, we'll drive to Caernarfon for lunch.

Lunch: We'll join a local Welsh family in their home in Caernarfon for a Home-Hosted Lunch around 12:30pm. Enjoy a lively afternoon of home-cooked Welsh cuisine and conversation as you share a meal together and get a unique perspective of everyday life in Wales.

Afternoon: After lunch, you'll have about 1.5 hours of free time to wander Caernarfon on your own. You can also choose to join your Trip Experience Leader for a walk along the coast.

We'll return to our hotel at around 3:30pm, after which point the rest of the day is yours to spend as you like. You might choose to indulge your sweet tooth at Baravelli's chocolate shop to try some locally-made treats and chat with the owner, Emma, about how she's one of only three people in Britain to run a shop that produces chocolate from bean to bar, entirely in-house.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Enjoy time to make independent discoveries this evening.

Day 4 Visit local sheep farm & woolen mill • Visit Chester, England • Transfer to Liverpool

- Destination: Liverpool
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Indigo Liverpool or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel from 7am to 8am.

Morning: We begin our transfer to Liverpool around 8:30am today, stopping along the way to visit a Welsh sheep farm. Here, we'll meet a farmer, who will show us around, and tell us about the day-to-day life of farmers in rural Wales.

Farming has been a staple of Welsh life from time immemorial, but in recent years, this old tradition has been threatened. Farmers typically make a living from selling their produce overseas—about 40% of Welsh lamb is exported—but with Brexit disrupting Britain's trade deals and international relations, the future of this profession is uncertain. During

your conversation, you'll learn how many farmers feel the Welsh government has left them to fend for themselves, and how they are turning to alternate sources of income to make ends meet. This farmer has begun to turn to local markets, selling his wool to a nearby mill, which we will also visit.

Next, around 10:15am, we'll travel to Trefriw Woolen Mill and meet with a member of the family that has owned the business for more than 150 years. We'll learn about the techniques the workers use to process raw wool into finished tapestry and tweed, including classic machines that have been in use for more than 50 years, and a vintage water turbine that powers the tools. We'll also visit the on-site Weaver's Garden, where locally-grown plants provide fibers and dyes, and browse the wares available for sale at the factory shop.

We then continue on and cross the border into England to visit the city of Chester, arriving around 1:15pm.

Lunch: On our own in Chester. Our Trip Experience Leader can provide recommendations.

Afternoon: Our Trip Experience Leader will help us discover Chester, an ancient English town with Roman roots and a well-preserved medieval center.

Around AD 60, the Romans expanded their empire in Britain to the banks of the Dee River, where Chester is located. The city today still displays the Roman layout, extending from the Cross, where a Roman fortress once stood, to four city gates. In the Middle Ages, commerce on the Dee River, particularly with Ireland, enriched the town in the twelfth and 13th centuries.

The prosperity of those times is still evident in one of Chester's unique features: "the Rows," a series of two-tiered shops along the ancient

streets of the historic town center. Chester also holds a significant place in English cultural history as the town where, beginning in the 14th century, mystery plays (public theater depicting biblical events) were presented.

We'll discover the city for about 30 minutes with our Trip Experience Leader, followed by around 1.5 hours for free exploration. We'll then continue on our drive to Liverpool, arriving around 4pm. After checking in to our hotel, our Trip Experience Leader will lead us on a short orientation walk. Our walk wraps up at Duke Street Market, where we can get a taste of local culture by mingling with the locals as they go about their day.

Dinner: On your own; ask your Trip Experience Leader about the best local fare at the market or in the area.

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

Day 5 Explore Liverpool • Farewell Dinner

- Destination: Liverpool
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Indigo Liverpool or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll explore Liverpool with a local guide to introduce us to this maritime city, set on the banks of the River Mersey and the Irish Sea.

Liverpool was a bustling hub of trade and migration between the 18th and 20th centuries. For much of its history, it wore a reputation as a poor, rough-and-tumble city, but in recent decades has joyfully emerged as a sought-after destination. Liverpool was designated by the European Union as a European Capital of Culture in 2008, as well as a UNESCO

World Heritage Site in 2004. Liverpool's residents—officially known as “Liverpudlians,” but most call them “scousers,” after a stew popular amongst local dockworkers—are famously friendly, as we’ll learn during our explorations.

We’ll walk for about 3 hours, exploring local sights, including the waterfront, where ferries cruise the sea and an iconic trio of mercantile buildings known as the “Three Graces” look out over the water. We’ll also soak up some local culture when we stop by a historic café that has been a popular hangout spot for local dockers for more than a century. Learn more about daily life in Liverpool as you join the locals for tea, coffee, and conversation.

After our walk is finished, we’ll have the rest of the afternoon free to explore and enjoy lunch on our own.

Lunch: On your own. Our Trip Experience Leader will happily offer suggestions.

Afternoon: Free to explore independently. Our Trip Experience Leader can help you find activities to suit your interests. You might choose to discover The Beatles Story, a museum which highlights the journey that these four famous Liverpool musicians took on the road to stardom. The museum features replicas of the Casbah Coffee Club, Mathew Street, Abbey Road Studios, The Cavern, and other locales to recreate the spirit of the 60s when Beatlemania was at its apex.

Dinner: Join your fellow travelers this evening at a local restaurant and toast to your discoveries over an included Farewell Dinner.

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

Day 6 Transfer to Manchester • Return to U.S.

• Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport in Manchester for your return flight to the U.S. sometime this morning, depending on your individual flight arrangements.

Scotland Revealed: Legends, Lochs & Highland Landscapes

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- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

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Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** 2 blank “Visa” pages.
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extensions:** No additional pages are needed.

No Visas Required

Travelers with a U.S. passport do not need any visas for this adventure, including the optional trip extensions.

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Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

PACING

- 5 locations in 14 days

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- Must be able to walk approximately 2-3 miles unassisted each day and participate in 6-8 hours of daily physical activities
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

CLIMATE

- Scottish weather is traditionally fickle, but summer temperatures usually range from the low 40s to the mid 60s
- Autumn generally brings mist, showers, and brisk weather in the 40s
- Most of the country receives some rain at least 200 days a year

TERRAIN

- There is a fair amount of hiking, and walking over uneven, unpaved, or cobbled surfaces

TRANSPORTATION

- Travel by motorcoach, public transportation, and ferry
- There are several 1-3 hour drives (sometimes with around 2 hours between stops), and 1- to 2-hour ferry rides
- Agility and balance are required for boarding or disembarking ferries

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Hotel rooms are smaller than U.S. and offer basic amenities
- All accommodations feature private baths with showers

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel> or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

No Vaccines Required

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>. (Pick the country and then follow the links to "Local Laws & Special Circumstances"; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying

- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water is safe to drink on this trip.
- If you prefer bottled water is widely available for sale. Or consider bringing a reusable water bottle from home to fill up at your hotel before you head out for the day.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler’s checks are not accepted in the United Kingdom.**
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

United Kingdom

The official currency of the United Kingdom is the pound sterling (GBP). One pound (£1) is divided into 100 pence (100p). This legal tender is used throughout Scotland, England, and Wales. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, and 50 pounds
- Coins: 1 and 2 pence (copper); 5, 10, 20, and 50 pence (silver); 1 and 2 pounds (silver/gold)

You may want to avoid 50 pound notes as these are not always accepted at smaller restaurants, cafes or shops.

