

FACT FILE

EATING AND DRINKING

There are many restaurant guides available to help you make your choice, but you can also ask the local Tourist Information Centre or someone at your accommodation. Look out for the EatScotland logo which indicates establishments who are committed to providing good quality food. www.eatScotland.com

Restaurants

Many restaurants, bistros, cafes and pubs are open all day in towns and cities. Last orders are often taken 45 minutes before closing.

Lunch 1200-1400hrs, prices from £5

Dinner 1800-2400hrs, prices from £8

Bars

Most pubs also serve coffee, snacks and meals, including those in hotels. Some bars and pubs are open later, especially in towns at weekends.

Open: 1100hrs (1230hrs on Sunday) and last orders are generally at 2300hrs.

SHOPPING AND SHOPPING HOURS

Open: Monday-Saturday, 0900-1730/1800hrs, Sunday 1000-1600hrs.

In popular visitor areas many shops stay open until later in the evening during the summer months. In cities you'll find late-night shopping on Thursday evenings throughout the year. Many stores open on Sundays, particularly in the larger towns. In cities, some larger supermarkets are open 24 hours a day.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES

Every one of Scotland's tourist information centres has qualified, friendly and knowledgeable staff able to answer your questions and give advice on making the most of your visit to Scotland. They are also the ideal place to book your accommodation in advance when touring Scotland.

MONEY AND BANKING

Open: Monday-Friday 0900-1600/1700hrs

Scottish banks issue their own bank notes in all the normal denominations. These differ in appearance from English notes but are of the same value and are accepted elsewhere in the UK. English notes are accepted in Scotland.

In Scotland, banks usually give the best exchange rate for foreign currency. It is also possible to change money in airports, some rail stations, travel agents and many of the larger hotels (if you are a resident). There may be a handling fee. You can obtain British currency using your bank or credit card at cash machines. Some establishments may accept Euro traveller cheques. Many smaller establishments such as B&Bs and small businesses may not have the facilities to accept credit cards.

Bank holidays in 2007: 1-2 January, 6 April, 7 and 28 May, 6 August and 25-26 December. Some Scottish banks may take additional holidays, please check locally.

POST OFFICES

Open: Monday-Friday 0900-1730hrs; Saturday 0900-1230hrs (times may vary).

The network of Post Offices throughout Scotland offers a variety of products and services such as bureau de change. In rural areas they are often dedicated to serving the local community and can be part of a general store in which it may be possible to buy a wide range of items including food and souvenirs. Smaller offices often close in the middle of the day. Look out for the Post Office sign, yellow lettering on a red background. You can send postcards or letters from any red post box. www.royalmail.com

CAR RENTAL

There are many international companies offering competitive car rental rates. Branches of the companies can be found in many cities, towns and airports throughout Scotland. Conditions of hire vary but most require the driver to be between 23 and 75 years old, with a current driving licence having been held for at least one year.

For information on car rental companies check www.visitscotland.com/library/carhire

DRIVING IN SCOTLAND

Scotland has an excellent road network with motorways and dual carriageway roads linking cities and most towns. The primary road network extends over most of the country, except in a few remote areas. In these areas you will find single-track roads with passing places, where you have to draw in to the left to let others pass or overtake. Getting away from traffic jams and out onto Scotland's quiet roads can really put the fun back into driving. The main congestion in towns and cities is during the 'rush hour', so try to avoid driving in large towns and cities on weekdays between 0730-0930hrs and 1630-1830hrs. There are no tolls on roads in Scotland, but tolls must be paid on the Forth and Tay Bridges.

Vehicles drive on the left-hand side of the road and overtake on the right. There is no automatic priority for cars coming from the left.

WEATHER

Average temperature summer: 15-22°C/60-74F

Average temperature winter: 5-7°C/19-27F

Scotland's geographical position makes the weather very varied. While there's a popular misconception that the whole of Scotland experiences high rainfall, generally speaking the east coast tends to be cool and dry and the west coast milder and wetter. On the longest day there is no complete darkness in the north of Scotland and Shetland has about four hours more daylight at midsummer than London. For more detailed information on the weather in Scotland, go to www.metoffice.gov.uk

IN AN EMERGENCY

For the whole of the United Kingdom, 999 is the number to use in an emergency to contact the police, fire service, ambulance and, in certain areas, mountain rescue or the coastguard.

