

# Country Guide for ENGLAND



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## 1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Location:** Great Britain.

British Tourist Authority

Thames Tower, Black's Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9EL

**Tel:** (020) 8846 9000. Fax: (020) 8563 0302.

**E-mail:** [tradehelpdesk@bta.org.uk](mailto:tradehelpdesk@bta.org.uk) (trade enquiries only) or [enquirydesk@bta.org.uk](mailto:enquirydesk@bta.org.uk) (consumer enquiries). Web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>

Promotes Britain abroad.

English Tourism Council

**Tel:** (020) 8563 3000. Web site: <http://www.english tourism.org.uk>

Address as above. Promotes Britain within the UK.

## 2 GENERAL

**Area:** 130,422 sq km (50,356 sq miles).

**Population:** 49,494,600 (1997).

**Population Density:** 379.5 per sq km.

**Capital:** London. Population: 7,187,300 (Greater London, 1998).

**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 (Cumbria) and the northwest are divided from the Yorkshire Dales, and the northeast, by the (relatively) high-rising Pennines, 'the backbone of England'. The eastern part of the country, particularly East Anglia, is the most low-lying. The coastline is varied, and ranges from long stretches of sandy beaches to steep cliffs and isolated rocky coves.

**Language:** English. The multiplicity of local dialects throughout the country, overlaid with class, and town and country accents makes English a language of astonishing diversity - words and forms of syntax which are obsolete in the southeast may often be found elsewhere. Cornish is still spoken by a few people in Cornwall. In the larger cities, particularly London, there are many

***communities who do not speak English as a first language (or who have a patois - originating outside of this country - which adds yet more variety to the English language).***

***Note: For information on Government, time, electricity and communications, see the main United Kingdom section.***

***Passpor***

***See main United Kingdom section***

Passport Required?    Visa Required?    Return Ticket Required?

British

Australian

Canadian

USA  
OtherEU  
Japanese

### 3 MONEY

See main United Kingdom section.

### 4 DUTY FREE

See main United Kingdom section.

### 5 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

See main United Kingdom section.

### 6 HEALTH

See main United Kingdom section.

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
<b>Yellow Fever</b>		
<b>Cholera</b>		
<b>Typhoid and Polio</b>		
<b>Malaria</b>		
<b>Food and Drink</b>		

Travel - International

**AIR:** England's principal international airports are:

**Heathrow (LHR):** Located 24km (15 miles) west of central London. Airport information: (tel: (0870) 000 0123; web site: <http://www.baa.co.uk>). The airport has three passenger terminals grouped together in the airport's central area. The fourth terminal is a short distance from the main complex. Facilities: Banks (7 days a week) and currency exchange in all terminals (T1: 24 hours for arrivals, 0600-2130 for departures; T2: Open from first to last international flight; T3: 24 hours for arrivals, from first to last international flight for departures; T4: Open from first to last international flight); cash dispensers in all terminals; left luggage in all terminals; post office (T2: 0830-1730 Monday to Saturday, 0900-1300 Sunday; T4: 0900-1730 Monday to Saturday; 0900-1300 Sunday); a variety of restaurants, bars, cafés and other eating places in all terminals

(24 hours); baby care rooms in all terminals (0700-2000); St George's Chapel, opposite entrance to T2 car park (tel: (020) 8745 4261); duty free in all terminals; gift/general shops in all terminals; Travel Care Unit in Queen's Building (tel: (020) 8745 7495, open 0930-1630 Monday to Saturday); The Business Centre, Heathrow (tel: (020) 8759 2434), next to T2 24-hour emergency medical service; hotel reservation service in all terminals; facilities for the disabled: wheelchairs, telephones, toilets, special parking bays in short-term car park and coach link to long-term car park. There is also an induction loop link system for the hard of hearing.

Underground: The airport is linked to the entire Greater London area by the underground railway network. Stations for Heathrow Terminals 1, 2, 3 and 4 are on the Piccadilly Line, with direct trains to Hammersmith, Earl's Court (change for Victoria), South Kensington (change for Paddington, Blackfriars, Cannon Street and Tower Hill), Knightsbridge, Green Park (change for Charing Cross and Baker Street), Piccadilly Circus (change for Marylebone), Leicester Square (change for Euston and Waterloo), Holborn (change for Bank and Liverpool Street), King's Cross (change for Moorgate and London Bridge) and Finsbury Park. The travel time to the West End is 47 minutes, and to the mainline stations King's Cross and St Pancras 55 minutes. All other mainline stations can be reached with only one change of train in central London (see above for suggested connections). Services run 0508-2349 Monday to Saturday, and 0557-2256 Sunday (Terminals 1,2,3) and 0458-2354 Monday to Saturday and 0547-2343 Sunday (Terminal 4). 24-hour information on the London Regional Transport network may be obtained by dialling (020) 7222 1234. Train: The Heathrow Express (tel: (0845) 600 1515; web site: <http://www.heathrowexpress.co.uk>) is a fast service from London Paddington to Heathrow. Trains depart every 15 minutes (travel time - 15 minutes). There is a Railair (tel: (0990) 747 777) coach, with frequent express services connecting Heathrow with trains at Reading and Woking stations. Details are available in each terminal. Coach: London Transport operates Airbus, providing an express service between Heathrow and central London. Airbuses call at all terminals and have ample space for passengers and baggage. There are also wheelchair facilities for the disabled. The A2 service to Kings Cross Station, and other central and west London stops runs every 30 minutes from Heathrow 0530-2145 and from Kings Cross Station 0400-2000 (travel time - 1 hour 40 minutes). Speedlink Airport Services' Jetlink operates every 30 minutes (0440-2210) to Gatwick (journey time - 1 hour 10 minutes). The service now runs to Luton airport, operating 0430-2245, and to Stansted airport, operating 0600-0110. Green Line coach/bus services (724), run to Watford, St Albans, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Hertford and Harlow. London Transport's 726 bus runs to Kingston, Sutton, Croydon and Bromley. For information on these services, dial (0990) 747 777 or (020) 8668 7261. National Express (tel: (0990) 808 080) runs direct Rapide coach services from Heathrow to most parts of the UK including Manchester 11 times a day (travel time - six hours); Bristol 18 times a day (travel time - 2 hours); and Birmingham 16 times a day (travel time - 2 hours 35 minutes). Speedlink luxury coaches connect Heathrow with Gatwick (travel time - 1 hour). Coaches depart every 30 minutes, operating 0440-0040. Many private companies have long-distance coach services linking Heathrow with the rest of the country. West Midlands area: Flightlink (tel: (0990) 757 747). East Anglia: Cambridge Coaches (tel: (01223) 423 900). For information on schedules, on-line booking and fares for Airbus, Speedlink, Jetlink and National Express services, visit the general web site (<http://www.gobycoach.com>). Local bus: London Transport (tel: (020) 7222 1234; web site: <http://www.londontransport.co.uk>) services A2, 105, 111, 140, 190, 285, 441, 555, 556 and its night bus N97 operate from Heathrow Central bus station to various parts of London. The Oxford Bus Company (tel: (01865) 785 410) runs the Oxford Express service directly between Heathrow and Oxford at half-hourly intervals during the day and 2-hourly intervals throughout the night. Green Line also operates local services (see above for coach operations). Note: London Transport Travelcheck (tel: (020) 7222 1234) gives up-to-the-minute information on how London services are running. Taxi: Available for hire outside each airport terminal. Each terminal has its own taxi rank and the information desk can give an indication of fares. Car hire: Avis, Budget, Hertz and Europcar self-drive and chauffeur-driven cars can be hired from desks in each airport terminal. To central London takes 30 minutes to 1 hour. Private car: Heathrow, 38km (24 miles) from central

London, is reached either through the tunnel of the M4 motorway spur or from the A4 (Bath) road. It is also close to the M25 orbital motorway, making journeys to virtually all parts of the country relatively simple. It is advisable to avoid the area during peak times (0700-1300 Friday to Sunday), especially in summer. Unloading but no waiting is allowed outside terminals. Short- and long-term car parking is available; There are coach connections from long-term car park to all terminals.

**Gatwick (LGW):** Located 46km (28 miles) south of central London. Airport information: (tel: (01293) 535 353; web site: <http://www.baa.co.uk>). Facilities: Banks/currency exchange, cash dispensers, shops, restaurants, left luggage, duty-free shops, chapel, baby care rooms, medical room and facilities for the disabled. All facilities are available 24 hours. Train: Trains travelling from London to Brighton stop at Gatwick Airport. Gatwick Express (tel: (0990) 301 530; web site: <http://www.gatwickexpress.co.uk>) operates a nonstop service from Victoria Station at 15-minute intervals from 0500-2345 and at hourly intervals from 2400-0430 (travel time - 30 minutes), seven days a week. Passengers travelling with British Airways, American Airlines and GB Airways can check in at Victoria Station (tel: (020) 7707 4750). There are also services to Gatwick from London Bridge Station every half hour (travel time - 35 minutes). There are fast and frequent trains from Gatwick which connect with mainline stations throughout south-east England. There are direct trains daily between Gatwick and Manchester, Birmingham, Coventry, Edinburgh, Luton, Oxford, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton, with stops en route (tel: (0345) 484 950). Coach: Speedlink (tel: (0990) 747 777) luxury nonstop service links Gatwick with all four terminals at Heathrow. Services depart every 15 minutes to 1200, every 30 minutes in the afternoon and the evening until 2230 (travel time - 1 hour). Flightline to Victoria Coach Station and Stansted Airport runs hourly 0415-2240 (travel time to Victoria - 1 hour 25 minutes). Jetlink (tel: (020) 8668 7261 or (0990) 747 777) to Heathrow runs every 30 minutes 0500-2330 (travel time - 1 hour 10 minutes), with extensions to Luton Airport every hour and to Stansted Airport every 2 hours. The service to Heathrow runs every hour until 0005. National Express (tel: (0990) 808 080 for information and bookings) have direct coach services to most parts of the UK including Birmingham, nine times a day (travel time - 3 hours 40 minutes); Leicester, six times a day (travel time - 4 hours 5 minutes); and Newcastle, three times a day (travel time - 9 hours 5 minutes). Flightlink goes from Manchester and Birmingham. Other services calling at the terminal include Oxford Citylink and National Express (from Glasgow). Certain charter tour operators also provide coaches from Gatwick for arriving passengers. Check with relevant tour operator. Contact (web site: <http://www.gobycoach.com>) for information on schedules, on-line booking and fares for Speedlink, Flightline, Jetlink and National Express services. Local bus: There are local buses to Crawley and Horley on routes C1, C2, 405, 455 and 773. Taxi: Available outside the terminal. Travel time to central London - 1 hour (tel: (01293) 562 291; fax: (01293) 567 390). Car hire: Avis, Europcar, Budget and Hertz self-drive and chauffeur-driven cars can be hired from desks in the arrivals hall. Private car: Gatwick can be reached from London on the A23 or M23. It is also close to the M25 orbital motorway, linking all main routes from London. There are ample parking facilities for short and long stays. Fee enquiries (tel: (01293) 502 737 (short-stay parking); (0800) 128 128 (long-stay parking, North Terminal) or (0800) 626 671 (long-stay parking, South Terminal)).

**London City Airport (LCY):** Located 10km (6 miles) east of the City of London. Airport information: (tel: (020) 7646 0088; web site: <http://www.londoncityairport.com>). This airport, situated at the Royal Docks in the London Borough of Newham provides frequent scheduled air services linking the City of London with Antwerp, Amsterdam, Basle, Berne, Brussels, Clermont Ferrand, Dublin, Dundee, Düsseldorf, Edinburgh, Frankfurt/M, Geneva, Glasgow, Isle of Man, Jersey, Le Havre, Lugano, Luxembourg, Milan, Münster-Osnabrück, Paris, Rennes, Rotterdam and Zurich. Scheduled airlines include Air France, British European, Cross Air, Lufthansa, Sabena and VLM. Check-in time is usually about ten minutes. Facilities: Duty-free shops, car hire, bank, bureaux de change and cash dispensers, left luggage, information desk, restaurant and bars,

newsagent and bookstore, and business centre with meeting rooms/conference facilities for up to 80 persons. Train/Underground: Silvertown Station, on the Silverlink Metro line, is 300 yards from the airport terminal; connections with the Underground are at West Ham (District and Hammersmith and City Lines), Stratford (Central Line and Docklands Light Railway), Highbury and Islington (Victoria Line), West Hampstead (Jubilee Line) and Willesden Junction (Bakerloo Line). Plaistow (District Line) is approximately 3km (2 miles) from the airport; it has its own taxi rank. In 1999, the Jubilee Line opened at Canning Town, which is approximately 1.6km (1 mile) away; (travel time by shuttle bus - 5 minutes). Canning Town is also on the Docklands Light Railway and the Silverlink Metro. Coach/bus: A shuttle bus operates every 10 minutes from the terminal to Canary Wharf (Docklands Light Railway); Liverpool Street Station (London Underground and main-line trains to the east of England) and Canning Town (London Underground, Docklands Light Railway and the Silverlink Metro). The service operates approximately Monday-Friday 0600-2230, Saturday 0600-1300 and Sunday 1000-2220. London Transport buses 69 and 473 stop at the terminal, linking it with nearby Docklands Light Railway and Silverlink Metro stations. Taxi: Widely available; may be booked in-flight. Car hire: Europcar (tel: (0345) 222 525) and Avis. Private car: The airport is reached from the City via Commercial Road/East India Dock Road (A13) over the Canning Town Flyover, turning right into Prince Regent Lane, or via Tower Hill along The Highway (A1203) and Silvertown Way (travel time - 30 minutes); from the M25 via the M11 and North Circular (A406) or the A13. Access from the City of London will usually present no problems provided the morning and evening rush hours are avoided. London City Airport has ample car parking space located just outside the terminal building.