Scotland

Please note that although the British pound is the official currency in Scotland, Scottish banknotes are different in appearance than those used elsewhere in the UK. That’s because the three main Scottish retail banks (the Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland) all issue their own notes with their own designs. They are all legal tender and are accepted everywhere in Scotland. They may also be accepted in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, though technically, shops in those countries are not required to accept them.

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You can also exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2004) are best. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1-\$5 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

United Kingdom: ATMs are common throughout the United Kingdom so ATM cards will give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency.

Scotland: ATMS are common throughout Ireland so ATM cards will give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency.

Credit & Debit Cards

Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although the Discover card is accepted in some countries outside the U.S., it is not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

United Kingdom: Visa and MasterCard credit cards are readily accepted (American Express is not commonly honored), but you should always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase.

Scotland: Visa and MasterCard credit cards are readily accepted, but you should always inquire if your credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase.

Chip Cards

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

This new technology is only now gaining traction in the U.S., so occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation

by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines.

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$8-\$12 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1-\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff. *Please note: Because of the difficulty in exchanging a small amount of dollars, it would be easier for the housekeeping staff if you left their tips in local currency.*

Please Note: Your tour price includes gratuities on the main trip and optional extensions for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters that may assist you during the scheduled activities on your adventure. All tips are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Please do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Personalized Air:** You booked international air with us, and have customized it in some way. If you have customized your trip's dates to arrive early, stay longer, or stop on your own in a connecting city, airport transfers will NOT be included. You must also arrange your own accommodations for any additional nights. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Account at www.oattravel.com/myaccount under "My Reservations".

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com.

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.

- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Account at www.oattravel.com/myaccount).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you'll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

United Kingdom: +44

Scotland: +44

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
<p>Pre-trip extension to the Hebrides (Isles of Skye and Harris): Because of stricter limitations on the flight from Stornoway to Glasgow, you will be limited to 44lbs for checked luggage and 13lbs for your carry-on. In addition, the overhead bins on the plane are smaller than average. They will fit a backpack or handbag but not a roller suitcase.</p> <p>Pre- or post-trip extension to the Shetland Islands (Lerwick, Brea & Edinburgh): Because of stricter limitations on the flight from Edinburgh to the Shetland Islands, you will be limited to 44lbs for checked luggage and 13lbs for your carry-on.</p> <p>Post-trip extension in Wales & England: Same as the main trip.</p>

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to don “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers.** Weather in Scotland is unpredictable, and can feature warm and cold temperatures at any time of the year. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to any fluctuations in temperatures.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall and heavy fog is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell (including rain pants). Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through. This will be particularly helpful during some of your outdoor activities, such as open-air boat rides.

- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes.

Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. You may also want to consult the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

What not to pack: Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Leave behind any credit cards that are not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Rain jacket/windbreaker with hood and rain pants: At any time of year, you’ll encounter the heavy rains, wind, and fog associated with the lush green landscapes of Scotland. Since you’ll be exposed to the elements during several activities (such as open-air boat rides and hikes), we strongly suggest that you bring rain gear.
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, sunscreen, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap

- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Compact umbrella
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Optional Gear

- Travel alarm
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Washcloth
- Travel-size tissues
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Electrical transformer and plug adapter

- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Swimsuit, if your ship/hotel has a pool or whirlpool
- Addresses for postcards
- Photos, small gift for Home-Hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Pocket-size calculator for exchange rates
- Travel hair dryer: Many hotels will provide hair dryers, but not all. If a hair dryer is essential to you consider a travel-size version.

Electricity Abroad

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

Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Scotland, Wales, and England is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, MP3 players, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

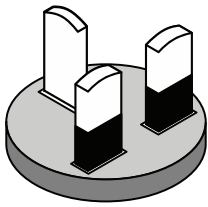
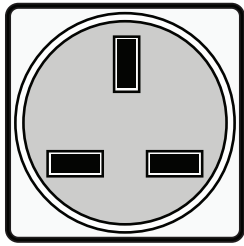
The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

United Kingdom: G

Scotland: G

Type G



CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Scotland: The variable climate of Scotland is infamous for its consistent ability to change from day to day. Cool, mild weather, accompanied by frequent cloud cover and rain, is the norm. But on occasion, and at any time of year, a stint of foul weather can settle in. In Scotland's lowlands (the Edinburgh region), temperatures average in the low 50s during spring and fall, and in the low 60s during summer. At any time, temperatures could drop and the weather become chilly.

Portree, Scotland (Isle of Skye, part of the Inner Hebrides Islands): Like many of the Scottish islands, the Inner Hebrides have a mild oceanic climate, similar to nearby Ireland. Despite their northern location, winters are seldom below freezing, with average temperatures in the 40s. And summers are rarely hot, with averages in the 60s. Wind and rain are abundant here. April and May are the driest months and December is the wettest.

Lerwick, Scotland (Shetland Islands): The Shetland Islands are the northernmost part of Scotland—roughly parallel to the Gulf of Alaska—and that location impacts their climate. Fortunately the islands' proximity to warm ocean currents means that the temperatures aren't quite as cold as Alaska. Average winter temperatures usually stay in the the 30s, and while there is some snow, it doesn't accumulate. However, winters are dark, with only a few short hours of daylight. (On the plus side, you maybe able to see the Northern Lights at night.) Spring and fall are chilly, windy, and wet, with highs and lows in the 40s. Summer is mild, with lots of sunshine. Being so far north, the Shetlands has extra hours of daylight from about mid-May to mid-July, when the sun might not set until 10pm. Summer is also the foggiest season, so be prepared for shifts in visibility throughout the day.

Like in *any* of Scotland's islands, the wind and weather can change suddenly throughout the day. It is best to come prepared with a warm layer (fleece, jacket, coat) and rain gear—no matter the season.

Conwy, Wales: Wales typically has a more temperate climate than Scotland's Highlands or London. In winter, it rarely drops below freezing. And in summer, the highs are usually no more than 73 degrees F. unless here's a heat wave. That said, expect cloudy and wet weather all year long—regardless of the season. Fall and winter are particularly wet, with rainfall almost every other day. Spring and summer are drier in comparison, but still averages 9–10 days of rain each month.

Liverpool, England: Liverpool's climate is similar to a coastal town in the Pacific Northwest—it doesn't get very hot or very cold, but it is frequently overcast and rains most days. Because of the mild climate, it doesn't snow very often in winter, and the lows are usually in the 40s. Spring is basically an extension of winter, and continues to be cool and wet. It isn't until May or June when highs start to creep up into the 60s, and—barring the occasional heat wave—summer highs rarely go beyond the high 70s. Fall is windy, with comfortable highs in the 50s.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to go online to www.oattravel.com/myaccount for your 10-day forecast.

