



Pre-Departure Information

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND



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WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.
- Vaccination Card:** Please send us a photo or scanned copy of your completed Covid-19 Vaccination Card if you have not already done so. Just the front side of the card is sufficient.

PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** or e-mail us at: info@wildernesstravel.com.

Travel Information

PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for six months after your date of exit from Scotland. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express**. Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

MONEY

The pound sterling is the official currency of Scotland. The most convenient way to obtain pounds is to use your debit card at ATMs. To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops in cities and larger towns. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. We suggest a tip of \$140 or more per trip member for each of the Trip Leaders, preferably in local currency. The Trip Leaders take care of gratuities for hotel and restaurant staff, and for local guides and drivers.

SPECIAL DIETS

Please reach out to us directly to discuss any dietary restrictions or concerns you may have. We can easily make arrangements for most diets, but please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or logistical limitations can make it difficult or at times impossible to accommodate all requests. With this in mind, please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a special diet, and any food allergies in particular, so we can do our best to meet your needs.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

The international dialing code for Scotland is 44. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

Email & Internet Access

Internet access is available at most of our hotels, although connections may be spotty.

ELECTRICITY

Scotland has a 220-volt current. Plugs usually have two or three prongs. You will need to bring a plug adapter for appliance use in hotels.

Medical Information

The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**.

INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required. However, it is easy to get a small cut, so a tetanus booster is strongly recommended (good for 10 years). If you take prescription medicines, be sure to bring enough for the duration of your trip.

STAYING HEALTHY

You can reduce your risk of getting sick on the trip by washing your hands often and not touching your face with unwashed hands. If you arrive on the trip with a cold or feel the symptoms of a cold, avoid close contact with others and move away from people before coughing or sneezing. The CDC recommends coughing or sneezing into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow or upper sleeve, not your hands.

GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to train for your trip, as your enjoyment will be highly dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for a hike is to hike, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling, or other cardiovascular exercises. Stair-climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy, comfortable, and thoroughly broken-in.

Helpful Information

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** , with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to wtphotoblog@gmail.com or tag us [@WildernessTravel](https://www.instagram.com/WildernessTravel) on social media.

Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

Packing List

THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** .

LUGGAGE

- Soft-sided suitcase, with a small padlock (must be unlocked for air travel).
- Daypack, large enough for a jacket or rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. Note: Very few daypacks or fanny packs are waterproof and any items that you need to keep dry should be put in a waterproof stuff sack inside your pack.
- (Optional) Small roll-up bag to carry home purchases.

NOTES ON CLOTHING

Bring clothes you find most comfortable for hiking. Although it may be warm enough for shorts on many days, long pants and rain protection will also be necessary for any possible cool or inclement weather. Remember, this is Scotland—expect cold, rainy weather at any time and prepare to layer accordingly. Scotland is famous for changeable and unpredictable weather. Count on and be prepared for everything from cold rain, persistent fog and mist, to brilliant warm, sunny.

Please pack everything in one piece of luggage, as this simplifies the transportation of luggage en route. Although airline service to Britain and Europe is generally reliable, it is best to wear or carry your hiking boots with you on your flights in the event that your luggage is lost or delayed. Likewise, don't pack valuables, such as travel documents, camera gear, or prescription medicines in your checked luggage.

CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only.

- Good quality breathable rain gear, such as a Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood and Gore-Tex rain/wind pants—essential!
- Medium fleece jacket or similar warm outer layer
- Lightweight fleece or wool sweater for layering
- Long-sleeved shirt. Quick-drying “travel” fabrics like nylon are recommended.
- T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts. Synthetics like polypropylene or Capilene work well.
- Hiking pants. Lightweight synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice. Jeans are not recommended because they take a long time to dry if they get wet.
- Hiking shorts. Quick-drying fabrics are recommended.
- Shade hat with a wide brim—preferably a waterproof one you can use as a rain hat as well
- Sturdy medium-weight hiking boots with Vibram-type rubber lug soles and good ankle support. They should be waterproofed and well broken in.
- Comfortable shoes for walking in towns
- Hiking socks. Some people like the thick Thorlo-type socks with padded toes and heels, or a combination of an outer sock and synthetic liner sock.
- Nylon or Gore-Tex gaiters—highly recommended for keeping pant legs dry
- Lightweight fleece or wool hat for cool days
- Lightweight fleece or wool gloves
- Sleepwear. Long underwear can double.
- Casual city/hotel attire
- Washcloths (not always supplied in British B&Bs)

EQUIPMENT

- One or two reusable water bottles, 1 qt. capacity
- Collapsible walking stick or trekking poles—highly recommended
- Nylon or Gore-Tex gaiters to keep the lower legs of your pants dry on hikes
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is a good idea should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Toiletry kit
- Kleenex pocket packs (handy for bathroom breaks on the trail)
- Money belt or neck pouch. Always carry your passport, credit cards, and cash with you in a money belt or neck pouch tucked down inside your shirt or blouse.

PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member must bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher and lip balm with sunscreen. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headaches, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Blister kit. Look for long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Insect repellent. Bring for protection against “midges,” a tiny biting fly prevalent at dawn and dusk in the summer (but not a problem in even slightly breezy conditions or if you are in motion). Repellents with DEET or alternatives such as citronella (Avon’s Skin So Soft Body Oil) are equally effective. You can also cover up with long sleeves as they don’t bite through fabric.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Plug adapter for appliance use. Most newer appliances don’t need a voltage converter.
- Waterproof stuff sack to keep items inside your daypack dry
- Waterproofing material for leather boots (Sno-seal or a silicon product)
- Long underwear if you tend to get cold
- Laundry soap for hand-washing clothes
- Camera, spare batteries
- Reading/writing material
- Lightweight binoculars
- Bandannas
- Tevas or other sturdy sandals
- Travel clock
- Small umbrella
- Washcloth, if you like to use one (most European hotels do not provide them)

Reading List

ESSENTIAL READING

Sea Room, An Island Life in the Hebrides

Adam Nicolson

2007, 391 PAGES

Nicolson explores the nature, history and magic of three remote islands in the Outer Hebrides in this affecting memoir. Tiny islands surrounded by serious tides, the Shiantans nonetheless make their mark with 500-foot basalt cliffs, seabird and seal colonies and a long history.

Lonely Planet Scotland's Highlands & Islands

Lonely Planet

2019, 320 PAGES

This practical guide to Scotland's highlands and islands features maps, a good overview of culture, history and nature and plenty of information on excursions, accommodations and sightseeing. With color photographs and excellent travel information.

Stone Voices, The Search for Scotland

Neal Ascherson

2004, 240 PAGES

Ascherson writes with verve and insight on the centuries-old impulse toward nationhood in Scotland in this absorbing portrait.

Scotland Map M 501

Michelin Travel Publications

2012

A clear, colorful road map at a scale of 1:400,000.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

Birds of Europe

Lars Svensson

2010, 416 PAGES

Featuring 3,500 glorious paintings by Killian Mullarney and Dan Zetterstrom, the second edition of this exquisite guide features updated text and maps.

Highlanders, A History of the Highland Clans

Fitzroy MacLean

2008, 276 PAGES

A marvelous storyteller, MacLean recounts the origins, uprisings and personalities of Highland Scotland from Celtic legends to the bloody defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden Moors in this vivid, beautifully illustrated history.

A Traveller's History of Scotland

Andrew Fisher

2009, 256 PAGES

This brief history of Scotland through the 1990s is wide-ranging, accessible and necessarily condensed. With a useful chronology, a list of monarchs and a historical gazetteer, this book marches confidently through the centuries.

Scotland, A Concise History

Magnus Linklater

2012, 248 PAGES

This richly illustrated survey brings Scottish history up to the present through its romantic figures and bloody battles. With 250 well-integrated illustrations, this revised fourth edition includes a newly added chapter on Scotland's place in the 21st century.

The Shetland Bus, A WWII Epic of Escape, Survival and Adventure

David Howarth

2008, 236 PAGES

The little-known story of a fleet of fishing boats that regularly journeyed across treacherous waters from the Shetland Islands to Norway, to bring relief and fortifications to Norwegians under Nazi attack.

An Innocent in Scotland, More Curious Rambles and Singular Encounters

David W. McFadden

1999, 346 PAGES

A sequel to his rambles in Ireland, McFadden again taps local lore, personality and history in this most entertaining journey through Scotland.

Off in a Boat, Hebridean Voyage

Neil Miller Gunn

1990, 348 PAGES

Gunn captures the romance and exhilaration of small boat travel in this enchanting account of a 1930s voyage through the Hebrides, interweaving his own adventures with history and lore.

Whisky, Kilts, and the Loch Ness Monster

William W. Starr

2011, 240 PAGES

Beginning and ending in Edinburgh and making stops at Glasgow, Culloden, Loch Ness, the Isle of Skye and more, William Starr follows hilariously in the footsteps of Boswell and Johnson across Scotland.

Kidnapped

Robert Louis Stevenson

2007, 240 PAGES

With great feeling for the Scottish landscape, history, and the local atmosphere, this classic tale of the conflict between Lowlanders and Highlanders mirrors the split sympathies of the author himself.

A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland and The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides

James Boswell

1984, 429 PAGES

Written when Johnson was 63 and Boswell 32 in 1773 (when they had been friends for ten years), these travel journals were the result of a three-month trip to Scotland. Johnson observed Scotland, and Boswell observed Johnson.

Mary Queen of Scots

Antonia Fraser

1993, 613 PAGES

This richly readable biography, the story of a legend who was loved even en route to her death, illuminates Mary's age as well as the figure herself.

The Crofter and the Laird

John McPhee

1978, 159 PAGES

McPhee packs up his family and returns for a year to his ancestral land on the Isle of Colonsay in this lyrical, appreciative portrait of place and traditional ways of life in the Hebrides.

Celtic Prayers and Incantations

Alexander Carmichael

2007, 142 PAGES

An authoritative edition of poems and blessings as collected by folklorist Alexander Carmichael (1832 - 1912) over 40 years, when Gaelic was still widely spoken in the Skye, Uist, Oban and other islands of the Hebrides.

To the Lighthouse

Virginia Woolf

1989, 209 PAGES

Woolf's modernist classic, in which the Ramsay family goes on holiday in the Hebrides, is drawn from memories of childhood trips to Cornwall.

Waverly

Sir Walter Scott

2009, 464 PAGES

Scott drew on childhood tales for this richly detailed portrait of the Highland and Lowland Scots, culminating with the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charles at the 1746 Battle of Culloden.

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