

TRAVEL TIPS - YALE ALUMNI TOUR – BRITISH ISLES

1. Do I need a passport and a visa?
2. How many bags can I bring?
3. What size and weight can my suitcase be?
4. What is the difference between a Twin bedded room and a Double room?
5. When will I receive my travel documents?
6. Where can I find information on currency rates?
7. What Gratuities do I need to pay (if any), and when?
8. Electrical power
9. Weather ranges expected
10. Clothing – dressing for comfort and style
11. Cell phone communications
12. Travel Insurance
13. Tours: Guided and self-guided
14. Laundry and Valet service
15. Arrival in London
16. Transportation

1) Do I need a Passport and a Visa?

When traveling in the UK, a passport is required for U.S. citizens. UK does not require a VISA.

2) How many bags can I bring?

Due to limited coach capacity, you are limited to **one large suitcase** and **one carry-on**. We are unable to accept a second suitcase or any luggage exceeding these limits. Your air carrier may have stricter weight/dimension limitations than those listed here. Size and weight limitations for carry on and checked baggage vary from airline to airline and even according to destination. Up-to-date information on carrier specific standard checked baggage allowance (including size and weight limitations), the standard allowance (and fee, if applicable) for carry-on baggage, and the standard fee for the first and second checked bag, along with information that additional discounts may apply depending on flyer-specific factors (e.g. frequent flyer status, military, credit card used for purchase or early purchase over the internet, etc) can be found by accessing www.iflybags.com. Regulations within most airports require that travelers handle their own luggage through customs. Loss of or damage to baggage or any of the traveler's belongings throughout the duration of the vacation is covered under our included TravelSafe travel insurance policies in effect.

3) What size and weight can my suitcase and carry-on be?

Your large bag should have **dimensions not exceeding 30"x21"x11"** (62" linear dimensions) **and weight not exceeding 50 lbs.**

Carry-on bags should not exceed the dimensions of 12"x11"x6". For safety reasons, wheeled carry-on bags are not suitable as hand luggage on motorcoaches and mini-buses. Carry-on bags must be small enough to store in overhead bins or under the seat in front of you on motorcoaches and other transportation. Please note that air carriers, cruise lines and other forms of transportation may have other restrictions and requirements including weight, and we recommend that you contact the suppliers directly for additional information. We regret we are unable to accept a second suitcase or any luggage exceeding these limits. The restriction is due to the fact the European and UK coaches have smaller designs to accommodate the more narrow streets in Europe and UK than larger U.S. coaches and buses, and the luggage space is more limited. Similarly the overhead storage space on UK coaches is smaller than airlines overhead storage allows. Some airlines are also charging fees for checked baggage, and these fees are not included in the vacation or airfare package price. Please check with your airline directly for baggage information and regulations.

4) What is the difference between a Twin bedded room and a Double room?

A double room is a room designed to accommodate two people, though not necessarily with two separate beds. A twin bedded room has two separate beds of any size; this is what we usually reserve for our travelers. In the larger hotels, twin-bedded involved usually two Queen beds. In smaller hotels outside London, twin-bedded means two Twin beds.

5) When will I receive my travel documents?

Travel documents, including any air tickets, itineraries, and other information, are sent four weeks prior to departure. The package includes Travel Tips, Travel Brochure, Album of tour participant backgrounds, a mini pocket guide, power plugs, luggage tags, and pre-purchased tour tickets.

6) Where can I find information on currency rates?

If you are in the process of planning your vacation and need information on currency exchange rates, [click here](#) to access our currency converter tool. Currently the exchange rate at time of travel we project will be 1.45, ie it takes \$1.45 U.S. to exchange for £1 pound UK. Or \$1.00 U.S. will convert to £0.68 pounds. You can convert at the Heathrow Airport upon arrival. Hotels will exchange. ATM's on the street will take U.S. debit and credit card and issue pound notes. All exchanges involve a significant exchange fee. And don't forget to plan your cash so that you have as small amount as possible to exchange back to U.S. dollars at the airport upon departure. You do not want to arrive home with any UK currency in your pocket.