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

MONTH	EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND			INVERNESS, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	44 to 34	86 to 80	14	42 to 35	85 to 81	2.0
FEB	45 to 34	86 to 75	10	43 to 34	86 to 76	1.6
MAR	48 to 37	86 to 68	12	47 to 37	86 to 70	1.5
APR	53 to 39	87 to 65	10	50 to 39	86 to 68	1.5
MAY	58 to 44	87 to 65	11	60 to 49	87 to 67	1.8
JUN	63 to 48	86 to 64	10	60 to 49	86 to 68	1.9
JUL	67 to 52	88 to 66	10	64 to 53	88 to 70	2.6
AUG	66 to 51	90 to 66	11	63 to 52	89 to 68	2.8
SEP	62 to 49	89 to 69	10	58 to 48	88 to 71	2.3
OCT	55 to 43	88 to 74	13	53 to 44	87 to 75	2.6
NOV	49 to 39	87 to 79	13	46 to 39	86 to 81	2.4
DEC	44 to 34	87 to 82	13	43 to 36	86 to 83	2.1

MONTH	GLASGOW, SCOTLAND			PORTREE, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Avg.# of Days with Rain
JAN	44 to 35	88 to 83	25	45 to 38	87	31
FEB	45 to 35	86 to 75	22	42 to 33	82	24
MAR	49 to 37	87 to 70	23	43 to 36	80	27
APR	55 to 41	87 to 62	22	50 to 41	74	18
MAY	61 to 45	87 to 60	19	53 to 43	80	25
JUN	65 to 50	87 to 63	20	56 to 47	84	27
JUL	68 to 54	88 to 66	21	60 to 51	87	28
AUG	67 to 53	91 to 66	21	59 to 51	88	29
SEP	62 to 50	90 to 71	20	55 to 48	85	27
OCT	55 to 44	89 to 75	24	49 to 42	80	26
NOV	49 to 39	88 to 80	24	43 to 37	80	19
DEC	44 to 35	88 to 85	22	44 to 37	84	27

MONTH	LERWICK, SCOTLAND			CONWY, WALES		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Avg. # of Day with Rain	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	43 to 35	77	22	47 to 39	80	14
FEB	42 to 35	74	19	47 to 37	78	11
MAR	44 to 36	75	20	49 to 40	76	12
APR	47 to 38	75	14	53 to 42	75	11
MAY	51 to 42	80	11	59 to 47	75	9
JUN	54 to 46	88	11	62 to 51	77	10
JUL	58 to 50	88	12	66 to 55	77	9
AUG	58 to 50	86	13	66 to 55	78	11
SEP	55 to 48	83	17	63 to 53	79	11
OCT	50 to 44	80	21	57 to 48	79	15
NOV	46 to 39	74	21	52 to 43	81	16
DEC	43 to 36	80	22	48 to 39	82	15

MONTH	LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Average # Days with Rainfall
JAN	46 to 37	--	20
FEB	46 to 37	--	18
MAR	50 to 40	--	19
APR	55 to 43	--	18
MAY	61 to 46	--	17
JUN	65 to 52	--	17
JUL	68 to 55	--	18
AUG	68 to 55	--	18
SEP	64 to 52	--	17
OCT	57 to 46	--	20
NOV	50 to 41	--	21
DEC	45 to 37	--	20

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure you'll be accompanied by one of our local, expert Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Scottish Culture

Scots are known to be outgoing, steadfast, practical, and full of humor. They are also fiercely proud of their culture—in part, perhaps, because it has taken a lot for them to retain it. Scotland has endured centuries of attempted repression by the English—not to mention other invaders like the Romans, Vikings, and Normans.

But Scottish culture is not wholly defined in opposition to something else. Scottish Gaelic is still an official language, and even though very few Scots speak it, many signs are translated into Gaelic and Gaelic words have infiltrated the larger culture. Many Scots identify with their ancient clans, and proudly wear their clan tartans for weddings, holidays and special occasions. Though these were originally part of Highland dress, they are now the national dress of the whole country.

Within Scotland, there is an imaginary line that runs roughly from Aberdeen to Glasgow that separates the Highlands in the north and west, from the Lowlands in the south and east. Generally speaking, Highland culture is more Gaelic and rural; whereas Lowland culture is more hybrid and urban. The Hebridean islands are a bastion of Gaelic tradition, but Orkney and Shetland have a totally distinct feel, with strong Scandinavian influences.

Scottish folklore is rich and widely loved. You'll hear tales of kelpies (shape-shifting water spirits), wulvers (werewolves, but kind ones), selkies (seals who can take human form), and all manner of mythical beasts—Nessie the Loch Ness monster being the most famous. And one of the most popular holidays is Halloween, when all those goblins and faeries might run amok in the streets.

Some of that folklore has inspired Scotland's rich literary tradition, which gave us greats like Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott, Arthur Conan Doyle, J.M. Barrie, and the most revered Scottish poet of all, Robert (Rabbie) Burns. Among the country's best-known artists are the portraitist Allan Ramsay; and the architect-designer-watercolorist and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh, who had a major impact on the Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Bauhaus and other modernist movements. You can see some of his finest work in Glasgow. Today, you can experience some of the most exciting contemporary art, music, theater and more at cultural festivals like the Edinburgh International, the Fringe, Up Helly Aa (Shetland fire festivals), Aye Write! (the Glasgow book fair), and more.

That's quite a lot to celebrate, and Scots love to do just that the local pub, another cultural icon. Wander in and share a beer or a whisky, and pretty soon you'll be having a *blether* (conversation) with your bar mate. Just don't call what you're drinking a Scotch (it's called whisky here), and don't call your new friend that, either. It's considered antiquated and offensive. They are Scots or Scottish—and fiercely proud of it.

Religion and Religious Observance

Today's Scots are not a particularly religious people. In a 2016 government survey, 51% of respondents said they had no religion at all. Otherwise, of those who did claim a religious orientation, most identified simply as "Christian." The official (and largest) denomination is the Church of Scotland. It is simply called "the Kirk," and theologically, it is Presbyterian. The next largest group are Catholics. Especially with increased immigration, there are growing populations of Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs. There are small Jewish communities, primarily in Glasgow, but as with other groups, observance has fallen off.

Christmas and Easter are the major religious observances. Interestingly, Christmas was banned here in 1640, and was not made a public holiday until 1958. At the time of the Scottish Reformation, Yule celebrations were common among the previously Catholic people. These included bonfires and other activities associated with old Celtic and pagan rites. Plus, the Protestant clergy frowned upon any activities that were extravagant or superstitious. So Christmas celebrations were prohibited. As a result, the Scots found another outlet for their festivities: Hogmanay or New Year's Eve. Even today, Hogmanay is the biggest, most popular holiday of all.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing most people in the UK is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash in your pocket. Carry most of your money, and your passport, in a travel pouch or money belt under your shirt. Replenish your pocket supply when you are in a safe and quiet place, or in our vehicle. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize them.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful. Con artists sometimes target travelers.

Language in Scotland

There are three official languages in Scotland. The first is English, which is spoken by more than 99% of the people. The dialect you will hear most often is Scottish English, and sometimes, it is hard to understand! But if you just ask people to speak more slowly, you will catch on. The second most spoken language is Scots, a Germanic language that is related to Old English. The third language, Gaelic, is Celtic in origin. Scottish Gaelic is different than Irish Gaelic. It is spoken by nearly 90,000 people in Scotland, most of which are concentrated in the Highlands and the western islands. But very few people speak only Gaelic.