**Stansted (STN):** Located 48km (30 miles) northeast of central London. Airport information: (tel: (01279) 680 500; web site: <http://www.baa.co.uk>). Facilities: Information desk, executive lounge, lost property, bureaux de change, cash dispensers, a variety of restaurants and cafés/bars, nursing mothers' room, 24-hour emergency medical service, duty-free shops, fax and photocopying facilities, wheelchairs and toilets for the disabled as well as induction loop system in the international departures lounge. Train: The Stansted Express runs throughout the day (0500-2300) from London Liverpool Street to Stansted. Services run every 15 minutes (0800-1700) and every 30 minutes, evenings and weekends (travel time - 41 minutes). There are also services from Stansted to Cambridge and the North. Further information is available from National Rail Enquiries (tel: (0345) 484 950). Coach: Colchester Coach Link (tel: (08705) 747 777) runs services to Stansted from Dunmow, Bradwell and Colchester, 0525-2010, seven days a week. Airbus (tel: (08705) 747 777) connects Stansted with London Victoria Coach Station. Coaches run every half hour during the day and hourly throughout the night (travel time - 1 hour 30 minutes). Jetlink (tel: (08705) 747 777) operates services every 2 hours, between Stansted, Gatwick and Heathrow. Jetlink also provides services to Ipswich, Braintree, Cambridge and Oxford. Flightlink coaches operate to Gatwick Airport via Victoria Coach Station in London. Taxi: To central London takes 1 hour 30 minutes. Car hire: Cars can be hired from desks in the terminal building. For details contact: Budget Rent-a-Car or Hertz (tel: (01279) 680 154/5). For air taxis/business aviation services contact Artac Air Chartering Service (tel: (01376) 566 000). Private car: Situated 54km (34 miles) northeast of London, the airport is easily accessible by road on M25/M11 from London. The Midlands and the North are reached via the A1, A604 and M11. Long- and short-term car parking space is available.

**Luton (LTN):** Located 51km (32 miles) northwest of London. Airport information: (tel: (01582) 405 100; web site: <http://www.london-luton.com>). Facilities: Bureaux de change, cash dispensers, general shops, a variety of restaurants and bar/cafés, two 24-hour cafés, nursing mothers' room, free play area (2-8 years) in departure lounge, duty-free shop, chapel, medical services and facilities for the disabled - wheelchairs, toilets and ambulift. Train: Access to Luton Airport improved with the opening of a new station - Luton Airport Parkway - in 1999. A courtesy shuttle service operates between the station and airport terminal. Luton is on the Thameslink line

which runs from Bedford via London (stopping at King's Cross and London Bridge stations) and Gatwick Airport to Brighton. Midland Mainline services connect Luton with the Midlands and the North. Trains run direct to Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield. National Rail Enquiries (tel: (0345) 484 950). Coach: National Express (tel: (0990) 808 080) runs five services a day to Birmingham and ten services a day to Manchester. Services also run to most other parts of the UK. Jetlink is a direct (limited stop) service connecting Stansted Airport with Luton, Heathrow and Gatwick, which operates hourly from Luton. It runs via Hemel Hempstead and continues on to Brighton. London Link 757 Express runs a daily service from the airport to Luton and on to central London. United Counties (tel: (01604) 676 077) operates directly to Bedford. From Bedford there are connections to Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Peterborough and St Neots. Services vary in frequency. Flightlink operates direct between the airport and Birmingham, Nottingham and Leicester. Local bus: Buses nos. 31 and X31 (tel: (0345) 788 788) run from the airport to Luton bus and rail stations, with frequent services during the day, and hourly evening services (Monday-Saturday). Taxi: Can be hired from the rank immediately outside the terminal building. Car hire: Avis, National Car Rental, Budget and Europcar have desks at the airport. Private car: The airport can be reached on the M1 exiting at Junction 10. Access to the airport from the east is via the A505 dual carriageway from Hitchin. The M25 connects all motorways and the airport can therefore be accessed from the East, South and West via M25, M4, M11 and M23. Travelling from the west also provides several routes from the Dunstable area through Luton. Airport signs should be followed throughout. Long- and short-term car-parking is available within the airport boundary.

**Birmingham (BHX):** Located 13km (8 miles) southeast of the city centre. Airport information: (tel: (0121) 767 7145; web site: <http://www.bhx.co.uk>). Facilities: Bank and foreign exchange services, cash dispensers, cafés and restaurants, duty-free shop, facilities for the disabled, medical centre, nursing mothers' room, shops, spectators' viewing gallery and left-luggage office. Train: The main terminal is linked to Birmingham International Station and the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) by the Air Rail Link courtesy bus service. Birmingham International is connected to the Intercity network and regional lines and has a fast service to London Euston (travel time - 1 hour 20 minutes). Train information: (0345) 484 950 (only available from within the UK). Birmingham New Street Station, in the city centre, is ten minutes away by Intercity or local services and provides interchange for services throughout the rest of the country. Coach/bus: Travel West Midlands operates local services into the suburbs. An Airbus service from the airport to the NEC and various locations around the city centre, operates every 30 minutes (0500-2100). National Express offers a frequent, daily service to central Birmingham, Coventry, Lancashire and the London airports. A service also runs to Birmingham, Coventry, Northampton, Cambridge, Chelmsford and Southend. Flightlink (tel: (0990) 757 747) operates connections to Gatwick and Heathrow with various collection points along the route. Frequent coaches run to and from Birmingham from London Victoria and most major cities and towns throughout the country. Local bus: Services 38Y and 58Y run to the city centre Monday to Saturday, every 20-30 minutes. Taxi: Travel time to city centre - 25 minutes. Taxis are available outside the Eurohub Terminal. Car hire: Avis, Budget, Hertz, Europcar and National Car Rental have offices at the airport. Private car: M1, M5, M6, M42 and M40 are the main routes to Birmingham. The airport is well signposted from the city. There is multi-storey and open-air parking (over 8000 spaces) at the airport. For further details, contact National Car Parks (NCP) (tel: (0121) 767 7861).

**Manchester (MAN):** Located 16km (10 miles) south of the city centre. Airport information: (tel: (0161) 489 3000; web site: <http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk>). Facilities: Restaurants/cafés, duty-free shops, baby care facilities and play area, shops, banking services, bureaux de change, cash dispensers, medical centre, post office, conference and banqueting facilities for up to 400 people and full facilities for the disabled. Train: Manchester Airport station links the airport to Manchester city centre, with trains departing every 15 minutes Monday to Saturday and every 20 minutes Sunday (travel time - 20 minutes). Fast trains to all parts of the country leave from



Manchester Airport station and there are connections for further services at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Victoria (tel: (0345) 484 950, only available from within the UK). Coach/bus: National Express (tel: (0990) 808 080) runs daily services to most parts of the UK including Scotland. Buses 43A and 105, run by Stagecoach Manchester, operate throughout the week to Piccadilly rail station and the city centre. Service 500 runs to Bolton and various other stops including the Trafford Centre. For more detailed information on times and frequency of these services, contact Greater Manchester Passengers Transport Executive (tel: (0161) 228 7811). Taxi: Travel time to the city centre - 25 minutes. There are taxi ranks situated outside or adjacent to Terminals 1, 2 and 3. Car hire: Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz and National Car Rental have booking offices in Terminals 1, 2 and 3. Private car: The airport is at the heart of the country's motorway network and a specially constructed spur from the M56 runs directly into the terminal building. Road connections serve Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Lancashire, Cheshire, the Midlands and West and South Yorkshire. There is car parking space within the airport boundary.

**Newcastle (NCL):** Located 8km (5 miles) northwest of the city centre. Airport information: (tel: (0191) 286 0966; web site: <http://www.newcastleairport.com>). Facilities: Bureau de change (0530-2130 daily, summer; 0530-2130 Monday to Saturday, 0530-2000 Sunday, winter), bank, cash dispensers, restaurant/bars, shops (0545-2100), duty-free shop, left luggage, baby care facilities, play area, emergency medical services and facilities for the disabled. Metro: The Tyneside Metro Rapid Transport system connects the whole of the Newcastle area with the airport. It runs to Newcastle city centre, across the River Tyne to Gateshead and South Shields and to Tynemouth and the coast. Nexus Traveline (Public Transport Information): (tel: (0870) 608 2608). Train: Nearest railway station is Newcastle Central, 11km (7 miles) from the airport, linked by buses operated by Busways, which run every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday, and every hour on Sunday. For further information ring (0345) 484 950 (National Rail Enquiries). Coach: National Express and Scottish Citylink operates services to the airport from most major cities in Scotland and the North of England and Midlands. Local bus: Services 76, 76A, 77, 77A, 78, 78E and 79 run from Eldon Square bus concourse, in the centre of Newcastle. These stop on the main road at the airport entrance (travel time - 20 minutes). Public Transport Information (tel: (0870) 608 2608). Taxi: Travel time to city centre - 15-20 minutes. A taxi rank is situated outside the railway station, and at the Haymarket near the Eldon Square bus concourse in Newcastle city centre. Only licensed taxi cabs are allowed to pick up at the airport. Car hire: Avis (tel: (0191) 214 0116), Europcar (tel: (0191) 286 5070), Hertz (tel: (0191) 286 6748) and National (tel: (0191) 214 5222) self-drive agents are located at the airport. Private car: The airport can be reached from the south by the A1(M) north, then the A696 Jedburgh trunk road, and from the north by the A1 south, then the A696 Jedburgh trunk road. Open-air long- and short-term parking facilities are available (advance booking recommended during busy periods).

**SEA:** There are many ports offering ferry connections between England and mainland Europe, Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Wight, the Scilly Isles and the Isle of Man. See the main United Kingdom section for a list of operators.

**RAIL:** The Intercity network serves all main cities in the UK mainland. All routes radiate from London. For all rail enquiries National Rail Enquiries (tel: (0345) 484 950, only available from within the UK). Following the privatisation of British Rail, rail services are operated by numerous private companies. Terminus stations in London serve the following regions:

**Southern England and South London:** Charing Cross, Victoria and Waterloo.

**East Anglia, Essex, North East and East London:** Liverpool Street.

**South Midlands, West of England, South Wales and West London:** Paddington.

East and West Midlands, North Wales, North West England, West Coast of Scotland and West London: Euston, St Pancras and Marylebone.

**East and North East England, East Coast of Scotland and North London:** King's Cross.

There are also many smaller lines which operate less frequently. There are services to the Republic of Ireland via Holyhead, and to Northern Ireland. Services to the Republic of Ireland via Fishguard are also available.

**ROAD:** England is served by a good network of motorways and trunk roads which connect all the main cities and towns.

**The main motorways are:** M1: London, Luton, Leicester, Sheffield, Leeds. M2/A2: London to Dover. M3: London to Winchester. M4: London, Reading, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea. M5: Birmingham, Gloucester, Bristol, Exeter. M6: Coventry, Birmingham, Stoke, Warrington (connecting with the M62 for Liverpool and Manchester), Preston (connecting with the M55 for Blackpool), Morecambe, Carlisle. M11: London to Cambridge. M20/A20: London to Folkestone. M40: London to Birmingham. M62: Liverpool, Warrington, Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds, Hull. M25: London orbital.

**The main trunk roads are:** A1/A1(M) (motorway in parts): London, Peterborough, Doncaster, Darlington, Newcastle, Edinburgh. A2: London to Dover. A3: London, Guildford, Portsmouth. A5: London, St Albans, Nuneaton, Birmingham area, Shrewsbury, across inland north Wales to Holyhead. A6: London, Bedford, Leicester, Manchester. A11: London to Norwich. A12: London, Ipswich, Great Yarmouth. A23: London to Brighton. A30: London, Basingstoke, Yeovil, Exeter, Penzance. A40: London, Oxford (M40), Gloucester, Cheltenham, across inland south Wales to Fishguard.

**Distances from London (by road):** To Birmingham 169km (105 miles), Manchester 299km (186 miles), Liverpool 325km (202 miles), Exeter 278km (173 miles), Penzance 452km (281 miles), Bristol 185km (115 miles), Carlisle 484km (301 miles), Newcastle 441km (274 miles), Sheffield 257km (160 miles), York 311km (193 miles), Cambridge 89km (55 miles), Southampton 124km (77 miles), Dover 114km (71 miles), Oxford 92km (57 miles), Norwich 182km (113 miles), Portsmouth 113km (70 miles) and Harwich 122km (76 miles).

**COACH:** Many coach companies offer express and stopping services throughout England and the rest of the UK. National Express (tel: (0990) 808 080) provides nationwide coach information. The head office is at 4 Vicarage Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3ES (tel: (0121) 456 1122; fax: (0121) 456 1397; web site: <http://www.nationalexpress.co.uk>).