7) Gratuities:

Tippling is not always expected in the UK in the way it is in other countries. All staff in the UK, must by law, be paid at least the National Minimum Wage £6.70 21 + years of age (lower rate applies to those under 21 years of age).

All gratuities are already included in the tour cost including for the Globus provided Tour Guide, the Globus and MINT coach drivers, all local tour guides, and all meals provided by the tour (17 breakfasts, 16 dinners and two receptions). You will self-pay two breakfasts, all lunches and two dinners at which you can leave a 12.5% gratuity unless it is already included on the bill. Porterage for one suitcase from the coach to your hotel room is included in the price. Airport/train station porterage is not included unless otherwise specified in your travel documents.

Dining out: It is customary to leave 10-15% of the bill when eating out. However, restaurants often add on a service charge (usually 12.5%), especially if you're in a large group, so it's worth checking your bill if you don't want to tip twice. It's not customary to pay a tip for fast food, self-service or takeaway meals. Although restaurants (and other businesses) should make their policy clear, it's worth checking with your waiter that he/she will personally receive your tip rather than the company – particularly if you're paying by credit card.

Tippling in Bars and Pubs: People generally do not tip in pubs in London. Bartenders sometimes hand back change on a tipping tray, although it's still up to you to choose to leave a tip.

Tippling in Hotels in London: Like restaurants, most London hotel bills include a service charge, usually 10-12%. If there's no service charge added to your bill in a hotel restaurant, it's customary to tip as for any other restaurant (10-15% of the bill). For room cleaning staff, you can leave an amount of your choosing on departure. Tips for other hotel staff such as concierges and door staff are discretionary and are most commonplace for porters.

Taxi Drivers: It is polite to tip 10-15% of the taxi fare for black cabs and licensed minicabs in London. However, most people simply round up the fare to the nearest £1 and tell the driver to "keep the change". If you've had a longer journey and the driver has assisted you with luggage, you may wish to tip a little more, up to £5.

8) Electrical Power/current:

In the U.S. electrical power is 120 volts at 60 cycles . In the UK it is 220-240 volts at 50 cycles

Wall plugs in the UK require a special 3 prong plug adapter. We will provide each passenger with one wall adapter plug and one 3x extension plug. These will be mailed to each of us in the travel package in August.

Chargers for all hand held electronic devices today (cell phones, laptops, handheld devices, and iPads) sold in the last five years operate equally well on both power sources.

Please leave your hair curling irons and hair dryers and other heavy use appliances home. Your home U.S. appliances will burn up in spectacular fashion when plugged into the higher voltage in the UK. Just use the ones provided in all of our hotels.



Wall plug



3x extension plug

9) Weather: Temperatures and rainfall (based on published historical averages)

Temperatures will average 60f degrees, ranging from 45f-70f throughout our 20 days. We are significantly further north than our France tour in 2015 so expect cooler weather throughout. It will be slightly cooler (several degrees) in the northern portions of our tour, and the Lake District extension at higher elevation will be a few degrees cooler as well. Rainfall: 15 days per month. Chance of some rain each day is 50 %. Umbrellas are essential. Chance of Cloudy/Windy all Day is 20 %

10) Clothing:

Layering and comfortable clothing for daytime touring is best. Sweaters will be worn most days. A comfortable jacket will suffice. They can be removed if warmer than expected. A wind breaker (preferably waterproof) over a sweater will suffice for most weather conditions.

Only one occasion will require a coat and tie by the gentlemen and an evening outfit by the ladies, the Savile Club on our last evening in London. For two other occasions including the Thames River Dinner Cruise, a blazer or sport coat and dress shirt without tie for men are fine and the ladies dress to suit.