Useful Phrases

Scottish English has some colorful slang and expressions that you are likely to hear:

- *Aye* means “yes.” *Naw* means “no.”
- *Braw* is something that is great or fantastic, as in “that dinner was braw.” If it’s really, really great, you can say it was *pure barry*.
- *Fitba* is football. And football (in case you didn’t know it) is soccer.
- *Haud yer weesht* is a very brusque way to say “be quiet.”
- *To go out on the skite* means to have a night on the town, usually fueled by alcohol. Do that, and you might get *steaming* (very drunk.) The next day, you might look a little *peely-wally*, or sickly and pale. In that case, you may want to drink an Irn Bru (pronounced iron brew.) This popular carbonated beverage tastes like bubblegum and orange, and aside from being Scotland’s most popular soft drink, it is said to cure hangovers.
- *Haste ye back!* Is what you’ll want to do upon leaving Scotland: Come back soon.

Scottish Cuisine

Scotland has some of the most creative chefs in the United Kingdom, and considering the fantastic pantry they have to work with—with world-class seafood, game and produce—it’s no wonder that the country boasts ten Michelin-starred restaurants. Twelve products of Scottish origin qualify for the European Union’s PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) designation, including Shetland lamb, Orkney Island Scottish cheddar, Scottish salmon, and Scottish whisky.

You can enjoy these delicacies all over the country, not just in the foodie capital of Edinburgh. But when you’re in the capital, do visit one of its famous **chippies**. These fish and chip shops dish up the crispiest fare, served with something unique to Edinburgh: “**salt ‘n sauce**.” This is a tangy, brown condiment that’s a cross between malt vinegar, brown gravy, and ketchup.

Cullen Skink may sound like the name of a Harry Potter villain, but it's a fish soup of smoked haddock, potatoes and leeks. Traditionally, it's made from **finnan haddie**, a cold-smoked haddock from Aberdeen; or **Arbroath smokie**, a hot-smoked haddock. Scottish salmon is widely considered the best in the world. Some say the same about Scottish oysters from Loch Ryan.

For meat lovers, your roast, stew, or steak will taste best if it's made with rich, marbled **Angus Aberdeen beef**. Another favorite of Scottish carnivores is **black pudding**. It's a sausage made from congealed pig's blood mixed with oats, fat, and seasonings. It may not sound appetizing, but because it's loaded with protein, potassium, calcium and iron, it's considered a "superfood."

In Scotland, your **bangers and mash** (sausage and mashed potatoes) might include something besides pork, such as venison or apples. Bangers are a breakfast staple, as are **lorne sausage**, which are square and made with beef. You'll get both of those if you order a **full Scottish**, a heaping breakfast plate that also includes fried eggs, tomatoes, baked beans, ham or bacon, butter, scones, bread, and sometimes even haggis.

And oops, there you go, we've mentioned the unmentionable: **haggis**. Scotland's national dish, it's made from minced sheep's liver, lungs, and heart; mixed with spices and oatmeal; and served inside the stomach lining. It is usually served with **neets and tatties** (mashed turnips and potatoes.) If you get invited to a traditional Robbie Burns supper, haggis will be the main dish, ushered to the table by a bagpiper, and praised by a reading of the revered poet's *Address to the Haggis*. Otherwise, haggis is widely available, and many people say it's delicious. Go ahead, try it. This may be your only chance, because haggis has been banned by the USDA since 1971.

For dessert you might try traditional **shortbread; tablet**, a fudge-like confection (minus the chocolate); or the "king of Scottish desserts," **cranachan**, a rich parfait of cream, raspberries and oats. Cholesterol not high enough? Try a battered Mars Bar. Scots love to dip this American candy in a sweet batter, then deep fry it. And here's a secret: You can also get a deep-fried Snickers or Three Musketeers bar, whatever your sweet tooth desires.

Whatever your meal includes, you can toast it with a wee dram of **Scottish whisky**. If you order it in a pub, please don't call it "Scotch." If you ask for it on the rocks, you may get a pitying look along with your ice. To impress your bartender, order a single malt and specify one of the six official Scottish whisky regions: Lowlands, Speyside, Highlands, Campbeltown, Islay and Islands. Then raise your glass and say *slainte-mhath* (pronounced "slange var")—to your health!

Welsh Cuisine

Just like their language and ancient customs, the people of Wales have proudly preserved their traditional cuisine—much of which was borne out of poverty. Traditional Welsh cooking is linked to the diets of fishermen, farmers, and men who worked in the mines. Lamb, beef, freshly caught fish, and vegetables from the garden figure prominently in Welsh cooking. Outside of Wales, **cawl** is the classic dish of Welsh lamb with leeks and root vegetables, but inside of Wales, **cawl** is just the humble leek and potato soup—no meat, no bones, more of a poor man's broth. Other Welsh favorites include **Glamorgan sausages**, which are really not sausages at all, but vegetarian

sausage-shaped dish made with Caerphilly cheese, leeks, and breadcrumbs. And **bara brith** (literally, speckled bread), which is considered Wales' national fruitcake and starts out by soaking dried fruit in strong black tea overnight.

Welsh rarebit, the comforting snack of melted cheese on toasted bread, probably originated in the 17th century as a way to accentuate the local wheat bread and savory cheddar or Caerphilly cheese made in Wales. Some say that the English first called the dish Welsh "rabbit" because they looked down on the less wealthy Welsh and implied that they couldn't even catch a rabbit and had to eat cheese instead for dinner. No matter what they say, it's still delicious.

Passages from the 1939 novel *How Green Was My Valley* may provide you with a more accurate portrayal of Welsh cuisine: "When we sat down, with me in Mama's lap, my father would ladle out of the cauldron thin leek soup with a big lump of ham in it ... There was everything in it that was good ... and the smell alone was enough to make you feel so warm and comfortable ..."

English Cuisine

The French used to have a joke about their English neighbors that went something like "other countries know how to cook while the English know how to boil". Even the Brits themselves would joke about their standard "meat, potatoes, and two veg" meals. But starting in the 90s there was a revival of British classics using fresh ingredients, flavor-boosting "low and slow" cooking methods, and sometimes borrowing elements from other cuisines. As a result, modern British cooking now has many admirers (see the devoted fans of *Great British Bake Off* or the cookbooks of Jamie Oliver, Gordon Ramsay, and Nigella Lawson as proof). Add to this the fact that the UK has a diverse choice of restaurants—Indian, Thai, Italian, French, and Chinese to name a few—and we can say that the English eat very well.

That's not to say that you can't find the old classics; just that they are better than ever. For example, **beef stew**, **bangers and mash** (sausage and mashed potatoes), and **bubble and squeak** (a potato and cabbage/brussel sprout dish) are still on many menus. **Fish and chips** is another well-known meal and is usually bought from special shops (chippies) where the cooked food is wrapped and sprinkled with salt and vinegar. There are lots of traditional regional specialties, including **Yorkshire pudding** (made with flour and water), **toad in the hole** (sausages in Yorkshire pudding), **cream scones** served with jam and clotted cream, and London's **pie and mash** (eel in parsley sauce with mashed potato). And although not originally from Britain, Indian curry has become so ubiquitous that "going for a curry" is a weekend staple.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Scotland

Scotland has many fine local products to choose from, including shortbread, handmade soaps, Celtic jewelry, and bagpipes. There are plenty of items emblazoned with the Scottish flag, Nessie the Loch Ness monster, and golf imagery (since the game was invented here.) If there's a dog lover on your gift list, consider a memento of Greyfriar's Bobby. He was a 19th-century Skye Terrier who supposedly stood by his master's grave in Edinburgh's Greyfriar's churchyard—every day for 14 years.