TIPPING

There are no definite rules for tipping. If you feel that you have received good service then you may wish to leave a tip. Many restaurants include a service charge but if not, the tip is usually 10-15% of the bill. Tipping in hotels is also at your discretion. Taxi drivers are often given a tip, particularly on longer journeys and if they carry your luggage.

FACILITIES FOR VISITORS WITH IMPAIRED MOBILITY

VisitScotland operates an inspection scheme to assess accommodation with disabled provision using the UK-wide National Accessible Standards. These form three categories of accessibility, assuring you that an establishment can provide unassisted wheelchair access, assisted wheelchair access or access for those with mobility impairments. Establishments are recognised in this way by the appropriate access symbol in brochures. Many establishments will be able to cater for those with a sensory impairment but please check with the proprietor before booking.



Advice Service Capability Scotland (ASCS) is a national disability advice and information service. ASCS provides free advice and information on a range of disability issues such as equipment hire, accessible transport, and much more. For further information on their services please contact:

Advice Service Capability Scotland (ASCS)

Tel: +44 (0)131 313 5510

Textphone: +44 (0)131 346 2529

Email: ascscapability-scotland.org.uk

www.capability-scotland.org.uk

Tourism For All is a national charity and the UK's central source of holiday and travel information and support for disabled people and their carers. For further information on their services please contact the Information Unit:

Tel: +44 (0)845 124 9973

Email: info@tourismforall.org.uk

www.tourismforall.org.uk

Accessible Scotland lists almost 1,000 accommodation establishments and visitor attractions which are accessible. Ask for your free copy from VisitScotland or from any Tourist Information Centre or check out www.visitscotland.com/library/accessiblescotland

MEDICAL INSURANCE

Holidaymakers who become ill while in Scotland are eligible for free emergency treatment at National Health Service hospital Accident and Emergency departments. Although emergency treatment is covered, it is advised to take out insurance cover before travelling – just ask your travel agent for details.

TAX REFUNDS

Value Added Tax (VAT) at 17.5% is applied to goods and services. Visitors to Scotland from outside the European Union can reclaim VAT on goods only, by using the Foreign Exchange Tax Free Shopping arrangements. You can reclaim VAT at participating stores. A Tax Free Shopping form should be obtained and completed at the time of purchase and you will be required to show your passport as verification of country of residence. The form has to be presented to HM Customs and Excise as you leave the UK. www.hmce.gov.uk/public/vatrefunds.htm

VISA

All overseas nationals who wish to enter the UK must satisfy the immigration officer at the port of arrival that they meet the requirements of the UK immigration rules. Some visitors must have a valid visa or an entry certificate before arrival. Information on entry requirements can be obtained from any British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate or from the UK visa's website. www.ukvisas.gov.uk

PETS

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) means you are able to bring your dog or cat into the United Kingdom from certain countries and territories without it first having to go into quarantine, as long as you comply with all the rules of the scheme. You can obtain more information, including detailed fact sheets, from:

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Tel: +44 (0)870 241 1710

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm

VOLTAGE

Voltage is 240v/50Hz. Most establishments in Scotland have square-pin sockets for 3, 5 and 13 amp fuses. You can buy an adapter at your departure airport.

WORSHIP

Many religions and beliefs are practiced in Scotland and different denominations are represented in a wide variety of places of worship. The most widely practised faith in Scotland is Christianity, of which the most common denomination is Presbyterianism (represented by the Church of Scotland). There are also several bases for religious and spiritual retreats in Scotland.

MARRIAGE

Historically, Scotland has always been a popular destination for those seeking a truly romantic setting in which to make their wedding vows. There are two types of ceremony, religious and civil. A religious marriage is usually performed in a church (though it can take place anywhere) and the service must be performed by a minister, clergyman or priest. A civil marriage may take place in a registry office or other approved venue and will be performed by a registrar. For more information on procedure, registrars or approved venues, visit www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

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Welcome to our life.*

Want to know more about Scotland?
The No. 1 Booking and Information Service for Scotland
Tel: 0845 22 55 121 or +44 (0)1506 832 121 (outside UK)
Email: info@visitscotland.com

www.visitscotland.com

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