



The Great
Canadian
Travel Group
Inc.

1349 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3G 0V7
1-800-661-3830
www.greatcanadiantravel.com

Scotland General Information

Scotland is the most northerly part of the United Kingdom and occupies about one-third of the island of Great Britain. Scotland joined the United Kingdom in 1707. Its capital city is Edinburgh which is home to the Scottish Parliament. Scotland is known for its rich history and resilient people.



Documentation

Canadian passports are required for all travel to the United Kingdom. Your passport must be valid for the expected duration of your stay. You do not need a Visa for visits up to 90 days. You may be required to show proof of a return ticket and sufficient funds for your stay.



Airports

There are two major airports in Scotland. Edinburgh Airport is about 11 kilometers away from the center of Edinburgh. Glasgow Airport is about 13 kilometers from the center of Glasgow. There are also multiple smaller airports throughout Scotland.

Location and Geography

Scotland occupies the northern part of the island of Great Britain. England is connected by land to the south and ocean surrounds the remainder of Scotland. The North Sea is to the east and the Atlantic Ocean is to the north and west. The west coast is bordered by many deep indentations and numerous islands such as Skye and Mull. Island clusters of Orkney and Shetland lie north of the mainland. The mainland is comprised of three distinct regions: The Highlands in the north, the Midland Valley and the Southern Uplands. The Highlands are occupied by many lochs, the largest being Loch Ness (famous for the mythical Loch Ness Monster) along with many rocky peaks separated by valleys. The Grampian Mountains contains Britain's highest mountains reaching 1343 meters tall at Ben Nevis. The landscape of the Midland Valley includes hills and valleys. The Southern Uplands have narrow valleys surrounded by rounded, grass covered hills in the east and rougher granite mountains in the west.





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Population

The population of Scotland is approximately 5.3 million people. Glasgow is Scotland's most populated city with approximately 600,000 residents. Edinburgh has approximately 500,000 residents.



People and Culture

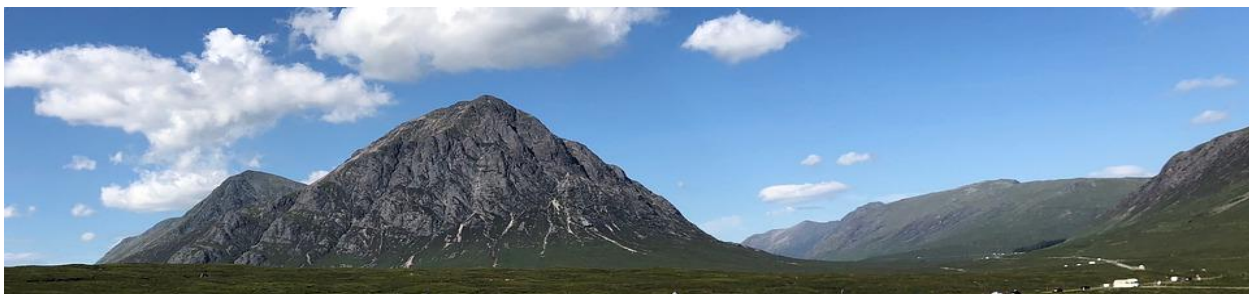
A large majority of the Scottish population are white Scottish. As immigration into Scotland continues ethnic diversity continues to increase. Scottish culture and traditions reach far back into history. The Highland Games are a highlight of culture and tradition and feature traditional dress such as kilts, music including traditional bagpipes, games such as tossing the caber and putting the stone and traditional dance. Clans are a huge part of Scotland's history and still exist today. Scotch whisky commonly called 'scotch' is a well know beverage and haggis is Scotland's national dish.

Language

English is the language of Scotland. Traditional languages Gaelic and Scots are still present in Scotland. Gaelic is used throughout Scotland but is more common in the Highlands and on the Islands. Scots is more common throughout the lowlands.

Economy

Scotland has a mixed economy that is closely linked with the rest of the United Kingdom. Manufacturing is an important sector of the economy with shipbuilding, textile manufacturing, computer chips, scotch whiskey and shortbread being some major exports. Fishing, farming and forestry are important to Scotland with many coastal communities relying on fishing as a major source of income. Sheep farming is a major farming component throughout Scotland with dairy farming being popular in the south west and beef production being popular in the north east. Oil and gas reserves located in the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean are also benefits to the Scottish economy. Tourism is another important sector with both domestic and international tourists visiting each year. Popular places to visit include: The Isle of Skye, Orkney, Loch Lomond, Glencoe, Loch Ness and Shetland Islands.





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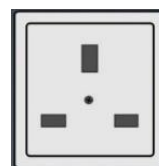
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Climate and Weather

Scottish climate is a generally cool and wet, maritime climate influenced by the Atlantic Ocean. There are no extreme weather variations such as tornadoes, droughts or widespread floods. The east coast has drier weather with sunnier summers and colder winters while the west coast is rainier. January and February are the coldest months with daily highs between 5°C - 7°C. July and August are the warmest months with an average temperature of 19°C. Snow falls in Scotland 15-20 days per year with more snowy days in the mountains.