Many of the best souvenirs are wearable, like Scottish cashmere, Harris tweed, quality woolens, Balmoral caps, tams, and tartans (which found on everything from umbrellas to scarves and pajamas.) While the kilt is the quintessential Scottish garment, there are also special accessories that complete the look: a *sporrán* (pouch), *sgian-dubh* (a small ceremonial knife—which might be hard to get back to the U.S. in your luggage), and jaunty knee-high socks. Although women don't wear kilts, they do wear tartan skirts and special shoes known as *ghillie boots*.

And of course, there's whisky (without an "e"), which is so synonymous with Scotland that many Americans call it "Scotch." Not a whisky fan? Scotland is also known for high-quality gin.

Wales

Popular Welsh souvenirs to bring home are Welsh cheese, Welsh love spoons, Welsh slate (as a coaster, cheese board, or even an engraved decoration), laverbread, Welsh cakes, or traditional wool blankets.

England

Different parts of the United Kingdom (UK) are known for different specialties. Even if your trip only takes you to one part of the country, you'll find these items for sale throughout. Popular items include Liberty silks, umbrellas, Crunchie candy bars, Derby-style hats and fascinators, Paddington toy bears, Wedgwood china, orange marmalade, Woods of Windsor soaps and lotions, football team shirts, Wellington boots, Burberry trench coats and accessories, books by British authors, Earl Grey tea, Beatles memorabilia and so much more. You can find all kinds of items emblazoned with Union Jacks, London Underground (Tube) imagery, and images of the royal family.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

United Kingdom in Brief

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 94,525 square miles
- **Capital:** London, with a separate parliament in Edinburgh for Scotland, a National Assembly in Cardiff for Wales, and a National Assembly for Northern Ireland in Belfast.
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy
- **Languages:** English, Welsh, Gaelic
- **Location:** Situated off the northwest coast of Europe, the island of Britain is occupied by England, Wales, and Scotland—collectively called Great Britain. Together with Northern Ireland, Great Britain makes up the nation officially called the United Kingdom (UK). England, in the southern part of Britain, is separated from Scotland on the north by the granite Cheviot Hills. To the west along the border of Wales—a land of steep hills and valleys—are the Cambrian Mountains. To the south of England is the English Channel and to the east is the North Sea, which also washes the eastern coast of Scotland. To the west of England is the Irish Sea, mixed to the north with the Atlantic Ocean.
- **Population:** Entire UK 65,105,246 (estimate): England - 55,268,100, Scotland - 5,404,700, Wales - 3,113,200, Northern Ireland - 1,862,100
- **Religions:** Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc.) 59.5%, Muslim 4.4%, Hindu 1.3%, other 2%, unspecified 7.2%, none 25.7%
- **Time zone:** Great Britain is five hours ahead of Eastern Time: when it is 6 am in New York, it is 11 am in Wales, England, and Scotland.

National Holidays: United Kingdom

National holidays can vary depending on which part of the country you're in; please refer to the section for the specific area that you'll be visiting. The United Kingdom also celebrates a number of national holidays that

follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

Scotland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 30,918 square miles
- **Capital:** Edinburgh (regional); Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London

- **Location:** Consists of 32 council areas, occupying the northern part of Great Britain and islands
- **Languages:** English, Scots, Scottish Gaelic
- **Population:** 5,404,700
- **Religions:** None 49.4%, Church of Scotland 24.1%, Roman Catholic 14.5%, other Christian 7.8%, Other 2.3%, Muslim 1.6%, Unknown 0.3%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

National Holidays: Scotland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Scotland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit **www.timeanddate.com/holidays**.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/02 2nd January Holiday

1st Monday in May Early May Bank Holiday

Last Monday in May Spring Bank Holiday

First Monday in August Summer Bank Holiday

11/30 St. Andrew's Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Scotland: A Brief History

We know that various hunter-gatherer tribes inhabited Scotland as far back as 9,600 BC. By 3,000 BC, they used tools, established farming and scattered standing stones all over. You can see some of these Neolithic monoliths on the Isle of Lewis, Shetland, Orkney, and beyond.

The Romans arrived in Great Britain 43 AD, but when they attempted to occupy Scotland, they met fierce resistance from the native tribes, who they referred to as Caledonians. The Romans built several fortifications, including Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. But they were never able to conquer the Caledonians and by 212 AD, they left.

In the wake of the Romans, Scotland was divided into four main kingdoms. The Picts held the northeast, the Scots (from Ireland) established Dal Riata in the west, the Britons occupied the southwest, and the Angles had Bernicia, which eventually morphed into Northumbria and stretched into England. Their rivalries were set aside in the face of a new threat: by 793 AD, Viking marauders arrived, ferociously attacking the monasteries at Iona and Lindisfarne, taking over villages and establishing trading posts. In 843 AD, the various kingdoms united under Kenneth MacAlpin, the first King of Alba. Eventually, his domain became known as Scotland. A nation was born.

When the Normans took over England in 1066, many Anglo-Saxons moved north into the Scottish Lowlands. This is when the Scots began adopting English cultural ways. But when a succession dispute arose, the English King Edward I seized the opportunity to invade and name himself king. This led to the first War of Scottish Independence in which William Wallace, of *Braveheart* fame,

routed the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297. The victory was short lived, as the English returned in 1298, captured Wallace and executed him in 1305. But Robert the Bruce picked up the baton (and the crown), and defeated the English at Bannockburn in 1314. Scotland's independence was assured, but peace was not.

Centuries of conflict with England ensued, often fueled by religion and marked not just by physical violence, but by various English attempts to suppress Scottish culture. The connections between clans were broken, and the chieftains became feudal lords whose rapacity often forced their own people off lands in evictions known as "clearances." In 1707, the two nations signed onto the Act of Union, which united England and Scotland under the same flag and Parliament, but allowed Scotland to keep its own church and legal system. The United Kingdom was born, but again, the bloodshed did not die as years of rebellion continued. The last one, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, culminated with the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

Despite tensions, Scotland's economy was supercharged by the Industrial Revolution. The 18th century saw the Scottish Enlightenment, and Glasgow became a great trading port. Scotland's educational system flourished, and its inventors exported their genius around the world. During World Wars I and II, the Scots' warrior legacy made huge contributions to the Allied War effort.

Following deindustrialization in the 20th century, the Scottish economy hit a wall. Tensions with England continue, manifesting as periodic calls for independence. In 2014, voters rejected a referendum for independence by a slim margin. They may well be reconsidering that decision: only 38% of Scots were in favor of Brexit, and a 2020 poll showed that 52% of voters support leaving the UK, post-Brexit.