Daily Dress:

- For men and women:
- Cruise casual sportswear clothes for all days and most evenings:
- Comfortable walking shoes, sandals, tennis shoes
- Khaki's, slacks, shorts
- Polo shirts, sports shirts, Yale T and V neck polo shirts
- Layering: Windbreaker, pull over sweater, mini-umbrella
- PJ's, slippers/sandals and bathrobes are recommended

Dress up evenings: Men sports coat with no tie. Ladies casual dress up incl. pantsuits

- 12th - Thames River Dinner Cruise: entertainment and welcome reception/dinner

Formal evening dress: Men sport coat, slacks, tie required. Ladies Town Clothes.

- 26th – U.S. Embassy and Savile Club reunion/reception

11) Cell phones, tablets and computers

On this tour there will be wireless connections to the Internet available at most hotels and on our tour bus. This means you can communicate by email for free, using any device that is designed to connect to the Internet using Wi-Fi. This includes most phones, tablets, and computers. Individuals may either bring and use their own cell phones from the U.S. or rent one from our CellHire service for an approximate cost of \$60.00 for the month. We will have no-cost Wi-Fi internet connection during most of the trip, on the coach during the days, and in the hotels in the evenings and at night. We will have our own 10 channel Mi-Fi accompanying the group to supplement the 5 channel Mi-Fi supplied on the bus. To avoid overcrowding, we ask everyone use the wi-fi during the day for texting and emails only, and to log off (enter airplane mode) when finished after each session to release the channel to allow others to log on and use the same channel after you are done. Otherwise the channel is blocked and cannot be used by others until reset. Please delay heavy Internet access for video and other high capacity usage for the evenings and nights in the hotels.

Communicating with home -- Email

Be careful with your phone; typically it has two ways to access the Internet—using Wi-fi or using the data plan purchased from your carrier (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Verizon). If you set your phone to "airplane mode" the phone will only use Wi-fi to receive and transmit emails. If you take it off of "airplane mode" the phone may select your phone carrier and your emails could be VERY expensive.

Communicating with home – Voice and Text

If you want bring your own cell phone to talk with people back home or send them a text message at times our Wi-Fi is unavailable for any reason, you should check with your carrier. Most have special plans that you can purchase for as short a time as one month. The plan gives you a better price on your text and talk.

le for ATT, Basic Passport would cost you \$30 for one month. This would buy you unlimited text messages and a per-minute charge for phone calls of \$1.00 per minute. It also buys you 120MB of cellular data – probably sufficient for a ton of emails (if Wi-fi was not available). However, if you send a ton of photos with your emails 120MB may be insufficient. Higher levels of Passport (Silver and Gold) give you better per-minute rates for phone calls and larger amounts of data. To find the plan for your carrier, use the search engine of your choice (Google, Bing, etc.) and type "international travel [name of your carrier]"

Your phone. Not all phones will work on cell phone carriers in the UK. Check with your carrier before you purchase a plan.

Communicating with home – Skype

An inexpensive way to call or text people in the U.S. is to use Skype. Before you leave the U.S. set up an account with Skype using your computer (skype.com). You will be asked to download a free Skype application to your computer. You will make your calls or send your texts from within that application. Skype also has an app for cell phones. As long as you have a strong Wi-fi connection to the Internet you will be able to talk with people back in the states. The calls are free to other Skype users. But here is a small per-minute charge (a little over 2 cents) if you call someone's landline or cell phone in the U.S. and 11 cents per text message. To pay for that set up an account with Skype and pre-load it with some money – perhaps as little as \$10.

12) Tour Guides and Self-guided tours.

The cost of all professional tour guide is included in the base price including gratuities to same. Rental of any audio recording equipment used during self-guided tours is not included and must be paid for by the individual.

