

CITSLINC DESTINATION INFORMATION --- SCOTLAND

Scotland, a part of the United Kingdom, shares a border with England. It can be divided into mainland Scotland and the Scottish Isles which number some 800 small islands, the best known being the Isles of Shetland, Orkney, the Hebrides (inner and outer), Arran and Skye. The country has majestic mountains, rolling lush glens, dramatic coastlines, picturesque lochs (lakes) and rivers. The scenery has been described as among the most spectacular in the World. The highest point in the UK is Ben Nevis at 1344 metres/4370 feet.

English is the main language spoken in Scotland. You will notice a wide range of different local accents and dialects spoken around the country. The ancient Celtic language of Gaelic is still spoken.

Scotland is recognized worldwide as the home of golf with International standard courses such as St. Andrews, Gleneagles and Troon. Fishing is also a sought-after pastime here. Scotland offers excellent walking or hiking from lakeside strolls to long-distance routes such as the West Highland Way and the Southern Upland Way as well as high-level mountain hikes for the more adventurous. Scotland is renowned for outdoors adventure pursuits such as white-water rafting on fast-flowing rivers, gorge walking, canoeing or sea kayaking. In winter, there are five excellent ski centres.

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland and the third largest city in the UK. In recent years, Glasgow has been awarded the European title of City of Culture and was the host city for the Commonwealth Games in 2014. It has a revitalized city centre, the best shopping outside London, excellent parks and affords easy access to both the Highlands and the Islands. The centre of Glasgow has a fine legacy of Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

Edinburgh is rich in associations with the past and has many historical buildings including Edinburgh Castle, built high on a rocky hill overlooking the city and Holyrood Palace. Its Old Town and New Town are jointly listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also home to the annual world famous Edinburgh Festival of the Arts and the Edinburgh Tattoo.

The Highlands of Scotland contain some stunning scenery including mountains, lakes and rugged coastline. Some of the best-known destinations are Loch Ness (of monster fame), beautiful Loch Lomond and the majestic Cairngorm Mountains and National Park.

Scotland offers a temperate maritime climate, meaning it rarely experiences extremes in weather or temperatures. The seas have a great influence on the weather and as such, there are cooler summers, but not very cold winters. The western side of the country is the wettest, due to the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Higher areas also experience a great deal of rain.

Spring in Scotland generally runs from March to May and is usually cool with chances of rain. Summer is from June to August and there can be patches of hot days, but Scotland tends to have a cool summer. Fall is from September to November and can be a mixed bag when it comes to temperatures. Finally, winter, from November to March is usually cool and windy. Again, Scotland faces colder temperatures than the rest of the UK.