**URBAN:** All towns and cities have bus services. In addition, the areas of Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and the cities in South Yorkshire and Newcastle have suburban rail services. Newcastle also has a metro, which consists of a circular line with three branches. It connects with Newcastle Central, Manors and Heworth railway stations and terminates at South Shields (ferry connection to North Shields, also on the metro), St James and Newcastle Airport. Manchester has a fast metrolink tram service running on former railway lines from Bury in the north to Altrincham in the south. There is also a brand new line from Eccles in the west via Salford Quays to the city centre. All cities have taxi services, many using London-type black cabs. Taxi ranks are usually placed near bus stations, railway stations and town centres. Local telephone directories give the numbers of mini-cabs and hire cars.

**LONDON:** Travel enquiries: For 24-hour enquiries on bus and underground travel contact London Transport (tel: (020) 7222 1234). For enquiries about rail services, contact National Rail Enquiries (tel: (0345) 484 950). Maps and leaflets are widely available.

**The Underground:** The 'tube' is the oldest and one of the most extensive underground railway networks in the world. There are 13 lines, including the Docklands Light Railway, and some - such as the Central and the Metropolitan - extend well into the surrounding suburbs. Each line has its own colour on the network map, copies of which are widely available. Some lines operate certain sections during peak hours and some stations close altogether in the evenings or at

weekends. There is also an extensive network of overground rail services in the London area, particularly in the southeast, many of which connect with Underground services. All of the railway terminus stations connect with at least one Underground line, with the exception of Fenchurch Street (which is, however, virtually adjacent to Tower Hill station on the District Line). Various travel discounts are available. The one-day Travelcard offers unlimited travel on bus, Underground and overground rail services in one or more zones; it is one of the best methods for visitors to travel throughout London. Weekly and monthly Travelcards require a passport-size photograph. Note: The maps of the Underground and overground rail networks are diagrammatic, and do not indicate the relative distances between stations.

**Bus:** London is served by an excellent network of buses (about 300 routes), although recent policy has been to cut some of the lesser-used services. Some operate only partial routes at specific times or may discontinue service in the evenings or at weekends. During rush hours, bus travel in central London can become agonisingly slow, although the introduction of bus lanes and 'red routes' on some roads has partly improved this situation. There is a good timetabled network of night bus services, and all routes passing through central London call at Trafalgar Square.

**Taxi/car hire:** Black cabs can be hailed in the street or ordered by phone. Fares are metered but surcharges are levied for extra passengers, large amounts of luggage, travel at night, and on Sundays or public holidays. Over 3000 new black cabs have facilities for wheelchair-bound passengers. Mini-cabs and cars for hire are also available; numbers are listed in the Yellow Pages telephone directory.

**River transport:** Leisure and commuter services on the River Thames are run by a variety of private companies, including Collins River Enterprises, which operates a commuter service between Canary Wharf and Savoy Pier. The other main commuter service is between Chelsea Harbour and Embankment. At weekends, there are a variety of cruises and pleasure trips. For further information, contact London Travel Information (tel: (020) 7222 1234; web site: <http://www.londontransport.co.uk>).

## 7 ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is available at hotels, motels and posthouses, guest-houses, farm houses, inns and self-catering establishments and on campsites.

**HOTELS:** It is rare to find a town in England, however small, which does not have at least one hotel, in villages very often doubling as the local pub. Some London hotels, for example the Savoy, are famous the world over but there are many newer first-class hotels. In addition, there are many smaller hotels throughout the larger cities; in London, Earl's Court and the area around King's Cross are famous for their many streets of small hotels bearing such names as the Apollo, Victoria or Albany. For further information, contact the British Hospitality Association, Queen's House, 55-56 Lincolns Inn Fields, London WC2A 3BH (tel: (020) 7404 7744; fax: (020) 7404 7799; e-mail: [bha@bha.org.uk](mailto:bha@bha.org.uk); web site: <http://www.bha-online.org.uk>).

**Grading:** Over the past three years, the AA, RAC and English Tourism Council have collectively worked towards harmonising inspection standards and ratings of hotels and guest accommodation. The introduction of new quality standards on September 13 2000 has simplified the rating system. Hotels are classified by use of a star rating system and guest accommodation by a diamond rating system. The new classification scheme will apply to all hotels and guest accommodation inspected in England. Although the Scottish and Welsh tourist boards operate

separate accommodation classification schemes, the star and diamond ratings will apply to Welsh and Scottish hotels and guest accommodation inspected by the RAC and AA. The hotel classifications are as follows:

**1-star:** Clean and comfortable accommodation, with a minimum of six bedrooms, three-quarters of which will have en suite/private facilities. Range of facilities will include a lounge area, alcohol licence, lunch availability option and dining facilities for evening meals.

**2-star:** Accommodation offering more extensive facilities including colour TV and private/en suite facilities in all bedrooms, a lunch availability option and a restaurant serving evening meals.

**3-star:** The range of facilities increases and includes a laundry service. More emphasis is placed on the quality and comfort of bedrooms, including remote-control TVs. Staffing levels and quality are of a good standard. Full dinner service, light snacks and lunches are available to residents and non-residents.

**4-star:** Includes hotels with extensive accommodation and smaller luxury hotels, which provide high standards of service and an even wider range of facilities. These include a dry cleaning service and a superior standard of décor, furnishings and fittings in all bedrooms. All en suite/private facilities will include baths with overhead showers. At least one restaurant will be open daily to residents and non-residents, for all meals. A full lunch service will be available in a restaurant, brasserie or similar.

**5-star:** The highest classification, with an extensive range of facilities and services, including excellent staff, high quality service and a luxurious standard of décor, furnishings and fittings. All rooms have en suite facilities which include baths fitted with overhead showers, bath robes and bath sheets. All colour TVs offer cable and satellite channels, along with video channels. Additional fax and computer points may be provided. Brochures, booklets and leaflets giving full information on accommodation are available from the English Tourism Council or any of the regional tourist boards.

**GUEST-HOUSES:** There are guest-houses and bed & breakfast facilities throughout the country. Under the new quality standards, guest-houses, inns and farm houses providing bed & breakfast services are classified by a diamond rating system. For listings, contact the appropriate regional tourist board for more information. The classifications are as follows:

**1-diamond:** Clean and comfortable accommodation. Services include a full-cooked or continental breakfast. Probably no private bathrooms or en suite facilities in bedrooms. Limited range of additional facilities and accessories in bedrooms (eg colour TV, radio, kettle, hairdryer and reading material).

**2-diamond:** A higher standard of facilities, comfort and quality, with greater emphasis on guest care.

**3-diamond:** An increased standard of comfort and range of facilities, with good levels of customer care. At least 40% of all bedrooms have private bathrooms or en suite facilities.

**4-diamond:** Good customer care and facilities. A very good level of quality and comfort.

**5-diamond:** Excellent overall level of quality in facilities, accessories, customer care, décor and furnishings and a high standard of maintenance. At least 80% of all rooms have private bathrooms or en suite facilities.

**SELF-CATERING:** Cottages and bungalows can be rented in many areas. For information contact the regional tourist board or look in the relevant section in local and national papers. Standards may vary. Grading: The English Tourism Council has a 'key' classification system:

**1-key:** Clean and comfortable, adequate heating, lighting and seating, TV, cooker, fridge and crockery.

**2-key:** Colour TV, easy chairs or sofas for all occupants, fridge with icemaker, bedside units or shelves, plus heating in all rooms.

**3-key:** Dressing tables, bedside lights, linen and towels available, vacuum cleaner, iron/ironing board.

**4-key:** All sleeping in beds or bunks, supplementary lighting in living areas, more kitchen equipment, use of an automatic washing machine and tumble dryer.

**5-key:** Automatically controlled heating, own washing machine and tumble dryer, bath and shower, telephone, dishwasher, microwave and fridge freezer.

**CAMPING/CARAVANNING:** There are camping and caravan sites throughout the UK, for short and long stays. Some sites hire out tents or caravans. Most sites offer basic facilities, while some have playgrounds, clubs, shops, phones and sporting areas.

**HOLIDAY CAMPS:** Offer accommodation, food and a full range of leisure activities generally at an all-inclusive price.

**YOUTH HOSTELS:** Standards vary greatly, from very basic night-time accommodation for hikers and cyclists, to modern hostels and motels which are often used by families and groups. Prices are very reasonable. For information contact the Youth Hostel Association, 8 St Stephen's Hill, St Albans AL1 2DY (tel: (0870) 870 8808; fax: (01727) 844 126; e-mail: customerservices@yha.org.uk; web site: <http://www.yha.org.uk>).

## 8 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

This section has been divided into 11 regions, following the divisions employed by the English Tourist Board. Except in the case of Dorset (which is split between the South West and Southern England) and the Peak District of Derbyshire (which comes under the North West), all these divisions follow county boundaries. At the head of each subsection is the address and telephone number of the local tourist board which can supply further information.

For further information on National Trust properties in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, **contact National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS** (tel: (020) 7222 9251; fax: (020) 7222 5097; e-mail: [lmkcls@smtp.ntrust.org.uk](mailto:lmkcls@smtp.ntrust.org.uk); web site: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>).

London

**The London Tourist Board & Convention Bureau:** The London Tourist Board & Convention Bureau, 6th Floor, Glen House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5LT (tel: (020) 7932 2000; fax: (020) 7932 0222; e-mail: [enquiries@londontouristboard.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@londontouristboard.co.uk); web site: <http://www.londontown.com>).

London is a city without an easily recognisable centre, a result of the fact that it grew out of two **distinct cities:** the City of London, the site of the original Roman settlement and, further west, the City of Westminster. Before long, these two settlements had grown together and were engulfing surrounding villages and hamlets. It was not until the Green Belt legislation of the 1950s that this expansion was halted. Today, the 32 London boroughs and the City of London cover an area of nearly 385 sq km, but the way in which the city has grown has left it with a

comparatively low population density as well as a great deal of open parkland, commons and even woods. The Central Area of London, roughly bounded by the Circle Line of the Underground, includes the West End, Westminster and the City of London. The West End contains many of the principal theatres, cinemas, restaurants, cafés, hotels and nightclubs, as well as some of the best-known shopping areas, such as Oxford Street, Covent Garden, Regent Street and Bond Street. The main places of interest in this area include Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, the British Museum, Buckingham Palace, the buildings of the Horse Guards in Whitehall, and the Tate Britain in Bankside. The latter has been renamed recently after the opening, on May 12 2000, of a second Tate gallery - the Tate Modern on the south bank of the river Thames (see below for details). The buildings of the Tate Britain have undergone extensive redevelopment, including additional galleries and improved facilities for the disabled. The newly refurbished Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, home to the Royal Ballet and Royal Opera, reopened in December 1999. The restored Floral Hall now has daytime access, and daily backstage tours are also available. Information on performances and details of booking are available on the information line (tel: (020) 7212 9123). At the Rock Circus, created by the Tussaud's Group, the story of rock and pop music is brought to life. The Courtauld Institute paintings are on display at Somerset House (which formerly housed records of births, marriages and deaths). Further west, in Kensington and Chelsea, are several other famous shopping streets (King's Road, Knightsbridge and Portobello Road), as well as three of London's largest museums (the Victoria & Albert, Science and Natural History), and the Royal Albert Hall, home of the Promenade Concerts during the summer. The central area of London also contains four parks: Hyde Park (by far the largest), St James's Park, Green Park and, slightly further north, Regent's Park. The City of London, with a population of less than 5000, is, during the day, the workplace of over half a million people. Its best-known building is St Paul's Cathedral, completed in 1711. The Museum of London, near St Paul's, is one of the most comprehensive city museums in the world and tells the story of London from prehistoric times to the present day. On permanent display is the famous Lord Mayor of London's coach, which carries the Lord Mayor through the streets of the City in the annual Lord Mayor's Show. Clearly visible from the City, although in fact just beyond its boundaries and in the neighbouring borough of Tower Hamlets, is The Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror in the 11th century. Near here you will find the Tower Hill Pageant, a history of the River Thames. The Bank of England, the Stock Exchange, Lloyd's of London (the world's leading insurance market), Mansion House (the official residence of the Lord Mayor), the Central Criminal Court ('The Old Bailey'), Dr Johnson's House behind Fleet Street, the Monument and the Royal Exchange are other famous landmarks; a more recent addition to the City skyline is the Barbican Centre containing an arts complex which is home to both the Royal Shakespeare Company and the London Symphony Orchestra. Tower Bridge is one of the most famous bridges in the world, and it is possible to visit the control room containing the machinery for raising and lowering the central section and to walk along the overhead walkway. HMS Belfast, which can be viewed from the bridge, is moored at Symons Wharf near Tooley Street and is open to visitors. The City is best explored during evenings, weekends or public holidays. Its narrow alleyways and passages contain impressive but often half-hidden 17th- and 18th-century buildings. Contact the London Tourist Board for details of organised walks.