Wales

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 8,006 square miles
- **Capital:** Cardiff (regional); Wales is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London
- **Location:** Consists of 8 counties, occupying the southwestern part of Great Britain
- **Languages:** English, Welsh
- **Population:** 3,113,200
- **Religions:** Christian 57.6%, None 32.1%, Unknown 7.6%, Muslim 1.5%, Other 1.2%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

National Holidays: Wales

Wales typically celebrates the same holidays as England, in addition to a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar,

such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

Wales: A Brief History

One of the oldest regions in the world, the area of land occupied by Wales is thought to have been inhabited since about 250,000 BC. Celts began arriving on Britain's shores in about 600 BC. The Romans came in 55 BC, but didn't fully occupy present-day Wales and England until about 60 AD. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, various independent kingdoms sprouted across Britain and were under constant threat by Anglo-Saxon invaders—a period that some say gave rise to the exploits of King Arthur who engaged in battles against them. When the Anglo-Saxons eventually gained control of much of present-day England, remote regions such as Wales clung to their language and customs. And by the sixth century, Wales had developed a unique identity that set it apart from the rest of Britain.

While the Kingdom of England was formed in 927 AD, internecine struggles among various Welsh kingdoms prevented Wales from uniting under a single ruler for very long. After the Norman conquest of England, the Welsh kingdoms gradually came under the sway of the English crown. Then, in the late 13th century, King Edward I conquered Wales and claimed it as a territory of England—and the successors to the English monarch would begin holding the title of the “Prince of Wales” to signify their control of the region.

After a smattering of revolts against English rule were launched by the Welsh in the 15th and 16th centuries, Henry VIII passed laws aimed at incorporating Wales into the Kingdom of England. In 1707 Wales became part of the Kingdom of Great Britain and about a century later (in 1801) was folded into the United Kingdom.

While the British Empire rose and flourished in the 19th century, Wales embraced changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and saw its population rise dramatically. But with the breakup of the British Empire after the Second World War, the industries of Wales also went into a steep decline, eventually giving rise to nationalist sentiments and possible paths to independence.

England

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 50,346 square miles
- **Capital:** London
- **Location:** Consists of 48 counties, occupying the southern part of Great Britain
- **Languages:** English
- **Population:** 55,268,100

- **Religions:** Christianity 59.4%, Non-religious 24.7%, Unknown 7.2%, Muslim 5.0%, Hindu 1.5%, Sikh 0.8%, Jewish 0.5%, Buddhist 0.5%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

National Holidays: England

In addition to the holidays listed below, England celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

1st Monday in May Early May Bank Holiday

Last Monday in May Spring Bank Holiday

Last Monday in August Summer Bank Holiday

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

England: A Brief History

Prehistoric England was home to Celtic and other tribal peoples, then was ruled by the Roman Empire from about AD 43 to AD 410. After Rome fell, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons established small kingdoms and fiefdoms. When the Viking marauders hit England's shores in the 9th century, many of those small kingdoms were unified by King Alfred the Great of Wessex. Strength in numbers.

Some of England's medieval monarchs stand out for their lasting impacts on history. William the Conqueror brought Norman rule to England in 1066. Richard the Lionheart embarked on the Third Crusade in 1189. King John was compelled to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, laying the foundation for constitutional monarchy.

English King Edward I conquered Wales in 1283 and sought to rule Scotland as well. Those imperial ambitions were not limited to the island of Great Britain—England under Edward III fought the Hundred Years' War with France between 1337 and 1453, ultimately losing all its possessions on the French side of the Channel. Then, between 1455 and 1485, the York and Lancaster families battled for the crown in the Wars of the Roses. The victor, Henry Tudor, who was a Lancaster but through illegitimate descent. He married a York, and their offspring, Henry VIII, became the third Tudor king in 1509.

Henry VIII is best known for his six marriages, the first of which, to Catherine of Aragon, he sought to end through annulment. When the Pope forbade it, Henry separated the Church of England from papal authority and made himself its head. His daughter, Elizabeth I, became queen in 1558 and ruled for 44 years—a golden age of cultural flowering, and the expansion of England's naval prowess.

England fell into civil war between 1642 and 1649, when Oliver Cromwell executed King Charles I and briefly replaced the monarchy with a republic. The monarchy was restored in 1660 with the enthronement of Charles II, though royal power was restored with limitations.

The United Kingdom came into being with the 1707 Act of Union between the parliaments of England and Scotland. Then, by 1714, the first of four King Georges ascended the throne, beginning the Georgian era, a time when England laid the groundwork for Empire. It reached its fruition in the 19th century during the Victorian era, when the British Empire straddled the globe.

During the 19th century, the entire island of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, having been incorporated into the UK in 1801. The Irish however, sought independence, and in 1921, all but the six northern counties of Ulster became the Republic of Ireland—leaving the UK in its present form. But the United Kingdom was still able to call on its crown colonies, protectorates and Commonwealth when it declared war on Germany in 1939. The Battle of Britain and the destructive air attacks known as the Blitz besieged England from July 1940 to June 1941. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, one of England’s most influential statesmen, led the country to victory.

As a popular song of the war years put it, “There’ll Always Be an England.” But what of the United Kingdom? In recent years, the desires of the Scots and Welsh for greater autonomy have led to the process called “devolution.” In 1999, Scotland regained its own Parliament, and Wales established its own National Assembly. In 2014, a referendum was held in Scotland to vote on independence from the United Kingdom, but was defeated.

In 2016, a United Kingdom referendum passed with 51.9% in favor of leaving the European Union. Brexit went into effect on January 31, 2020, with an 11-month transition period, during which the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson must negotiate a new EU trade deal. Failure to do so will be a major hit on the UK economy. Plus, with both Scotland and Northern Ireland solidly opposed to Brexit, there is talk that the prospect of them rejoining the European Union might resurrect the call for independence.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Scotland

The Scottish World: History and Culture of Scotland by Harold Orel, et al (1981, Culture) Ten essays seek to show that Scottish culture is distinctly different from English in its art, architecture, literature, music, and history.

The Crow Road by Iain Banks (1992, Fiction) Set in the west Highlands (in a town reminiscent of Oban), this darkly comic tale from one of Scotland's most acclaimed writers touches on themes of love, death, sex, addiction, family and the power of the Scottish landscape. In it, Prentice, a bumbling student, attempts to unravel the disappearance of his Uncle Rory, just one of the eccentric characters in the sprawling McHoan family. The Crow Road is a real road in Glasgow, but the expression "to take the crow road" means you are dead.

Corrag by Susan Fletcher (2010, Historical Fiction) In Glencoe in 1692, 38 members of the Macdonald clan are killed by the redcoats of William III—after they'd enjoyed the family's hospitality for a week. This real-life incident is told from the perspective of Corrag, a young woman who is accused of witchcraft after the event, and imprisoned in Inverary.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie by Muriel Spark (1961, Fiction) In 1930s Edinburgh, six 10-year-old girls are chosen as the favorites of their teacher, the unconventional, complicated and exuberant Miss Brodie. We follow all their lives through petty jealousies, the emergence of fascism in Europe, misguided affairs, World War II, religious awakening—and a searing betrayal. The film version won an Oscar for star Maggie Smith as Miss Jean.