Electricity

Voltage is 230V. Frequency is 50Hz and power socket type is G.



Currency

The official currency of Scotland is British Pounds (£). One pound is equal to 100 pence. Pounds are available in eight denomination coins: 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 and six denomination bank notes: £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. Scottish banks print their own version of the GBP that is different from the version English banks print. English notes are widely accepted throughout the United Kingdom while Scottish notes are preferred to be used in Scotland. £1 notes are only printed by Scottish banks and are less common than other bank notes.



Credit Cards

Visa, Mastercard and American Express are widely accepted at most major businesses throughout Scotland.

Businesses and Banking Hours

Banks are generally open Monday to Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm and Saturdays 9:00am – 3:30pm. It is common for banks to close during the lunch hour. Shops and businesses are generally open Monday to Saturday 9:00am – 6:00pm and Sundays 11:00am – 5:00pm.

Tipping

Tipping while appreciated is not a common practice in Scotland. When you receive good service, tips are generally around 10%.



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Telephone and Emergency

The international dialing code of Ireland is +44. To dial Canada or the United States dial 01- (area code)- phone number.

Emergency services 999

Non-emergency police 101

Health Information

Scotland has free comprehensive health care services for citizens. Standards are like Canadian Health Care standards. For non-urgent care or for care outside General Practitioner hours you can contact Scotland National Health Service by dialing 111.

Tourist Information Centers

VisitScotland iCentres can be found throughout Scotland and they are open year-round. They offer local and reliable advice on nearby events, the best places to eat, public transportation and local tours. They can assist with reservations for accommodations, tours and transportation tickets as well as provide maps, guidebooks and information leaflets.

National Holidays

January 1st – Hogmanay (New Year’s Day)

Celebrating the start of a New Year. Folks around Scotland take part in a Loony Dook, an event where costume-wearing people jump into frozen bodies of water to raise money for charity. Another special Scottish New Year tradition is First Footing, where the first guest of the New Year brings gifts that symbolize good fortune, such as black buns, coal, salt, shortbread, and whisky. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

January 2nd – Hogmanay (Bank Holiday)

The New Year’s celebrations known as Hogmanay last into the Bank Holiday of January 2. The day is marked with parties and specially prepared food. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

January 25th – Burns Night

Commemorating the life of the bard Robert Burns who was born January 25, 1759 and his contributions to Scottish culture. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

February 14th – Valentine’s Day

A romantic observance celebrating love. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.



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Date Varies – Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

Christian churches in the United Kingdom observe Shrove Tuesday as the last day before the fast for the Lent period. It is also known as Pancake Tuesday or Pancake Day. It is a time for people to eat pancakes or participate in pancake races. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

Date Varies – Ash Wednesday

Christian churches in the United Kingdom observe Ash Wednesday as the first day of Lent. It is the day after Shrove Tuesday. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day

Celebrating the Irish Saint Patrick. It is celebrated in Irish pubs and in cities where many people with an Irish background live. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

Date Varies – Mothering Sunday

A day to honor mothers and other mother figures. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

Date Varies – Good Friday

Good Friday is a Christian observance which commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

Date Varies – Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is an occasion for Christians to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. It is common to organize Easter egg hunts. It is not a public holiday and most businesses operate on normal Sunday hours.

April 23 – Shakespeare Day

Many fans and enthusiasts of William Shakespeare, who was one of England's greatest poets and dramatists celebrate his work on this day. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

Date Varies – Early May Bank Holiday

Celebrated as the start of the summer season. People organize events to celebrate the end of the winter season, fertility, and hope of the approaching summer. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

Last Monday in May – Spring Bank Holiday

The spring bank holiday, also known as the late May bank holiday, is a time for people in the United Kingdom to have a day off work or school. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

Dates Varies – Father's Day

A day to honor fathers and other father figures. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.



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First Monday in August – Bank Holiday

Marking the end of the summer holidays for many people who return to work or school in the autumn. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

October 31st – Halloween

Celebrations include trick-or-treating for children, costume parties or watching horror films. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

Date Varies – Remembrance Sunday

Honoring the heroic efforts, achievements and sacrifices that were made in past wars. The main observance is on the second Sunday in November, but 2 minutes of silence is also made on November 11. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours with a pause of activity at 11am on Nov 11th.

November 30th – St Andrew's Day

The Scottish flag, or Saltire, is flown on public buildings and there are celebrations and parties held in major city centers. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 24th – Christmas Eve

The last day for many people to shop and prepare for the Christmas celebrations and festive meals. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

December 25th – Christmas

Traditionally celebrating Jesus Christ's birth but many aspects of this holiday have pagan origins. Christmas is a time for many people to give and receive gifts and prepare special festive meals. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 26th - Boxing Day

It is an important day for sporting events and the start of the post-Christmas sales. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 31st – Hogmanay

The first of three days of New Year's celebrations. Parties usually being in the evening and last well into the night. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.