



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE U.K., IRELAND AND EUROPE

TIME DIFFERENCES

The United Kingdom and Ireland are 5 hours, Europe is 6 hours ahead of the US. Daylight savings changes occur a two week) later in Fall and earlier in Spring than the UK and Ireland.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

For the majority of foreign nationals who travel to the United Kingdom or Ireland for vacation, entry is straightforward and hassle-free. All visitors must be in possession of a valid passport in order to enter the country, and in some cases, a visa. It is also prudent that your passport shall contain at least **THREE** unused page when presenting the passport for endorsements. This requirement reflects the requirements of many of the world's top travel destinations, in line with the majority of global destinations' requirements and failure to have a clear page can result in entry being refused.

Ensure that your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months after the date you return from your visit to the UK or Ireland.

If you're unsure whether a visa is required, visit the official UK and Irish immigration websites for further information.

BANKS AND MONEY

The currency unit in the U.K. and Northern Ireland is the British Pound, denoted by the symbol £, with 100 pence making up £1 (one Pound). The Euro (€) is the currency for the Republic of Ireland and Europe. Foreign currency can be exchanged at local banks and Bureau de Changes. Most major international credit cards such as American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, Visa and their affiliates are widely accepted, however MasterCard and Visa are preferred.

TIPPING

Generally service is included on restaurant bills, however if not included, a 10% tip is acceptable.

TAXES

VAT (value added tax) is the equivalent of the US Sales Tax. The price that you see on a price tag or at the till is inclusive of sales tax, no additional tax is added. i.e. The price you see is the price you pay. VAT in the UK is 20%, Ireland is 23%.

If you do purchase any major items, ensure that you retain your receipts as you may be able to claim the VAT on export. Certain stores do offer duty free receipts.

CLOTHING

The best rule of thumb is to plan on layering. It can be exceedingly warm in the summer months, but then it could also be cold! The Brits and Irish always talk about the weather – because they do have weather! Being islands, with warm and cold sea currents running up their coastlines, the weather can be very changeable and unpredictable. Just “be prepared” is the best advice.

ELECTRICITY

Power in the United Kingdom and Ireland runs is at 220V. It is essential that you have an adaptor for any electrical equipment. Shavers will work off the dual voltage shaving sockets in the hotel bathrooms. Cell phones and rechargeable battery units can also be safely plugged into these sockets.

PERSONAL SAFETY

For tourists, the UK and Ireland is as safe as any other destination in the world, provided they take basic common-sense precautions. Basic Safety Tip guidelines will be available at hotels and tourism information offices.

SHOPPING

Most major shopping centers and malls operate 7 days a week, but you will find that in the smaller towns and rural areas that shops are closed on a Sunday.

ESSENTIALS

STUFF

- *Camera and spare memory disc and if you can manage it, your laptop to download your pictures on a daily basis.*
- *Binoculars*
- *Sunscreen*
- *Protective Lip Sunblock*
- *Sunglasses*
- *Driver's License (US and/or International)*
- *Sweatshirt / fleece*
- *Windcheater*
- *Umbrella*
- *Concealable Fanny Pack*
- *Plug adaptors*

PRECAUTIONS

- *Handbag that clasps tightly closed and is difficult to open*
- *Minimal Jewelry*
- *Keep a copy of your passport photo page and cover separately in your suitcase (off your person) or in an accessible secure online vault / server*

LAUNDRY SERVICES

Laundry services are available at most establishments