**South of the Thames:** South of the Thames: The South Bank Arts Centre, near Waterloo Station, is among the most famous and accessible attractions south of the river; it contains the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Festival Hall. In this complex, too, can be found MOMI (the Museum of the Moving Image) which traces the story of moving images from the earliest cinematic experiments to the latest TV technology. Nearby is The Old Vic, recently refurbished and one of London's best-known theatres. Southwark Cathedral, near London Bridge, is one of the finest Gothic churches in the city. Also in Southwark is an authentic reconstruction of the famous Shakespeare Globe Theatre (web site: <http://www.shakespeares-globe.org>), and nearby the site of the similar Rose Theatre was discovered. The new Tate Modern gallery is located in

the redeveloped Bankside Power Station opposite St Paul's Cathedral. The Tate Modern's collection includes major works by Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Salvador Dali, Francis Bacon, Jackson Pollock and Andy Warhol. Admission is free (except for special exhibitions). A new foot bridge will link the gallery with the north bank near St Paul's cathedral. Another new attraction in the area is the British Airways London Eye ferris wheel which, at 137m (450 ft) is the world's highest observation wheel and London's fourth tallest structure. Visitors can catch the view from one of the wheel's 32 passenger capsules (air-conditioned during summer and heated during winter). Trips last 30 minutes. Other attractions near the river include the Imperial War Museum in Lambeth, Lambeth Palace, the Florence Nightingale Museum, based at St Thomas' Hospital, Battersea Park and, further west, the Botanical Gardens (and palace) at Kew, and Richmond Park, where thousands of deer are free to graze. A 15-minute journey by train from Charing Cross is Greenwich, home of the National Maritime Museum, the clipper Cutty Sark (one of the fastest ships before, and at times even after, the Age of Steam), the Royal Naval College and the Royal Observatory Greenwich, through which runs the Greenwich Meridian, zero degrees longitude, dividing east from west. The Observatory has a permanent exhibition The Story of Time. In Greenwich you can also find the Queen's House which has recently been restored to its 17th-century glory. Over 2000 fans are displayed at the relatively new Fan Museum in Greenwich. Other attractions in south London include the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace, the All England Tennis Club at Wimbledon, the attractive 'village' of Dulwich, which has the oldest art gallery in England, and Brunel's Engine House in Rotherhithe, the site of the world's first underwater tunnel.

**West London:** West London: London's two major exhibition centres, Earl's Court and Olympia, are situated slightly to the west of the central London area. The Boat Show and the Ideal Home Exhibition are among their principal events. Not far away, Whiteley's of Bayswater is an Edwardian shopping centre comprising over 80 shops, restaurants and a multi-screen cinema. Chiswick House in Chiswick is a superb Italian-style villa. Further west are Syon Park in Brentford (which includes a beautiful 16th-century house) and the London Butterfly House; nearby is the Musical Museum, the Living Steam Museum and the Waterman's Arts Centre. South of Brentford and Chiswick are several elegant riverside houses which are open to the public, the greatest of these being Hampton Court Palace, built by Cardinal Wolsey in the early 16th century and added to by Henry VIII, Charles I, Charles II and William III; others include the Orleans House Gallery, Ham House and Marble Hill House. Wembley Arena and Conference Centre is in northwest London. Wembley Stadium, England's international football venue, closed in September 2000. The new stadium is due for completion in 2003. The August Bank Holiday weekend is celebrated in the Notting Hill area with the famous Carnival.

**North London:** North London contains the fashionable residential area of Hampstead, set on a steep hill to the north of central London. Hampstead Heath is one of the largest expanses of parkland to be found in any big city anywhere in the world. Hampstead itself has many narrow twisting streets and alleyways and numerous cafés, restaurants, wine bars and shops. Places to visit include Burgh House, Kenwood House (a Georgian country house, which contains a fine collection of paintings, set in beautiful parkland) and Keats' House (the poet's former house, now a museum). Slightly to the east, and also on a hill, is Highgate, another attractive former village, best known for its cemetery which includes the graves of Karl Marx and George Eliot. In St John's Wood visitors can take the Gestetner Tours of Lords' Cricket Ground.

**East London:** East London and in particular the East End (Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, Mile End and Bow) is in many ways the 'real London', although the architecture of this part of the capital suffered badly both during the Second World War and at the hands of the urban planners in the 1960s. Today the City is encroaching on the traditional East End areas of Whitechapel and Aldgate. The Whitechapel Art Gallery is, however, a source of local pride. One major area of recreational redevelopment is the Lea Valley Park, which stretches from Hertfordshire to Bromley-

by-Bow in the East End and has extensive leisure and recreational facilities. Attractions include the 16th-century Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge in Chingford and the 11th-century Waltham Abbey. Of more recent construction is the remarkable Thames Flood Barrier, situated down-river from Greenwich. The renovated St Katharine's Dock is now a yacht harbour and at Wapping there are many old warehouses, the majority of which have been converted into homes and amenities - a process which is under way throughout East London. Here can be found Tobacco Dock, a leisure complex with restaurants and entertainment. Two replica 18th-century pirate ships are moored at the quayside. The whole docklands area, on both banks of the river, is undergoing much redevelopment, and a light railway, the Docklands Light Railway, opened in 1987, giving greater access to the area of the Isle of Dogs. A separate development, Canary Wharf, with its 245m-high (800ft) tower, was completed in 1992. Walks along the river and in the dockland areas are often very rewarding, offering unexpected glimpses of 18th- and 19th-century London. The new Docklands Museum, which highlights the history of London's river and port industry and communities, is due to open in a listed warehouse on West India Quay in early 2001.

**London in literature:** London in literature: The Tower of London and the royal palaces have probably had more written about them in works of historical romance than anywhere else. But, these aside, it is the works of Charles Dickens, in particular, that have coloured visitors' (and even Londoners') perceptions of the city, though it is probably true to say that, apart from the Inns of Court, very little remains of the London he depicted - not even the famous pea-souper (London fog) famously described in Bleak House. The site of the debtors' prison in Marshalsea Road (into which Mr Pickwick was cast) retains squalid associations even now. It is perhaps worth bearing in mind that many of the changes (though certainly not all) would have been welcomed by Dickens; London is, to some extent, the result of the impact of his works. The most famous fictional inhabitant of London is undoubtedly Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes (who, as a fictional recipient of fan mail, probably comes second only to Santa Claus). The Sherlock Holmes Museum has recently opened at 221B Baker Street, with a representation of his apartment. Of the diarists who have strong associations with London, Pepys occupies the first place; his account of the plague in 1665 and of the Fire of London in 1666 resonates through places that have long since changed their character. There are many tours based on London's literary associations. The reconstruction of the Globe Theatre in Southwark gives visitors the chance to see Shakespeare's plays in their original setting.

**Tours:** Tours: Addresses of companies that offer guided tours of London and the surrounding area (either by car or on foot) may be obtained from the London Tourist Board or Tourist Information Centres. The London Tourist Board and the individual borough councils also produce a range of booklets and pamphlets giving information on events and attractions in the capital; these range from street markets, sports centres, guided walks, fringe theatre to festivals and flower shows. There is a great variety of entertainment in the capital, not all restricted to the centre.

South East

East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex.

**South East England Tourist Board:** South East England Tourist Board, The Old Brew House, Warwick Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5TU (tel: (01892) 540 766; fax: (01892) 511 008; e-mail: enquiries@seetb.org.uk; web site: <http://www.SouthEastEngland.uk.com>).

The sparkling array of seaside resorts, such as Brighton, Eastbourne, Margate and Worthing, are as popular now as they were with 18th-century patrons. With safe beaches, seafront gardens, piers (except Margate) and promenades, they all are strongly associated with the great British seaside holiday.



**Brighton:** Brighton is perhaps the most popular and lively of the south-east resorts, made famous by the Prince Regent (later George IV) who had the remarkable Pavilion constructed here. There are splendid 19th-century terraces and crescents, two piers, the 'Lanes' area of antique shops, a museum and an art gallery. Brighton also has a vibrant nightlife with many restaurants, pubs and clubs.

Other resorts include Dover, famous for the White Cliffs, the remains of the Pharos, a Phoenician lighthouse, and the Norman Dover Castle with the new White Cliffs Experience. Hythe, formerly one of the Cinque Ports, still contains three Martello Towers. There are Roman remains at Saltwood Castle and Lympne Castle. The former port of Rye has a medieval atmosphere and retains its 14th-century walls, albeit crumbling.

**Behind the resorts spread the South Downs:** an expanse of farmland, hills and woods, with the South Downs Way (a long-distance footpath) stretching some 130km (80 miles) from Eastbourne to the Hampshire border. Nestling at the foot of the Downs is the historic county town of Lewes, with its famous castle and picturesque High Street, while nearby the world-renowned opera house of Glyndebourne sits in its own grounds and welcomes the greatest singers from all over the world each year for its summer season. There are many villages of interest in the area including half-timbered Biddenden and Chiddingstone, and the old smuggling centres of Rye, Dymchurch, Hawkhurst and Alfriston, all of which are on the boundaries of the Romney marshes. There remain, to this day, smuggling tunnels under the town of Rye and there are ancient escape routes across the marshes that only the smugglers would dare to use. Other places of interest include Runnymede, the riverside fields where the Magna Carta was signed; the historic town of Guildford in Surrey; and Hever Castle in Kent, the childhood home of Anne Boleyn.

The North Downs stretch from Surrey into Kent. Curving across the hills from Farnham to Dover is another long-distance footpath, the North Downs Way. This merges in places with the traditional Pilgrims' Way leading to the archiepiscopal city of Canterbury, which retains its medieval charms. Thomas à Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170. It is also the centre of the Anglican Church. St Martin's Church is one of the oldest churches in use in the country and services were held as far back as AD500.

The Kent countryside has been dubbed the 'Garden of England' for its copious quantities of fruit, hops and garden produce. The best time to visit is in April or May when the orchards and woodlands are clouded with blossom. Rochester in Kent is a charming old town and has strong connections with Dickens, including Restoration House, which is thought to be the prototype for Miss Haversham's house in Great Expectations.

**The South East offers an excellent choice of bases for longer stays or weekends away:** the elegant spa of Tunbridge Wells; Maidstone, in the centre of the hop-growing country; Chichester, in West Sussex, with its lively harbour and 12th-century cathedral.

The South East has many historic houses and gardens, such as Penshurst Place, Leeds Castle, the Martello Towers at Dymchurch, Seaford and Eastbourne and numerous castles and battlefields which bear witness to the area's position as the invader's gateway to England.

Central Southern England

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Eastern Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire.

**Southern Tourist Board:** Southern Tourist Board, 40 Chamberlayne Road, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 5JH (tel: (02380) 625 400; fax: (02380) 620 010; e-mail: [stbinfo@org.uk](mailto:stbinfo@org.uk); web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>).

The area embraces spectacular coastline, historic towns and cities and some of the best-known beauty spots in the country.

To the west lie the seaside resorts of Bournemouth, Poole and Swanage. In the east, Southern England can lay claim to two of the greatest maritime centres, Southampton and Portsmouth, each with a naval heritage and a host of attractions to see.

Also in the area are the picturesque Hamble and Test valleys with their famous chalk streams. To the north lie the Hampshire Borders with their wealth of pretty villages and rolling countryside.

**Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight: Less than two hours by train from London (and a short car ferry or passenger ride from Southampton, Portsmouth or Lymington), the Isle of Wight, with its beautiful countryside, rugged downland, unspoilt coastline and mile after mile of sandy beaches, is blessed with one of the best sunshine records in the country. A stay there can be quiet and relaxing or sporting and energetic; the island has all the ingredients to make it unforgettable. Craft centres, country parks, historic buildings, sporting and leisure facilities, the island with its stunning contrasts in scenery and entertainment is often described as 'England in Miniature'. Cowes, world famous for yachting, also plays host to many national and international events, from sailing to power boating. Traditional English and foreign restaurants, cafés, pubs and wine bars provide a wide ranging choice of cuisine which can be complemented with a local wine from one of the island's five vineyards.

**Dorset:** Dorset is a delightful county that has plenty for everyone, including historic towns, pretty villages nestling in idyllic English countryside, scenic coastline and lively resorts. Called the 'Garden City by the sea', the Dorset resort of Bournemouth, just two hours from London, is foremost among British holiday locations for its sense of style. It has fine sandy beaches, excellent shopping, top-class entertainment and comfortable hotels and flats, making the town an ever-popular holiday resort.

Nearby Poole has the second-largest natural harbour in the world and the lovely island nature reserve of Brownsea lies in its midst. Pleasure boats wait at the quayside and regularly make the short trip over. The Tower Park leisure complex offers a host of up-to-the-minute entertainments. The town's old Quay retains its 18th-century atmosphere and has become an ideal location for displaying maritime influences on the area. The new waterfront museum can be visited here. Just to the west of Poole is an area known as the Isle of Purbeck. The coastline is full of variety and is known for its dramatic scenery and the popular holiday resort of Swanage.

A little further westwards is the holiday town of Weymouth, with its 'Blue Flag' award beach, panoramic Georgian Bay and picturesque harbour. There are entertainments and activities for all the family plus many top attractions and events including the Brewer's Quay leisure and shopping development.

**Portland:** Portland, joined to Weymouth by the Chesil Beach and causeway, is a fascinating island. Famous for its stone, the island also has several castles, a lighthouse and small, sheltered coves.

Lying inland, northeast of Weymouth, is Shaftesbury, Dorset's most ancient hilltop town, characterised by steep cobbled streets. Slightly to the south is the handsome 18th-century town of Blandford Forum. A little further southeast is Wimborne Minster, a small market town, with the distinction of having one of the most unusual churches in Dorset.

