



Country Information

ENGLAND

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About the country

General

Name of the country: England

Area: 130,281 km

Population: 50.4 million

Capital: London, 7.5 million inhabitants

Government: Constitutional monarchy. The UK is a Member of the European Union since 1973.

Geography: Much of the countryside is relatively flat, consisting of fertile plains and gentle hills. Mountains, moors and steeper hills are found mainly in the north and the west; the Lake District and the northwest are divided from the Yorkshire Dales, and the northeast, by the high-rising Pennines, 'the backbone of England'. The eastern part of the country, particularly East Anglia, is the lowest lying. The coastline is varied, and ranges from long stretches of sandy beaches to steep cliffs and isolated rocky coves.

Language: English. There are many local dialects throughout the country, influenced by class, and town and country accents.

Time: GMT (GMT +1 between the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October)

Religion: Predominantly Christian (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist), sizeable Muslim, Sikh, Jewish and Hindu minorities.

Electricity: 230 volts, 50Hz. Flat three-pin plugs are standard.

Money

Currency: Pound (GBP; symbol £) = 100 pence. Notes are in denominations of £50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of £2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 pence.

Exchange Rate Indicators:

CHF 1.00 = CHF 0.61005

USD 1.00 = USD 0.68703

EUR 1.00 = EUR 0.93761

At exchange rates' date 23 March 09

Credit cards: American Express, MasterCard and Visa are all widely accepted. Cash can be obtained from a multitude of ATMs.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1630 (there may be some variations in closing times).

Tippling: A service charge (usually 10-12.5%) might be included in the prices stated on the menu but it is more likely to be added to the bill at the end. This is technically an optional charge. Where 'service is not included', a tip of at least 10% is expected.

International travel

Main Airports

[Heathrow](#) (LHR) is 24km west of central London. To/from the airport: The [London Underground](#) stops at Heathrow journey time to city centre: 45 minutes. [Heathrow Express](#) runs from London Paddington station, journey time: 15 minutes. A shuttle service to London hotels is also available from [dot2dot](#) . Taxis are available outside each terminal.

[Gatwick](#) (LGW) is 45km south of central London. To/from the airport: [Gatwick Express](#) connects the airport with London Victoria station, journey time: 30 minutes. There is also a shuttle service to London hotels with [dot2dot](#) (website: www.dot2.com). Taxis are available outside the terminal.

[London City Airport](#) (LCY) is 10km east of the City of London. To/from the airport: Docklands Light Railway services run to the airport. The nearest Underground station is Canning Town. Local buses stop at the terminal. There is a taxi rank outside the terminal.

[Stansted](#) (STN) is 48km northeast of central London. To/from the airport: The [Stansted Express](#) runs from London Liverpool Street, journey time: 45 minutes. Local buses run to surrounding towns. Taxis are available, journey time: 1h30 to central London.

[Luton](#) (LTN) is 51km northeast of London. To/from the airport: Trains and coaches run to London and other cities. [Greenline](#) bus 757 runs to Luton and on to central London. [EasyBus](#) (easybus.co.uk) runs an express minibus to central London. Local buses run from the airport to Luton bus and rail stations. Taxis can be hired outside the terminal building.

[Birmingham](#) (BHX) is 13km southeast of the city centre. To/from the airport: Taxis are available from outside passenger terminals. Buses to the city centre and surrounds can be caught opposite Terminal 2 at the Bus and Coach Terminus. Bus 900 travels to the city centre from stand K. Trains run from Birmingham International to Birmingham New Street Station and vice versa during the day but are less frequent in the evenings and on weekends.

[Manchester](#) (MAN) is 17km southwest of the city centre. To/from the airport: Manchester Airport train station links to Manchester city centre, journey time: 20 minutes. Trains also connect to all parts of the country. A [local bus](#) runs frequently to the city centre. There are taxis available; journey time to city centre: 25 minutes.

Trains: London to Birmingham

There are frequent trains to [Birmingham New Street](#) from [London Euston](#). The journey takes about 1h25min.

Coach: London to Birmingham

Buses from London to Birmingham take between 2hr 40 min and 3 hours. Standard round trip fare is about £23, but limited numbers of online, advance tickets - called fun fares - may be available for as little as £6.50 round trip. There are two buses an hour between [Victoria Coach Station](#) in London and Birmingham Central Coach Station.

Passport/Visas

A valid passport for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all nationals from Australia, Canada and USA except EU nationals holding a valid national ID card.

EU nationals are only required to produce evidence of their EU nationality and identity in order to be admitted to any EU Member State. This evidence can take the form of a valid national passport or national identity.

If a visa is not required, travelers should hold a return or onward ticket, or proof of funds for the duration of stay. Passports must be valid for the period of intended stay in the UK; nationals of the EU require a passport valid on arrival.

Note: Passport and visa requirements are liable to change at short notice. Travelers are advised to check their entry requirements with their embassy, consulate or [UK Border Agency](#).

Venue

Please check the IB website.

Hotel Booking Form

Please check the IB website.

Participants are responsible for their own travel to and from the event.

Health & Safety

Health Care: There are no specific health risks associated with travel to the UK and food and water can be considered safe. Emergency treatment is free to visitors, but charges are made for routine medical care. A number of countries have reciprocal health agreements with the UK including Australia, New Zealand and EU countries. Visitors from other countries (including Canada, South Africa and the US) are advised to take out good medical insurance.

Climate

The climate is temperate with warm wet summers and cool wet winters. Weather varies from day to day and throughout the country as a whole. The west coast and mountainous areas receive the most rain; the east coast, particularly in the north, is colder and windier. The southeast is sunnier than the north with less rain and a climate approaching the continental. The southwest has the mildest climate overall.

Communication and Internet access

Telephone:

The international country dialing code for UK is +44; +44 905 for Birmingham. The outgoing code is 00, followed by the relevant country code.

Emergency Calls:

999 Police, Fire and Ambulance

Useful links

- Home Office, UK Border Agency
<http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/>
- Britain's official travel and tourism guide:
<http://www.visitbritain.com/>
- Birmingham Tourist Information
<http://www.birminghamuk.com>