44 *Scotland Street* series by Alexander McCall Smith (Fiction) Alexander McCall Smith, also known for the bestselling *No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency* series, depicts the lives of colorful residents in an Edinburgh apartment building.

Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns by Robert Burns (2012, Poetry) A collection by the famous Scottish poet who is known for writing in the Scots language, including the famous *Auld Lang Syne*.

Wales

The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship by Elizabeth Mavor (2011, Non-Fiction) A beautifully written account of two 18th-century women who abandoned their aristocratic lives in Ireland to settle in Llangollen, Wales. Wanting to keep their lives private and away from the glare of society, their achievements, intelligence, and wit would instead make them local legends.

The Matter of Wales: Epic Views of a Small Country by Jan Morris (2000, Travel Writing) One of the world's leading travel writers celebrates her native country in this deeply personal study of the architecture, landscapes, and national character of Wales.

Here Be Dragons by Sharon Kay Penman (1985, Historical Fiction). This is the first book in a highly praised trilogy that follows the decline of Welsh kings. Penman skillfully melds history and fiction and brings 13th-century Wales vividly to life.

England

Persuasion by Jane Austen (1818, Fiction) Social conventions derail the courtship of Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth. But the two are thrown together again in the social whirlwind of early nineteenth-century Bath.

Windsor Castle: A Thousand Years of a Royal Palace (2018, History) This authoritative history, the first to be published in 100 years, explores Windsor Castle and its immediate environs from around AD 700 to the present day, and examines the social, political and cultural events in the lives of the royals who lived there. Includes many illustrations, photos and 3D reconstructions.

London by Edward Rutherfurd (1998, Fiction) A very ambitious historical novel of London's past, which sweeps from Roman times through the medieval, Elizabethan, Victorian, and Edwardian eras on up to the present.

A Traveller's History of England by Christopher Daniell (2005, History) An entertaining refresher course in English history, from hunter-gatherers to Margaret Thatcher's resignation. Written by a noted British historian and archaeologist.

All Creatures Great and Small by James Herriot (1998, Memoir) A heart-warming book, in which a veterinarian in Yorkshire shares amusing anecdotes about his dealings with animals and their owners.

Bath by Edith Sitwell (1932, History) Sitwell, the famed Bloomsbury writer, provides a fine portrait of Beau Nash, the 18th-century "Master of Ceremonies" who put the city Bath on the Georgian social map. Insightful commentary on the fashions of the day, the development of the city, and the colorful array of politicians, peers, matchmakers, gamblers, artists and con artists who flocked here to "take the waters."

Suggested Film & Video

Scotland

Mary Queen of Scots (2018, Historical Drama) History has cast Queen Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie) and her cousin Mary (Saoirse Ronan) as enemies. This film imagines them as both power brokers and pawns whose mutual admiration is crushed by the misogyny, nationalism and treachery of their courts.

Local Hero (1983, Comedy) Oil exec Burt Lancaster sends young hotshot Mac to coastal Ferness, Scotland, to buy the entire village to make way for an oil refinery. The quirky locals are eager to make money, but others are not so keen, including an eccentric beach bum and a researcher who may (or may not) be a real mermaid. Spectacular Scottish locations, magical starry skies, subtle humor and genuine affection make this the perfect pre-trip pic.

Macbeth (2015, Drama) Evocative Scottish settings, outstanding production values and the timeless themes of Shakespeare's tragedy make this a must-see. Stars Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard bring intensity and depth as Scotland's most famous power couple.

Trainspotting (1997, Dark Comedy/Drama) Danny Boyle's electrifying breakthrough film follows a young heroin addict (Ewan MacGregor) and his outrageous friends as they struggle to score in the underside of Edinburgh. Plenty of black humor and provocative social commentary.

Braveheart (1995, Drama) The 13th century rebel William Wallace teams up with Robert the Bruce to lead the First War of Scottish Independence against England. The historical accuracy of Mel Gibson's opus has been critiqued, but none can deny the thrill of its battles, epic scenery and engrossing storyline.

Scottish TV Shows

Outlander (2014–present, Drama) Based on the novels of Diana Gabaldon, this wildly popular, historical time-travel series begins when a WWII nurse visits Inverness, Scotland, where she is mysteriously carried from the standing stones at Craigh na Dun back in time to 1743. She falls in love with a rebel Highlander, whose Jacobite cause, she knows, is doomed.

Shetland (2013–present, Mystery) Small town life is more complicated than it seems in this acclaimed BBC series. Follow detective Jimmy Pérez as he investigates crime amidst the elemental landscapes of the Shetlands.

Wales

The Englishman Who Went up a Hill but Came Down a Mountain (1995). Scored with a Welsh choir, this heartwarming tale recounts the experiences of two cartographers who arrive in a Welsh village in 1917. Loosely based on actual events, the film reveals how the Welsh are very different from the English.

How Green Was My Valley (1941). Grab a hankie for director John Ford's Academy Award winning film that chronicles the lives of a 19th-century Welsh coal-mining family.

England

Atonement (2007, Drama) On the eve of World War II, a 13-year old girl irrevocably changes the lives of three people when she mistakenly accuses her sister's lover of a crime. The depiction of the manors and manners of the British gentry is at once searing and beautifully evocative. And the war scenes—notably the famous tracking shot on the beaches of Dunkirk—are harrowing. This Oscar winner stars Keira Knightley, James McAvoy and a young Saoirse Ronan.

Mrs. Brown (1997, Drama) After the death of her husband, Queen Victoria plunged herself into an intense grief that only lightened with the help and support of one of her favorite servants, the highlander John Brown. But a friendship between queen and servant is simply “not done”, and the scandal threatens the Queen's popularity and position. Consider watching this along with *Young Victoria* (2009) starring Emily Blunt and Rupert Friend, for a Victoria double feature.

All Is True (2019, Drama) After the Globe Theater is burned in a fire, William Shakespeare (Sir Kenneth Branagh) returns to Stratford-Upon-Avon and his stoic wife, Anne Hathaway (Dame Judi Dench). Fame is trailing him, as are the ghosts of his past, and the genius for wit and wordplay that he can no longer summon. Also starring Sir Ian McKellen.

Gosford Park (2001, Drama) “Upstairs, Downstairs” meets Agatha Christie in this whodunit set in an English country estate in 1932. The powerhouse ensemble cast includes Helen Mirren, Maggie Smith, Michael Gambon, Kelly MacDonald and Clive Owen.

British TV

Known for their dry humor and intriguing mysteries, and well-produced period adaptations, British T.V. shows are a fun way to see the Brits as they see themselves. Most shows are available on DVD, BBC America, PBS, or Netflix.