**Hampshire:** Hampshire: Lovers of the sea and open spaces will delight in this county. The region is one of great natural beauty but also enjoys the benefits of up-to-the-minute shopping, leisure facilities and nightlife. The county is justly famous for the New Forest, 376km (145 sq miles) of open heathland, where ponies, deer and cattle roam freely. The New Forest was decreed a Royal Hunting Preserve in 1079 and is a haven for riders and walkers; there are lots of lovely places to stay and campsites are plentiful. Beaulieu Motor Museum and Bucklers Hard are well worth a visit.

**Southampton:** Southampton is one of the most rapidly expanding cities on the South Coast with exciting new marinas, leisure facilities and shopping malls including the Waterfront, Ocean Village and the new Bargate shopping centre.

There is a wealth of maritime history in the neighbouring city of Portsmouth - HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, the Mary Rose and the Royal Naval Museum. The D-Day Museum at Southsea tells the story of the 1944 allied Normandy landings.

**Winchester:** Winchester, in central Hampshire, and Romsey to the south are worth including in any itinerary. Winchester has a magnificent 11th-century Cathedral and is surrounded by the most lovely rolling countryside. Romsey is an attractive old market town proud to be associated with Broadlands, the 18th-century home of Lord Mountbatten.

Yachtsmen are well catered for in Hampshire. Lymington is a very attractive small town lying on the edge of the New Forest, with its own pretty harbour. Hamble to the east is a mecca for yachtsmen, the Hamble River providing good sheltered moorings, making it an ideal place to start a cruise around its waters or over to the Isle of Wight.

The Hampshire Borders, in the north of the county, have some lovely countryside and the area is home to a past winner of the Best Kept Village competition, Hartley Wintney. There are a number of historic houses in the region and lots of military museums. A wide variety of accommodation can be found in and around Basingstoke, making it a good base from which to explore and the area is well connected by road and rail to London. The Thames, with its many riverside pubs and hotels, winds its way through attractive and colourful towns and villages such as Abingdon and Wallingford and the regatta towns of Marlow and Henley. The ancient university city of Oxford also lies on the Thames. The college buildings, gardens, squares, cathedral and gracious streets that make up this historic city are probably best appreciated on foot or on an open-top bus tour. Northwest of Oxford, on the fringes of the Cotswolds, is the impressive Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill. The Cotswold Wildlife Park and Broughton Castle are situated in Oxfordshire.

Almost on the outskirts of London but still on the Thames, is Windsor, dominated by its famous castle. For the 900 years since William the Conqueror, Windsor has been a royal residence. The fire of 1992 destroyed large parts of the State Apartments, but these have now been renovated. Guided tours of the town are available, as well as bus tours and river cruises. At Windsor's Central Station a recreation of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897 brings famous Victorian figures to life using the latest computerised techniques. Across a footbridge lies Eton, home of the famous college founded by Henry VI. Nearby are the 4800 acres of Windsor Great Park, with its glorious gardens.

The Berkshire Downs are criss-crossed with ancient by-ways and dotted with interesting towns and villages. There is Wantage, birthplace of King Alfred the Great, and Newbury, home of the famous racecourse and annual Spring Festival. In the beautiful Kennet Valley lies Hungerford, known for its unusual antiques arcade. Astride the River Lambourn at Bagnor, near Newbury, stands the jewel-box Watermill Theatre, renowned for its varied and entertaining plays.

**Buckinghamshire:** Buckinghamshire has been called the Queen of the Home Counties. It boasts many picturesque villages and fine old towns such as Olney and Buckingham, as well as the new city of Milton Keynes in the north, with its extensive covered shopping centre. The River Ouse and the Grand Union Canal flow through the north of the county, and the Thames through the south, with the magnificent beechwoods of the Chilterns running along its eastern edge. The county's historic houses include Cliveden and Hughenden Manor.

The West Country

Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Western Dorset, Isles of Scilly.

**The South West Tourist Board:** The South West Tourist Board, Woodwater Park, Exeter EX2 5WT (tel: (0870) 442 0830; fax: (0870) 442 0840; e-mail: post@swtourism.co.uk; web site: <http://www.westcountrynow.com>).

The superb West Country resorts, together with 1000km (650 miles) of varied and spectacular coastline, have always been a great attraction for holidaymakers.

The coastline of Cornwall, which has both the southernmost and westernmost points on the English mainland, is characterised by tiny harbours, rocky headlands and magnificent cliffs. The north coast, washed by Atlantic breakers, has particularly good stretches of fine golden sandy beaches. Bude, the picturesque harbour at Boscastle and the clifftop castle at Tintagel are worth visiting. Newquay is the region's main resort, and has excellent beaches, good shops and hotels that combine the best of old and new. Beloved by surfers, Newquay's Fistral Beach hosts several surfing events. The Newquay Surfing Festival takes place in May, and the British National Surf Championships are in August. St Ives is an old fishing port and a delightful holiday centre.

The south coast is in complete contrast, generally less dramatic, with many wooded estuaries, sheltered coves, picturesque fishing ports and several popular resorts. There are excellent facilities for sailing and deep-sea fishing at Penzance and Fowey. Falmouth, a town of many beaches and several beautiful gardens, is the main resort. Mevagissey and Looe are fine examples of traditional Cornish fishing ports. The coastline is also notable for its old smuggling villages, such as Coverack.

Inland Cornwall consists mainly of flower-bordered lanes, gentle valleys and granite-capped moors. The three main towns inland are Bodmin, Launceston and the cathedral city of Truro. Bodmin Moor is an area of stark natural beauty, and the setting for Daphne du Maurier's famous novel Jamaica Inn.

**Devon:** Devon: The area known as the English Riviera comprises Torquay, Brixham and Paignton. The major city in this region is Plymouth, a principal English seaport for over 500 years and the place where Westcountryman Sir Francis Drake famously finished his game of bowls before setting sail to defeat the Spanish Armada. In 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers set out for the New World from Plymouth on the Mayflower, and parts of the town dating from this period still survive. Seaside trips in this region can also be combined with holidays inland into the peaceful wilderness of the Dartmoor National Park where native wild ponies roam freely across a beautiful landscape dotted with prehistoric remains. The county town, Exeter, has a long history and there are remains of Roman walls, underground passages, a beautiful cathedral and the oldest Guildhall in the Kingdom.

**Western Dorset:** Western Dorset: Virtually all of the coast and much of the inland regions of the county has been designated an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Along the coast from Christchurch to Lyme Regis there is a fascinating variety of sandy beaches, towering cliffs and shingle banks, whilst inland is a rich mixture of lonely heaths, fertile valleys, historic houses and beautiful villages of thatch and mellow sandstone buildings. Weymouth is the main resort in this part of the county. Inland, the hills of Dorset abound with ancient trackways and early British hill forts; the county town of Dorchester was itself founded by the Romans.

The north of the county is a region of farms, woods and river valleys. The three main towns are Sherborne, Sturminster Newton and Shaftesbury.

**Somerset:** Somerset, another attractive rural county, has three fine coastal resorts, Weston-super-Mare, Burnham-on-Sea and Minehead. Much of west Somerset lies within the Exmoor National Park. Attractions in this region include the tiny Culbone Church, the clapper bridge at Tarr Steps, the idyllic villages of Selworthy and Dunster, and Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor. The county town of Taunton lies to the west of the county, near the southern end of the wooded Quantock Hills. The county's northern boundary is emphasised by the limestone range of the Mendip Hills. Along the southern edge are the attractions of the Cheddar Gorge,

Wookey Hole and the great cathedral at Wells. The south-eastern corner of the county around Yeovil has many historic houses open to the public.

Even in prehistoric times the inland county of Wiltshire proved attractive to early settlers, and the evidence of long occupation - at places such as Stonehenge, Avebury, Old Sarum and others - make Wiltshire the best county for exploring prehistoric remains. In addition, some of England's greatest stately homes are in Wiltshire, including Longleat, Wilton, Lacock Abbey, Corsham and Stourhead. Longleat is a very grand Elizabethan mansion, famous for its lions, and Stourhead, built in 1722, has particularly fine gardens leading down to its own lake.

The city of Salisbury is dominated by the 123m (404ft) cathedral spire, the tallest in England. The grounds of Salisbury Cathedral contain many notable houses that are open to the public.

Mompesson House is a perfectly preserved 18th-century home and Malmesbury House was once sanctuary for King Charles II, who was fleeing after the Battle of Worcester in the 17th century.

The city has a harmonious blend of gabled houses, historic inns and 18th-century architecture and offers a great choice of hotels, restaurants and shopping. Guided tours can be taken around the city by open-top bus or horse-drawn omnibus. The Barchester Chronicles of Anthony Trollope, which provide an entertaining account of life in a 19th-century cathedral town, are a fictional evocation of Salisbury. The remains of Old Sarum, an ancient city and Norman fortress, can be seen but the most important site is Stonehenge, 3km (2 miles) away on Salisbury Plain. The enormous stones are arranged in an inner and an outer circle, and the site is believed to have been first used as long ago as 1500BC.

**Further west there are two cities of note:** Bristol, which is one of the largest ports in the country (the Cathedral and St Mary Redcliffe Church are worth seeing, as is Brunel's impressive Clifton Suspension Bridge, which spans the Avon Gorge) and Bath, which is usually regarded as the most elegant Georgian city in the country, and has been immortalised in countless photographs, paintings and novels. The city also has Roman remains and an abbey.

Historical and literary associations can be found in many places throughout the West Country; King Alfred reputedly burnt his cakes at Athelney, while Cadbury may have been Camelot. R D Blackmore's novel Lorna Doone was set in Exmoor (now a national park), while many of Daphne du Maurier's books were set in Cornwall. Lyme Regis, in Dorset, was one of Jane Austen's favourite towns, and, along with Bath, was one of the settings for her novel Persuasion. John Fowles' novel The French Lieutenant's Woman is also set in Lyme Regis. Dorchester is the birthplace of Thomas Hardy, the West Country's most famous literary figure, who immortalised both this town and much of the surrounding countryside - referred to in his books as 'Wessex', the name of the old Saxon kingdom in that area. Hardy's cottage lies 5km (3 miles) out of town. The museum in Dorchester contains many pre-Roman exhibits and a Thomas Hardy memorial room. Maiden Castle, 3km (2 miles) from Dorchester, is one of the most impressive prehistoric sites in the country.

The Isles of Scilly lie 50km (30 miles) off Land's End. Though there are about a hundred of them, only five are inhabited. They are a popular holiday destination, as the climate is warmer and more temperate than on the mainland. The tourism industry was undoubtedly boosted when, during his prime ministership, it became known that Harold Wilson had a holiday home there. Horticulture is now the islands' second-largest industry. Boat trips to visit the smaller islands are popular, particularly from St Mary's, the largest of the islands. The Isles of Scilly can be reached by ferry or helicopter.

Heart of England

Gloucestershire, Derby, Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Leicester, Nottingham, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, the West Midlands.

**Heart of England Tourist Board:** Heart of England Tourist Board, Larkhill Road, Worcester, WR5 2EZ (tel: (01905) 763 436; fax: (01905) 763 450; e-mail: [market@heart-eng-tourist-board.org.uk](mailto:market@heart-eng-tourist-board.org.uk); web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>).

Some of the country's most famous landscapes lie in the Heart of England. Little has changed over the centuries in the Cotswolds, where gentle uplands are studded with beautiful old villages and towns, many of which are frequently built from the locality's yellow limestone and graced by magnificent churches erected chiefly from the wealth of the medieval wool trade.

Two important rivers cross this heartland. The River Severn winds through the old city of Worcester, skirting the Malvern Hills to meet the Avon at Tewkesbury. The River Avon flows past the fertile Vale of Evesham and passes Stratford-upon-Avon, home town of William Shakespeare. The dark mountains of Wales give way to the border area called The Marches and the English hills of Long Mynd, Wenlock Edge and Clun Forest. This area was once less tranquil than it is today and its turbulent past is indicated by ancient barrows, pre-Roman camps and the entrenchment of Offa's Dyke (now a long-distance footpath). In turn, the Normans and Plantagenets left remains of splendid castles at Shrewsbury, Goodrich and Ludlow, built to protect England from invasion.

The first sparks of the Industrial Revolution ignited at Ironbridge, now a showplace of industrial archaeology, while in neighbouring Staffordshire, where the scenery rises to peaks and moorland, that same era bequeathed a legacy of canals (now popular for pleasure-craft) and the Potteries with their famous china factories.