13) Travel Insurance:

All deposits paid toward the tour will be refunded up to the amount of coverage purchased. \$7,000 was provided per person in the package and additional insurance was purchased by some to cover air fare. Should any person traveling or their travel partner, or any member of the immediate family encounter a medical situation preventing travel, up to the amount of the

insurance will be paid by our insurance company TravelSafe. Funds will only be disbursed after a claim form is submitted and after the tour is completed. The cost of the insurance premium itself will not be refunded. In addition, the plan will pay for any medical expenses encountered on the tour. There is a life insurance policy of \$25,000 coverage during the tour, a medivac return to the U.S. is covered, and if the tour must be cancelled due to major service interruption in the designated country as a terrorist act preventing travel, the tour cost will be refunded as will the failure of the major tour operator preventing travel.

14) Laundry and Valet service on the road

Besides in room self-laundry for undergarments with special detergents brought from home by yourself, Laundry/valet service is available at all of our hotels. It is expensive so budget accordingly. The best opportunities for outside laundry service near the hotels are where we are staying over for two nights, Killarney and Edinburgh, a third and half way through the tour. We will look for the best opportunities and arrange for and make them available from our coach.

15) Arrival in London.

Most of us are booked to arrive Heathrow Airport early morning to noon of the 11th from evening/overnight flight departures in the U.S. leaving on the 10th. 14 of us are coming a day early, departing on the 9th and arriving on the 10th. You must transport your own luggage to and through customs. Those of us who booked airfare through Globus will be met and transported to the hotel. The rest of us must arrange our own transportation to the Metropole Hilton Hotel. There is a train service, and taxis or limo service are available. Google for the most appropriate service for you. London taxis are available outside each terminal. The cost to central London is £50–£70 (\$75 to \$110) total for up to four people and the journey time is approximately one hour. Or, chauffeur limo service in advance.

Normal hotel check in time is 3pm. We have requested early check-in for all of us but it will depend upon the hotel and the capacity and cannot be guaranteed. Check-in the front desk upon arrival and if the rooms is not yet available, you can store your luggage at valet and have lunch while waiting. The coach for the optional Windsor Castle tour will leave at 1pm from in front of the hotel. 25 of us will be on that tour. We will be back at 5:30pm in time to join the first welcome cocktail party in the lobby bar followed by our shared welcome dinner reception, also at the hotel. The formal tour starts at 8:30am the next morning with the Globus coach and tour director meeting us in the front of the hotel and we are off for a full day of London touring followed by the Thames River dinner cruise that evening.

16) Transportation:

We will be utilizing a variety of modes of transportation on our tour around the British Isles. Around London for five days, we have retained the services of MINT Coaches, London's finest custom transport company. Their expert and experienced drivers are very familiar with runs to all of the place we will be touring and staying. For the London to London external 15 day tour, Globus will provide a coach. It has capacity of 44 and with 41 in our tour it will be almost full with only several empty seats. There is a W/C onboard, reserved for emergency situations only. For the longer distance runs outside London, there will be ample rest stops along the way.

The big Globus coach is comfortable, has good visibility, comfortable seating, fresh cold bottled water, and a good PA system used by the Tour Guide. Per Globus policy we will be invited to rotate in couples on a daily basis around the coach so everyone gets to enjoy all the seating and no one "owns" any seats for the duration. Where there are special requirements for seating (as up front or near the exits), these will receive priority where requested. The MINT and Globus coaches will have Wi-Fi for cell phone communications. To avoid overcrowding, we ask everyone to use the coach Wi-Fi during the day for emails only, and to log off (enter airplane mode) when finished each session to release the channel to allow others to log on and use the same channel after you are done. Otherwise the channel is blocked and cannot be used by others until reset. Please wait for the heavy Wi-Fi Internet access for video and other high capacity usage for the evenings and nights in the hotels.



Globus MotorCoach



Ferry across the Irish Sea



Virgin Rail/Europe-Britain



Taxi Cab



London Hop-on Hop-off Bus



Mint Coaches London



Lake Ferry



Thames River Dinner Cruise



Killarney Jaunting Car wagon



Lake District by Van