- **The Crown** (Historical Drama) A Netflix original drama following Queen Elizabeth II in the mid-20th century as she assumes the throne and the events that follow.
- **The Great British Baking Show** (Reality Cooking Series) Sometimes known as *The Great British Bake Off*, this competition features 12 aspiring bakers from Britain as they take on challenges to create everything from traditional British treats to twists on the classics with their “showstopper” dishes before facing the judges.
- **Masterpiece Classic** (Period/Adaptations) A PBS series that showcases adaptations of literary works, many of which are produced by the BBC. Classic novels by Dickens (*Little Dorrit*, *Bleak House*), the Brontes (*Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Height*), and P.G. Wodehouse (*Jeeves and Wooster*) are well-represented. They also showcase original shows set in bygone eras, like the Edwardian drama *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey*, which takes the concept into a countryside estate.
- **Prime Suspect** (Mystery) This gritty modern crime drama introduced Helen Mirren to wider audiences as the no-nonsense detective Jane Tennison. The show deals with some dark subject matter, such as crime and alcoholism.
- **Inspector Morse** (Mystery) Moody and brilliant, Morse solves complicated murders in Oxford with the help of his more-grounded partner Sergeant Lewis. In recent years, Sergeant Lewis got a promotion and his own series: *Lewis*. And PBS has done a flashback series to Morse’s early days on the force in the 1960s called *Endeavour*.
- **Monty Python’s Flying Circus** (Comedy) By turns wacky, witty, and surreal, this classic sketch show from the 1970s continues to have a devoted following.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel

www.oattravel.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Store

www.oatshop.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

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

World Weather

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

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

O.A.T. HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

We've introduced the following measures on all Small Group Adventures to give you greater peace of mind when you travel again. Updates are made based on data received via our live feed to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, and from our 36 international offices.

TRAVELER SCREENING PROCESS & SAFETY MEASURES PRIOR TO ARRIVAL IN YOUR FIRST DESTINATION

- Your Trip Experience Leader will contact you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure to introduce him- or herself and provide you with specific information regarding updated health and safety measures and protocols in effect for your trip.
- The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has updated its security screening procedures, including increasing the distance between travelers as they enter security check points, requiring travelers to return to the area outside of security if prohibited items are found, and having travelers scan their own boarding passes.
- Many airlines and airports have specific safety procedures, so you are encouraged to check with your airline prior to departure. Please arrive at the airport early as these new protocols add more time to the check in and security process.

TRAVELER SCREENING UPON ARRIVAL

- All travelers will have their temperature checked at the airport by an O.A.T. representative or Trip Experience Leader using a non-contact infrared temperature scanner before transferring to the first accommodation or lodging on their adventure.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- N95 face masks (or the equivalent in the country), gloves, and hand sanitizer will be provided to all travelers throughout the adventure. You are also free to bring your own preferred face covering and hand sanitizer from home.

NEW: WHISPERS HEADSETS

- Every traveler will receive a complimentary Whispers audio headset to use for the duration of your trip. These wireless headphones ensure that you won't miss a word of your Trip Experience Leader's commentary. And with a range of up to 492 feet, they also help to maintain proper social distancing.
- Whispers will be thoroughly sanitized before the trip begins and alcohol wipes will be provided for personal daily sanitizing.

INCLUDED FEATURES & ACTIVITIES

- All included features and activities will be rearranged to avoid large crowds—this may mean that we will arrive early or visit the location later in the day.
- Travelers will break into smaller groups as needed for Home-Hosted meals to support social distancing.
- Our local regional offices have carefully selected included features and activities with a focus on your safety. However, these are all elective, meaning that you can always choose whether to participate in an activity or not.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION & COACHES

- All local transportation and coaches will operate at approximately half the vehicle's capacity.
- All coaches will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized with disinfectant before each use.
- The driver's temperature will be checked daily.

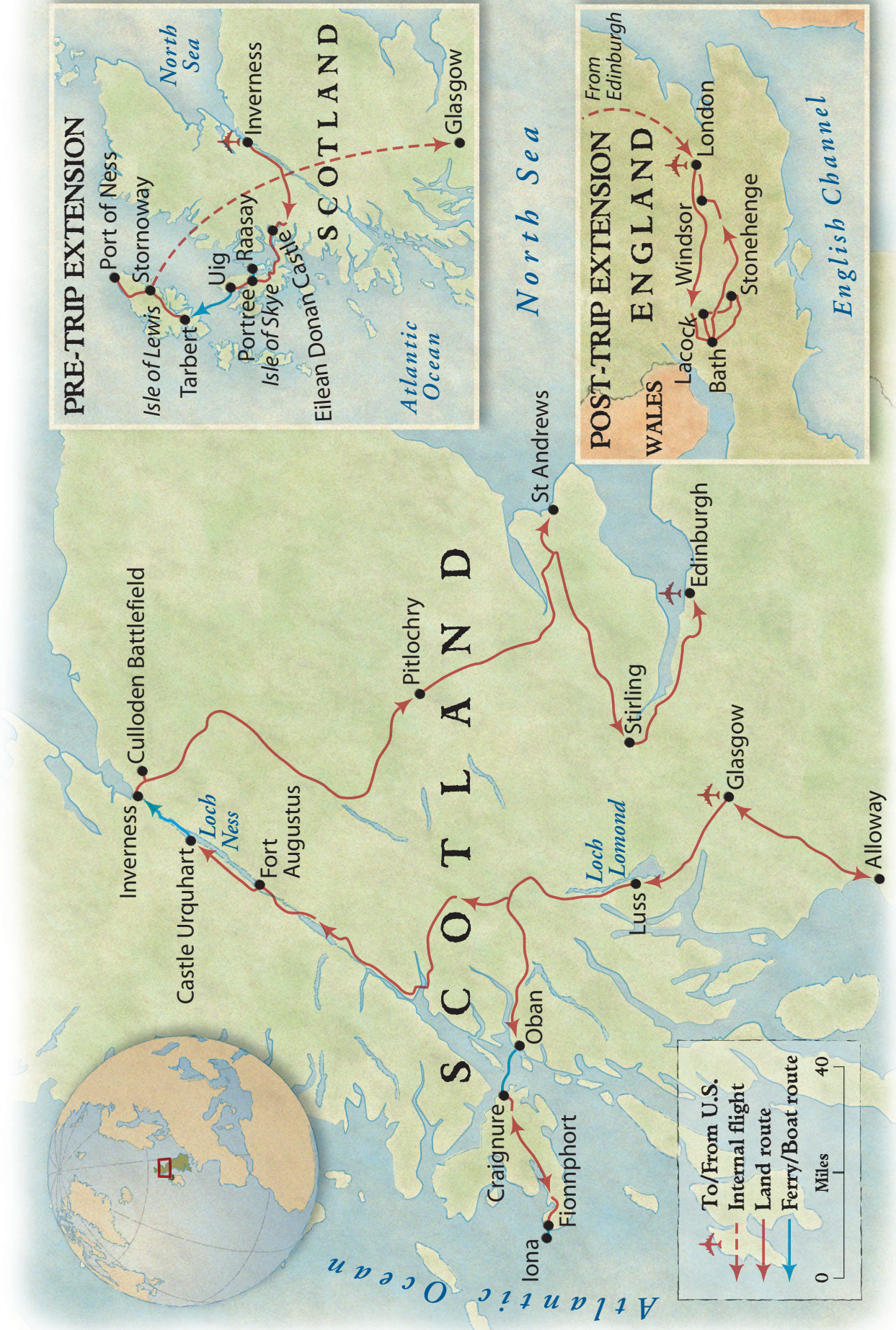
Learn more at www.oattravel.com/health-safety-guidelines

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or call us toll-free at **1-800-955-1925**



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