**Gloucestershire & The Cotswolds:** Gloucestershire & The Cotswolds: This region comprises a range of low limestone hills stretching in a curve from Bath to the vicinity of Stratford-upon-Avon. The charming and well-preserved towns and villages of the Cotswolds are built in a honey-coloured stone, and are set in one of the finest areas of unspoilt countryside in England. Historically, the area's wealth was based on sheep farming and the wool industry, and sheep are still very much in evidence today. The area is accessible by road from London, and many of the towns by rail from London Paddington. Gloucester is an old cathedral city on the River Severn. Many of the streets and parts of the old city wall date back to the Middle Ages. The revitalised docks now have massive warehouses which are gradually being filled. The National Waterways Museum, the Marina and Tall Ships, plus the fascinating Opie Collection of Packaging, are open to the public. Cheltenham, an elegant Regency spa town, is famous for its National Hunt Racecourse and annual music and literature festival. The flowers and gardens of the suburbs are also worth seeing. Malmesbury contains a fine example of Norman building in its abbey, the ruins of a 12th-century castle, a market square and several attractive 17th- and 18th-century houses. Cirencester contains extensive Roman remains and is a good centre for exploring the Cotswolds. To the east of the Wye Valley is the Forest of Dean, 130 sq km (50 sq miles) of ancient hunting forest, once the property of the medieval kings but now given over to trails and picnic sites.

**Herefordshire & Worcestershire:** Herefordshire & Worcestershire: The stretch of country between Worcester and the Welsh border is one of the richest farming areas in Great Britain, with orchards, fields and meadows full of cider apples, hops and white-faced red cattle. Characteristic black and white half-timbered buildings decorate the villages and market towns such as Ledbury. The Wye Valley, the Malvern Hills and the Teme Valley all add to the area's beauty.

The Wye Valley is an exceedingly beautiful region, with the river flowing at first through water meadows and gentle countryside but later winding its way through spectacular gorges in the region of Symonds Yat. The town of Ross-on-Wye provides a good base for exploring this area. Northwest of Ross is Hereford, also on the River Wye, an attractive cathedral city and a thriving market centre. There is a city museum and art gallery as well as a cider museum. Nell Gwynne was said to have been born here. To the west of Hereford is the Golden Valley, a remote region containing many attractive villages. At the northern tip of the valley on the Welsh border is the town of Hay-on-Wye, famous for having one of the largest second-hand bookshops in the world. The old city of Worcester on the bank of the River Severn has a cathedral, the museum and factory of the famous Royal Worcester Porcelain Company, a magnificent Guildhall with a Queen Anne façade and a number of streets with overhanging half-timbered houses from the Tudor

period. Worcester is also the ancient Commandey, once the battle headquarters of Charles II, and now housing a Civil War audio-visual display. South of Worcester are the Malvern Hills, a steep range topped with open moorland which offers superb views across the rich agricultural landscape. The spa town of Great Malvern was built as a fashionable spa resort in the 19th century; Malvern spring water can still be tasted at St Anne's Well. 32km (20 miles) north of Worcester is the Wyre Forest, ideal for walking and riding. The main towns in this region are Stourport, Bewdley and Kidderminster, terminus for the Severn Valley Railway, the longest full-gauge steam railway in England.

**Warwickshire & The West Midlands:** Warwickshire & The West Midlands: The industrial heart of Britain on the edge of some lovely countryside, particularly in Warwickshire. Birmingham, Britain's second-largest city, is a centre both of industry and culture. It has a magnificent library, and the Central Museum & Art Gallery is one of the finest in the country. Birmingham is the home of the National Exhibition Centre, site of many of the major exhibitions and fairs for which Britain is renowned. Birmingham also lies at the centre of a vast network of canals, most of which are still navigable. Canal holidays represent one of the best ways of seeing not only the countryside of the area but also some unusual views of the gaunt architecture of the industrial revolution in the cities. There are also many museums which trace the region's industrial past. Coventry is famous for its modern cathedral, designed by Sir Basil Spence after the original was destroyed in the Second World War. Warwick contains many 17th- and 18th-century houses and the castle, one of the most imposing medieval strongholds in the country, is open to visitors even though it is still inhabited. The Church of St Mary, the Lord Leycester Hospital and the Doll Museum are all worth visiting.

**Stratford-upon-Avon:** Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwickshire, is one of the most famous towns in the country. It was the birth and burial place of William Shakespeare, and the life and works of the great playwright are commemorated throughout the year in almost every aspect of the town's public life, chiefly through the productions of his works at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Other buildings in the town associated with Shakespeare include his birthplace in Henley Street, the 15th-century grammar school which he attended, the early home of his wife Anne Hathaway, the Shakespeare Centre, Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare and his family are buried, and Halls Croft, once the home of Shakespeare's daughter. Other buildings of note include the Motor Museum; the RSC's other venues, the Other Place and the Swan Theatre; and Harvard House, built in the late 16th century and owned by the family who founded the American University of the same name. The whole of Stratford is a beautifully preserved town, with many excellent examples of Elizabethan, Jacobean, Restoration and Georgian buildings. It makes an ideal centre for exploring the surrounding towns and countryside. Places of interest close to Stratford include Ragley Hall and Coughton Court near Alcester, Charlecote Park and Upton House, Edge Hill.

**Staffordshire:** Staffordshire is both an industrial and an agricultural county. Part of it lies within the Peak District National Park and contains some of the most spectacular countryside in England, such as Thor's Cave and the limestone gorge at Dovedale on the Derbyshire border. East of the industrial region of the Potteries lie the scenic Churnet Valley and the Vale of Trent, the latter containing Cannock Chase, an attractive area of heath and woodland. One of the most famous sights in the county is Lichfield Cathedral, which has three spires. Nearby Tamworth has a fine castle.

**Shropshire:** Shropshire is a county with a varied landscape, including moorlands, forests, gentle hills and open pastures. Despite this appearance of rural tranquility, Shropshire is also the county where the industrial revolution began, evidence of which may be seen in the area of Ironbridge Gorge, which includes the towns of Coalbrookdale, Coalport and Ironbridge. The Ironbridge Gorge Museum is spread out over a large number of sites but the area's most famous landmark is

probably the Ironbridge itself, built in 1779. On the eastern boundary of this district is the magnificent Restoration house and parkland known as Weston Park. Nearby is Boscobel where the future Charles II hid in the now famous Royal Oak after the Battle of Worcester. To the west is the area of The Wrekin, a conical-shaped hill that figures in many local tales and legends. The county's capital of Shrewsbury is one of the finest Tudor towns in England, celebrated for the flower market held every summer. South and southwest of Shrewsbury are the Shropshire Hills, designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty. Ludlow (dominated by the ruins of its castle), Church Stretton, Bishop's Castle, Much Wenlock and Bridgenorth are also worth visiting. The north of the county is dominated by a large plain with many quiet roads, making it ideally suited to a cycling or walking holiday. Market Drayton, Wem (famous for its beer), Whitchurch and Oswestry are the major market towns in this region.

## East Anglia

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk.

**East of England Tourist Board:** East of England Tourist Board, Toppesfield Hall, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 5DN (tel: (01473) 822 922; fax: (01473) 823 063; e-mail: eastofenglandtouristboard@compuserve.com; web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>).

The county of Essex has some lovely remote and unspoilt villages including Finchingfield, Thaxted (with its medieval church and windmill), Saffron Walden and Dunmow. Also in Essex are the well-known seaside resorts of Southend, Clacton-on-Sea and Maldon, a maritime town on the estuary of the River Blackwater. Colchester is the oldest continuously occupied town in the country with the Roman Walls still remaining. The town is a good base for exploring the neighbouring Constable Country.

A relatively under-exploited part of East Anglia is the marshland called the Fens, drained in the 17th and 18th centuries by Dutch engineers to create a system of canals. The main centres in the Fens are the cathedral cities of Peterborough and Ely, site of Cromwell House, home of Oliver Cromwell, which is open to the public. Not as famous is the heath area known as Breckland, now overgrown with pine forests. Many archaeological discoveries have been made here. Thetford is a good base from which to visit this area.

The towns in East Anglia show many examples of the wealthy past of the region. The late 14th, 15th and 16th centuries were a period of great prosperity, largely as a result of the wool trade; the architecture of towns such as Lavenham being superb testimony to the wealth of the Tudor wool merchants. Many of Cambridge's colleges were founded at this time and elsewhere in the region solid stone guildhalls, manor houses and thatched inns were built, as well as a wealth of churches. Because the towns largely escaped the influence of the Industrial Revolution, Norman castles, medieval churches, Tudor half-timbered houses and 18th-century mansions are still numerous.

**Cambridge:** Cambridge is famous for its university (the second oldest in the country) and gracious buildings, including Henry VI's Chapel at King's College, the Great Court at Trinity College, the Bridge of Sighs at St John's College and the Cloister Court at Queens' College. A river trip along the River Cam affords the best view of the colleges whose lawns sweep down to the river, a view known as 'the Backs'. Bear in mind that most of the colleges are closed to visitors during the examination periods in the early summer.

**Ipswich:** Ipswich, county town of Suffolk, retains much of its medieval street pattern and several of the buildings from this period remain. Kings Lynn is a medieval town, once one of the country's major ports. Aldeburgh is a pleasant and peaceful old fishing town. Norwich is an attractive city with a Norman cathedral, a castle with a museum and art gallery, and medieval houses set in narrow streets. The Maddermarket Theatre is an Elizabethan theatre with an apron stage. Over 160km (100 miles) of navigable waterways make up The Broads, an area of reed-



fringed lagoons and rivers, teeming with wildlife and waterfowl, and ideal for a boating holiday. In between many of the coastal resorts are secluded marshes and estuaries, popular among birdwatchers and yachtsmen.

The Great Ouse winds gently through the county of Bedfordshire, a region of great natural beauty, with a number of country parks and riverside walks. It has many historic connections, including the 4000-year-old Icknield Way and the Roman Watling Street, both crossing the county. John Bunyan is a famous son of Bedfordshire and many associations with him can be found in and around Bedford. The county's historic houses include Luton Hoo and Woburn Abbey, famous for its Safari Park. Animal lovers should also visit Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, southeast of Dunstable.

**Hertfordshire:** Hertfordshire is a region of gently undulating countryside. The historic town of St Albans contains many reminders of the town's great past when, as Verulamium, it was one of the great cities of the Roman Empire. The Verulamium Museum reveals these Roman connections through a nationally important collection of Iron Age and Roman artefacts. Other museums of note in the county include the Tring Zoological Museum, a branch of the British Museum; St Albans Organ Museum with its magnificent collection of fairground and dance-hall organs and the innovative Stevenage Museum, which tells the town's history from prehistory to the present through displays of everyday objects.

The region has many historic houses, including Audley End, Sandringham, Ickworth, Wimpole Hall, Hatfield House, Knebworth House, Woburn Abbey and Luton Hoo.

**Seaside resorts:** Seaside resorts Essex: Southend, Clacton, Walton, Frinton and Harwich. Norfolk: Cromer, Wells-next-the-Sea, Sheringham, where a steam railway operates daily in the summer, and Great Yarmouth, one of Britain's largest and most popular resorts. Suffolk: Lowestoft, as well as being a major resort, is also the home of England's main fishing fleet. To the south is Oulton Broad and the resort of Southwold. Beyond Southwold is Aldeburgh, home of a summer music festival. Hunstanton gives a magnificent view of the Wash, and is also notable for its red-and-white striped cliffs.

East Midlands

Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire.

**Heart of England Tourist Board:** Heart of England Tourist Board, Larkhill Road, Worcester, WR5 2EF (tel: (01905) 763 436; fax: (01905) 763 450; web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>).

**Historic houses make their presence felt throughout the area:** Chatsworth; medieval Haddon Hall; Althorp, family home of the late Diana, Princess of Wales; Sudbury Hall with its Museum of Childhood; the gardens at Melbourne Hall; and Elizabethan Doddington Hall. A strong sense of history can be felt throughout the region - in the cathedrals of Lincoln and Southwell, in Leicester's Guildhall, Nottingham's Castle and at Derby's Industrial Museum, and also in the wealth of churches, particularly in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

The traditional dining-table of this area reflects the presence of the English landed gentry over the centuries. Sporting specialities include game soup, flavoured with port wine; Melton Mowbray pork pies; and Melton Hunt Cake, made to a 120-year-old recipe. Red Leicester and Stilton cheeses and Bakewell Pudding are other local favourites.

The spa town of Buxton in Derbyshire, makes a good base from which to explore the Peak District, now a 1300 sq km (500 sq mile) National Park with limestone dales and open moors. Other places of interest in Derbyshire include Matlock Bath, with its cable car ride across the Derwent Gorge and show-caves to visit; Bolsover, a small market town with a 17th-century castle set in rich farmland; Creswell Crags, with the Visitor Centre at the site of archaeological finds such as Creswellian Man; Chesterfield, another convenient base for exploring the Peak District

and famous for its crooked-spire church; Chatsworth House, Baslow; Kedleston Hall, near Derby; and Sudbury Hall, Sudbury.

The county town of Derby is the home of Royal Crown Derby porcelain and the city's cathedral, museums and Assembly Rooms are all worth visiting.

**Nottinghamshire:** Nottinghamshire was the home of Robin Hood, and parts of his Sherwood Forest still survive in the Country Park. The city of Nottingham has a beautiful neo-Classical Council House, a castle which overlooks the city, and Wollaton Hall, an Elizabethan mansion now housing a natural history museum. North Nottinghamshire is a rural area with many old villages, and the home of several of the Pilgrim Fathers. Newark-on-Trent in the heart of the county has a 12th-century castle. Rufford County Park at Ollerton is also worth visiting.

**Lincolnshire:** Lincolnshire, the largest county in the East Midlands and the only one with a coastline, has several seaside resorts, notably Skegness and Mablethorpe, both of which are towns with good sunshine records. Inland are the gently rolling hills of the Lincolnshire Wolds, where Tennyson spent much of his early life. The area around Spalding is the richest farmland in the country, and is famous for growing bulbs. During the 12th century, Boston was one of the three most important ports in England, and from here many of the Pilgrim Fathers planned to set sail for The Netherlands to find religious freedom, but were betrayed and imprisoned in cells still in Boston Guildhall. The county town of Lincoln is a well-preserved medieval city and the Cathedral, set on a limestone hill, has three towers, a fine Norman west front and a particularly beautiful 13th-century presbytery. The aptly named Steep Hill has some interesting shops and the Jew's House, halfway up the incline, is worth a visit.

**Stamford:** Stamford, situated at the border of four counties, is another medieval town, with several fine churches and buildings of mellow stone. Nearby is Burghley House, built by one of Elizabeth I's most powerful ministers. The medieval Old Hall at Gainsborough in north Lincolnshire is also worth a visit.

The county of Leicestershire has many castles, manor houses and market towns. Leicester has Roman remains and a great deal of medieval architecture, but is nowadays more important as a major shopping centre. Other towns of interest in the county include Market Harborough, Oakham, Lutterworth (the home of John Wycliffe) and Melton Mowbray, the home of Stilton cheese and pork pies. Near Leicester is Market Bosworth, the site of one of the most famous battles in English history, when Henry Tudor defeated Richard III, the last Plantagenet king. Also worth visiting are Belvoir Castle near Melton Mowbray and Oakham Castle, with its collection of decorative horseshoes.

**Northamptonshire:** Northamptonshire is traversed by major road and rail links but most of the countryside remains unspoilt. One of the most attractive regions is the Rockingham Forest area, which contains several historic houses. Of Fotheringay Castle (where Mary Queen of Scots was executed in 1587) only the mound remains, but most of the other houses are in much better condition, and many are still occupied. Of these, Althorp (which has a museum on the grounds commemorating the late Diana, Princess of Wales) and Rockingham Castle, north of Corby, are particularly worth visiting. Other places of interest include the Nene Valley Steam Railway and the Central Museum in Northampton with its fine shoe collection.

The North West

Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, the High Peak District of Derbyshire.

**North West Tourist Board:** North West Tourist Board, Swan House, Swan Meadow Road, Wigan Pier, Wigan WN3 5BB (tel: (01942) 821 222; fax: (01942) 820 002; e-mail: info@nwtb.u-net.com; web site: <http://www.visitbritain.com>).

The North West's 250km (150-mile) coastline is characterised by dune-backed sandy beaches. The seven large resorts, the most popular of which is Blackpool, attract millions of holiday-makers each year. Other resorts include Lytham St Annes, Ainsdale, Fleetwood, Morecambe and Southport. All have extensive facilities and a wide choice of accommodation and entertainment.

**Blackburn,:** Blackburn, Bolton, Nelson and Burnley offer varied accommodation as bases for trips round the western slopes of the Pennines, while long stretches of footpaths and bridleways wind through the landscape of heather and wild bilberries. Throughout the area there are fine examples of the stately homes of England: 16th-century Speke Hall near Liverpool; Gawsworth Hall near Macclesfield; timbered Bramall Hall near Stockport; and Tatton Park near Knutsford, whose interior is familiar to viewers of the BBC television adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*.

The countryside includes the gentle Cheshire Plain dotted with small natural lakes, old water-wheels and distinctive villages with black and white houses. In the Peak District National Park, the limestone valleys and vast caverns of the White Peak give way to the dramatic moorlands of the Dark Peak.

In the south is the Mersey Estuary and the port of Liverpool, home town of the Beatles. It also contains the Walker Art Gallery with Dutch, French, Italian and English paintings, the New Tate Gallery and two cathedrals, one Anglican and one Roman Catholic. Attractions in and around the city include the Merseyside County Museum and St George's Hall. From Liverpool there are regular ferry sailings to the Isle of Man.

Across the river is the Wirral Peninsula with the resort of New Brighton and a large country park. From here there are views across the Dee estuary to the Welsh Hills. On the River Dee near the Welsh border is the historic walled city of Chester, well-known for its concentration of Cheshire's black and white 'magpie' houses. To the east of the city is the 4000-acre Delamere Forest and the rich pastures of the Cheshire Plain, a region which has a network of canals several hundred kilometres long.

Northeast of Cheshire is the city of Manchester, in many ways the 'capital' of the north of England. Attractions here include the Opera House, the Palace Theatre, the Royal Exchange Theatre (in the building that, 100 years ago, was at the very centre of the world's cotton industry), the Bridgewater Hall and the mock-Gothic John Rylands Library. The city's cathedral was built in the 15th century, although most of the more immediately noticeable buildings date from the city's period of greatest prosperity in the 19th century.

Further north is the Forest of Bowland, a vast and lonely area of high moor-backed hills which also contains the beautiful wooded valley of the River Ribble. The historic county town of Lancaster is to the northwest, a short distance inland from the resorts of Morecambe and Heysham.

Cumbria

**Cumbria Tourist Board:** Cumbria Tourist Board, Ashleigh, Holly Road, Windermere, Cumbria LA23 2AQ (tel: (015394) 44444; fax: (015394) 44041; e-mail; mail@cumbria-tourist-board.co.uk; web site: <http://www.gocumbria.co.uk> or <http://www.golakes.co.uk>).

Cumbria is proud to boast England's largest national park, containing the highest English peak (Scafell Pike) and Lake Windermere, the largest lake. Cumbria is climbing country, with easy fell walks, and sailing, fishing, canoeing and pony-trekking facilities in a stunningly beautiful setting of mountains and lakes. The ancient sport of Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling takes place at the annual sports meetings in Grasmere, Ambleside and Coniston. Traditional fell-racing (to the top of the nearest hill and back) can also be seen at some of the Cumbrian sports meetings. Many of the towns and villages, hidden among moorland, perched on mountainsides or tucked away along the coast, hold fairs, shows and sheepdog trials throughout the year. Local crafts are practised and workshops, smithies and potteries welcome visitors. It is possible to watch weaving

in Grasmere, pencils made at Keswick and clogs fashioned in Whitehaven. Sweaters sold in Ambleside are made from the wool of local Herdwick sheep.

**Grasmere:** Grasmere is where Wordsworth lived for several years and his home, Dove Cottage, is open to the public. He also lived at the nearby Rydal Mount, also open to the public. Keswick, on the shores of Derwent Water, is an attractive market town with a museum in Fitz Park, which contains many manuscripts and letters of Shelley, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge. The region also has several coastal resorts such as Maryport, Silloth, St Bees and Grange-over-Sands. To the north of the county is the 2000-year-old cathedral city of Carlisle, close to Hadrian's Wall and once a Roman camp. Likewise, the once important 18th-century trading port of Whitehaven today preserves an echo of former glories in its Georgian buildings. Another historic town, Penrith, makes a good base for touring the rich and peaceful Eden Valley and the wide-open spaces of the Cumbrian Pennines.

Yorkshire

North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire.

**Yorkshire Tourist Board:** Yorkshire Tourist Board, 312 Tadcaster Road, York YO25 1GS; (tel: (01904) 707 961; fax: (01904) 701 414; e-mail: [ytb@yorkshire-tourist-board.org.uk](mailto:ytb@yorkshire-tourist-board.org.uk); web site: <http://www.ytb.org.uk>).

Yorkshire & Humberside is a region of beautiful countryside, rugged castles, stately homes and ancient churches all packed tightly into a compact area with good transport connections. For many people, the scenic grandeur of the Yorkshire Dales National Park - 1761 sq km (680 sq miles) of unspoilt countryside, rivers, caves and unforgettable views - is a major attraction all year round. This is the landscape made famous by JMW Turner and, most recently, by the worldwide success of the books and TV series featuring Dales vet, James Herriot. The surgery and locations used in the filming can be seen in Askrigg, in Wensleydale. Walking is a very popular pastime in the area, with everything from gentle strolls to hearty climbs such as the ascent of the Three Peaks of Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-ghent. An even bigger challenge is the Pennine Way, the toughest of many long-distance footpaths to be found in Yorkshire & Humberside.

Historic castles abound in the region, such as the great fortresses of Richmond and Middleham, the latter associated with Richard III. Bolton Castle in Wensleydale once served as a prison for the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots, whilst an even more tragic scenario was played out at Pontefract Castle in West Yorkshire, where Richard II was murdered.

A more stable period for the aristocracy is reflected in the great houses to be found dotted throughout the region, notably Castle Howard, near Malton, world famous as the setting for the TV adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. Other fine houses open to the public include Harewood House, Duncombe Park, Nostell Priory, Sledmere House and Burton Constable Hall.

The great city of York, with its unparalleled wealth of historic sites, continues to be a strong magnet for visitors; more than two million people visit the Minster - northern Europe's largest Gothic cathedral - every year. Other top attractions are the National Railway Museum, the Castle Museum and the Jorvik Viking Centre, whilst many people come to see the medieval ring of walls or to shop in the Shambles. Humberside is a maritime county with powerful links with Britain's proud seafaring tradition. The city of Hull is an important working port, and has recently been transformed by the new waterfront marina development, whilst the majestic Humber Bridge is an attraction in its own right. Beyond Hull is the gentle lowland area of Holderness, which ends in the bird sanctuary at Lonely Spurn Point. To the north lies the ancient market town of Beverley, with its Georgian houses in the shadow of the minster. Close by is the racecourse and the Museum of Army Transport.

The North York Moors National Park has miles of open moorland with picturesque villages nestling in hollows. The North Yorkshire Moors Railway, starting at Pickering, is one of the most scenic in Britain, and is one of the many steam railways in the region - others include the Embsay Steam Railway at Skipton and the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway.

On the coast, traditional family resorts include Scarborough, Bridlington and Cleethorpes which have added a number of attractions, such as Bridlington's popular Leisure World Complex. There are also many smaller resorts, each with their own special character, such as Whitby with its busy harbour and clifftop abbey, linked to Bram Stoker's Dracula.

Between the coast and the Vale of York lie The Wolds, a gentle range of rolling hills with timeless villages and quiet lanes, ideal for walking or cycling. On the edge of The Wolds is Malton, one of the many interesting towns to be found dotted throughout the region - others worth a visit include Thirsk, Skipton, Selby, Ilkley and Harrogate (which has good conference facilities).

The cities of South and West Yorkshire make interesting destinations, their potent industrial heritage combined with a new spirit of renovation and renewal. Bradford has led the way, with the award-winning National Museum of Photography, Film and Television. Wakefield boasts Caphouse Colliery, home of the Yorkshire Mining Museum. Close by are the wild moors of the Pennines where the Brontë sisters lived in the village of Haworth.

## Northumbria

Cleveland, Durham, Tyne & Wear, Northumberland.

**Northumbria Tourist Board:** Northumbria Tourist Board, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5UX (tel: (0191) 375 3000; fax: (0191) 386 0899; e-mail: [enquiries@ntb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ntb.org.uk); web site: <http://www.ntb.org.uk>).

A region of contrasts, this area offers miles of coastline, city lights, quiet countryside, castles and cathedrals, industrial tourism, Hadrian's Wall and much more.

**Northumberland:** Northumberland, lying between the Scottish border and Tyne & Wear, is a rural county with numerous attractive villages and market towns. On its northern boundary it has Hadrian's Wall as its most famous landmark. The wall was built to protect Roman Britain from the incursions of the Picts and Scots from north of the border; much of the surviving architecture tells of centuries of border warfare, such as the chain of castles built to defend the countryside and the long Northumberland coastline. These include dramatic Bamburgh, gaunt craggy Dunstanburgh and impressive Alwick. In contrast, the simple cross at Chollerford, Lindisfarne (Holy Island) and St Wilfred's at Hexham reflect the important role Northumberland played in the spread of Christianity. Hexham makes a good base from which to explore the whole Northumbrian region. Much of the county is a National Park, with rolling moorlands stretching from the North Sea to the Cheviot Hills on the Scottish border. England's most northerly town, Berwick-upon-Tweed, was a regular casualty in the border battles, and changed hands between Scotland and England at least 13 times. Its medieval town walls, reconstructed in Elizabethan times, are among the best-preserved in Europe. Today the town makes a convenient base for touring northern Northumberland and the Borders.

**Tyne & Wear:** Tyne & Wear spans the mouths of the two major rivers in its name. Newcastle-upon-Tyne (originally no more than a fort on Hadrian's Wall) has city centre shopping, museums, theatres, hotels, restaurants and all the services expected in a major city. There is also a cathedral and a castle. Across the river are Gateshead with the Metro Centre indoor shopping and South Shields, home of popular author Catherine Cookson. Sunderland stands at the mouth of the River Wear and nearby is Washington, famous as the original home of US President George Washington's family. Christian heritage comes to the fore at Tynemouth Priory and Jarrow, home of the Venerable Bede. Transport in the Newcastle area is particularly good owing to its excellent Metro.

**County Durham:** County Durham, where Prince Bishops ruled for 600 years, surrounds Durham City with its spectacular castle and Norman Cathedral built overlooking a gorge on the River Wear. The surrounding countryside is pleasant and studded with small market towns such as Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle. The Bowes Museum, Raby Castle, High Force Waterfall and Beamish Open Air Museum attract thousands of visitors to the county each year. There are several castles, in varying stages of dilapidation. Bishop Auckland is an ancient market town; nearby is an 800-acre deer park. Also within this county, is the wild region of the North Pennines, Weardale and Teesdale. Darlington, which made its name in the 19th century with the world's first passenger railway to nearby Stockton, has a famous railway museum. There are many other attractive towns and villages throughout County Durham, and many opportunities for walks in the hills and moors.

**Cleveland:** Cleveland, in the south of the region close to the Yorkshire border, is an industrial county dominated by Middlesbrough. It boasts Australia's discoverer Captain Cook as its most famous son. The Captain Cook Birthplace Museum in Middlesbrough tells his story. Coastal towns include Redcar, Saltburn and Hartlepool, with its maritime museum, restored ships and marina (under construction). Cleveland's long industrial history dates from the early 19th century (the world's first passenger train steamed into Stockton-on-Tees in 1825). Towns of interest include Marske, Guisborough and Upleatham, with reputedly the smallest church in England.

## 9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

**Walking:** Walking: Although England has a high population density, it contains some beautiful and unspoilt countryside which is ideal for walkers. As a rule, the highest ground is in the north and west of the country, while the east and south tend to be flatter. Just south of the Scottish border is Northumberland National Park, featuring moorland and beaches. The Pennines ('the backbone of England') stretch for 268 miles (429km) from Kirk Yetholm just over the Scottish border to Edale in Derbyshire, separating Yorkshire in the east from its ancient rival, Lancashire, and from Cumbria in the west. The long-distance footpath the Pennine Way runs along this range. Relatively demanding, owing to the continual ascents and descents, it is nevertheless very popular. In the northwest, just below Carlisle lies the spectacular Lake District, with England's highest peak Sca Fell Pike (3207ft/978m), while Yorkshire contains two national parks, the North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales. The Peak District National Park lies to the south of the Pennines. Gentler hills and farmland are to be found in the 'home counties', the area in the south of England to the west of London. The 'west country' (Somerset, Cornwall and Devon) by contrast, features higher land, moorland, cliffs and a rocky shoreline. The 613-mile- (978km-) South West Coast Path runs around the coast from Minehead in Somerset to South Haven Point near Poole in Dorset. Further information about these areas can be found in the Resorts & Excursions section.

**Boating:** Boating: England is threaded with canals and rivers, and there are many lakes and other waterways. Because canals connect urban centres, hiring a canal boat is a good way of visiting towns while still enjoying the countryside. A number of tour operators specialise in hiring out boats; for a list of these, contact the English Tourism Council (see address section). Yachts and cabin cruisers can also be hired, and facilities abound in popular sailing areas such as the Norfolk Broads.

**Cycling:** Cycling: Cyclists are very well catered for in England, and there are many designated cycling routes. Some of these pass through towns and villages and some go through wilder regions. All are signposted and well maintained, and bicycles can be hired all over the country. A

list of cycling routes is available from the Tourism Council. East Anglia, its flat terrain sprinkled with picturesque villages, is a good cycling destination.

Other sports available include surfing, particularly popular in Cornwall; fishing (a permit is needed and is available from post offices); horseriding, climbing, and other outdoor pursuits.

**Spectator sports:** Spectator sports: English sporting events are often characterised by their traditional atmosphere and valued as much for the social opportunities which accompany them as for the sporting action. Many of the most famous events are patronised by the Royal family, and a certain style of dress is de rigeur. The main horse races attract a huge following and include the Grand National, (the nation's premier event, prompting bets worth millions of pounds), Ascot (famous for the extravagant hats worn by women on Ladies' Day) and Aintree. Many English people are passionate about racing, and there are race courses all over the country. The world-famous tennis tournament known as Wimbledon takes place in London SW1 in late June and early July. Tickets must be purchased well in advance if good seats are required, while a ballot is held for tickets for the days of the finals. Rowing is another traditional sport which provides fans of English culture a chance to observe some age-old rituals. The year's most prestigious event is the Henley Regatta, held at Henley-on-Thames in late June. Boaters and blazers are worn by the men, while women often wear dresses and hats. Rowing eights from all over the world come to compete. The Oxford versus Cambridge Boat Race takes place in February. Eights from England's two oldest universities race along the Thames in London from Putney to Mortlake. Nowadays, there are races for women as well as for men. Cricket, incomprehensible though it may seem to those unfamiliar with the rules, is popular in England. The most famous ground is Lords' in north London. Football is enthusiastically followed by all classes of society and, increasingly, by both men and women. Teams such as Manchester United and Liverpool are known for their skill all over the world. Rugby, which is divided between union and league (amateur and professional), is also quite popular.

## 10 SOCIAL PROFILE

**Food & Drink:** Good English cooking is superb and there are some restaurants specialising in old English dishes. In general, the north of the country tends to offer more substantial and traditional food, at more reasonable prices than the south. Every region, however, will have its own speciality; these will include roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, game or venison pies, rack of lamb and many fish dishes. Britain is still the home of puddings: spotted dick (suet pudding with currants and raisins); plum duff (suet roll stuffed with plums); and syllabub (a medieval dish consisting of double cream, white wine and lemon juice). The English cream tea is still served in tea rooms, particularly in south coast seaside resorts. It generally consists of scones, jam, butter, clotted or double cream and, of course, tea. There are many regional varieties in baking: the flat pancake-type scones of the North of England and Scotland; Scottish black bun, a fruit cake on a pastry base; Bakewell tart, a pastry base covered with jam, almond filling and topped with icing; and breads of all description. For those who want variety, London and the larger cities offer every type of ethnic food imaginable, Indian and Chinese being particularly popular and good value for money. Cheddar and Stilton are the most famous British cheeses. Tipping is not compulsory and it is up to the individual whether to pay the 10-12% service charge often added automatically to bills. Table service is usual but there are self-service snack bars. Set price lunches, especially on Sundays, with a choice of about three dishes, are particularly good value, as is pub food. Drink: The British pub is nothing short of a national institution and even the smallest village in the remotest corner of the country will usually have at least one. There are about as many beers in England as there are cheeses in France and the recent revival of real ale has greatly improved the range and qualities of brews available. Look out for the sign 'Free House' outside a pub, meaning that beer from more than one brewery will be sold there. Bitter and lager are the most

popular beers, but stout, pale ale, brown ale and cider are also widely drunk. Wine bars and cocktail bars are now common in the larger cities and towns, and the latter will often have a 'happy hour' (when prices are reduced) in the early evening. Under 18s may not be served with alcohol and children under 16 are not generally allowed into pubs, although they may sit in the garden. Licensing hours vary from Monday to Saturday but many pubs, especially in main centres, are open typically 1100-2300; the visitor should not be surprised however if they find a pub closing for a period in the afternoon. On Sunday, hours are 1200-2230. Private clubs often have an extension to these hours.

**Nightlife:** The main cities, London in particular, have a vast range to choose from: theatre (including open-air in the summer), opera, ballet, concerts, films, restaurants, nightclubs and discotheques, as well as, of course, pubs. The weekly magazine Time Out publishes a comprehensive guide to the events in the capital.

**Shopping:** Woollen and woven goods such as Harris Tweeds are famous. Printed cottons and silks are to be found, as well as fashionable ready-made clothes. China and porcelain Wedgwood, Crown Derby, Royal Worcester and Royal Doulton are good buys, as are luxury food and chocolates. Antiques are to be found all over the country. In London, Charing Cross Road is famous for bookshops, and there are the street markets: Petticoat Lane for clothes and Bermondsey for antiques, to name just two. Tax Free Shopping: Many shops throughout the country now operate a tax-free shopping scheme for overseas visitors. The store will provide a form which should be completed at the time of purchase. Upon arrival at Customs, present the goods and the forms (within three months) to the Customs Officer, who will stamp the vouchers certifying that the goods are being exported, and that you will be entitled to a refund of Value Added Tax (VAT). For further information contact the British Tourist Office which will be able to supply details. Shopping hours: In major cities 0900-1730 Monday to Saturday; in London's West End and other large shopping centres, shops stay open to 2000. Many local shops stay open to 1900 or 2000 and some even later; many of these are open on Sunday morning or all day. Larger shops will open 1000-1600 on Sunday. Some towns and areas of cities may have early closing one day a week, usually Wednesday or Thursday.

**Special Events:** For a complete list, contact the English Tourist Board. The following is a selection of the major festivals and other special events taking place in 2001 in England: Jan 4-14 2001 The Big Blue London Boat Show. Jan 11-14 Autosports International 2001, Birmingham. Jan 28 Chinese New Year Celebrations - Year of the Snake, London. Feb 2-5 31st Harrogate Winter Antiques Fair, Harrogate. Feb 2-17 Bradford Film Festival 2001, Bradford. Feb 17-18 Jorvik Viking Festival - Jolablot 2001 (combat event and parade), York. Mar 8-11 Crufts Dog Show, Birmingham. Mar 17-18 London Classic Motor Show, London. Mar 24 Oxford v Cambridge Boat Race, London. Apr 7-8 World Wargames Championships (championships of table-top miniature armies), Epsom. Apr 22 London Marathon, London. Apr 29 Three Peaks Fell Race (running race over three peaks of Yorkshire), Settle. May 12 FA Cup Final (football championships). May 17-26 Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Glyndebourne. May 22-25 Chelsea Flower Show, London. Jun 8-22 54th Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts (international festival founded by Benjamin Britten). Jun 16 Trooping the Colour (The Queen's Official Birthday Parade), London. Jun 19-22 Royal Ascot, Ascot. Jun 25-Jul 8 Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championships, London. Jun 26-Jul 19 City of London Festival 2001. Jul 4-6 Henley Royal Regatta, Henley-on-Thames. Jul 19-22 Golf Open Championships, Lytham St Annes. Jul 24-26 New Forest and Hampshire County Show (agriculture and equestrian show), Brockenhurst. Jul 28-29 Sunderland International Air Show (parachute teams, stunt flying and civilian aircrafts), Sunderland. Aug 4 Grasmere Rushbearing (colourful procession of flowers, garlands and music), Ambleside. Aug 23-28 International Beatles Festival, Liverpool. Aug 25-27 Herstmonceux Castle Medieval Festival (celebration of the Middle Ages with a mock siege of the castle, jousting and archers), Hailsham. Aug 26-27 Notting Hill Carnival, London. Aug Glastonbury Festival,

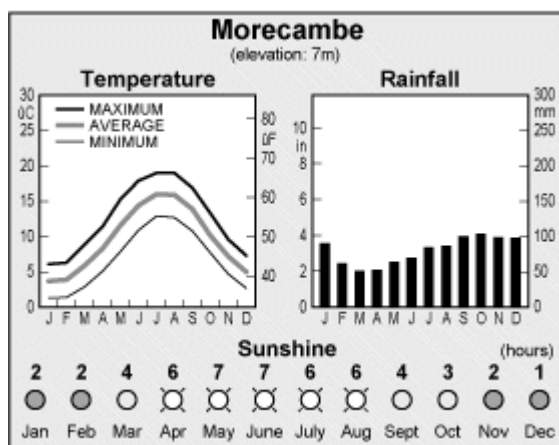


Glastonbury. Sep 1-30 Round the World Yacht Race, Southampton. Oct 6-20 Northumberland Traditional Music Festival, Northumberland. Oct 17-28 London Motor Show, London. Oct 21 Trafalgar Day Parade (Sea Cadet Corps), London. Nov 10 Lord Mayor's Show, London. Dec 1-2 City of Durham Christmas Festival, Durham; Dickensian Christmas (costumed carol singers, bell ringers and street theatre), Rochester.

## 11 BUSINESS PROFILE

See main United Kingdom section.

## 12 CLIMATE



The climate is temperate with warm wet summers and cool wet winters. It is variable 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 overall the mildest climate.

**Required clothing:** European according to season, plus rainwear.

## 13 OVERVIEW

**Country Overview:** England, a country of patchwork landscapes: from the rugged coastlines and golden beaches of Devon and Cornwall, to the craggy mountains of the Peak District, the ancient forests riddled with folklore to the picturesque Lake District, great cities and centuries-old villages of heart-warming charm. Woven into its fabric lies a rich-veined 'Englishness', earthed in a heritage of stone circles, Arthurian legend, Shakespeare, the triumphalist ego of a crumbling aristocracy, and the cocky independence of an island nation.

Vibrant, multicultural and contradictory, contemporary England is a place of extremes, yet at times, fiercely united. From the essential glories of London, Stratford, Gloucester and York, to the quirky delights of Newcastle, Liverpool and Manchester, England's cities are lively, buzzing places, where a love of nostalgia strains against a spirit of inventiveness.

Enjoy the unrivalled beauty of the Cotswolds and the Dales, but travel the byways of Northumberland, and church-laden Lincolnshire too. With time to spare, escape the tourist trails and wander over peaceful countryside, savour 'real' ale at a country pub, visit a traditional town market, or sample England's 'new-wave' wines and a cosmopolitan cuisine that rivals any in the world. England today is welcoming, friendly, fascinating and fun, where pomp and circumstance balance the often-bizarre idiosyncrasies of its people, and a sense of humour is the passport to certain acceptance.