



VANTAGE  
EXPLORATIONS

# Pre-Departure Guide: *Scotland & Ireland*







## Introduction

As we walk the ancient hills and dales and hear the haunting melodies of bagpipes echo through the valleys, a journey through the enchanting landscapes of The United Kingdom and Ireland unfolds like a timeless tale of intrigue. Ready yourself for a voyage into the heart of nations where history turns every stone, and the vibrant tapestry of cultures weaves stories that remain with you forever.

Thrill to tales of Roman conquest, Viking marauders and Spanish armadas. Wander windswept cliffs, mesmerising castles and mist-strewn highlands, to finish your day with a wee dram of the local's finest.

The United Kingdom (made up of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and the Republic of Ireland straddle the North Atlantic and the North Sea, their famous coastlines sculpted by furious gales, tumultuous seas and warmed by the Gulf Stream.

These island nations have enticed travellers since the last Ice Age (between 35,000 and 10,000 years ago), when sea levels were much lower and it was possible to walk from Europe to Britain. Those early visitors settled and farmed, and pondered

their place both on earth and in the universe, leaving behind archaeological sites as wondrous today as they were when they were built.

Our voyages, explore this region of more than 800 islands, creating close encounters with the people who call these coastlines home, along with a variety of landscapes from heathlands and moors, to brooding peaks and sparkling lochs.

Approaching these countries from the sea, we honour a maritime history that stretches from Celtic tribes that sailed from Europe and France between 1500 and 500 BC, to the Roman conquest under Julius Caesar in 43 AD; from the Anglo-Saxons of the fifth century to the Viking invasions in the next; from Admiral Nelson's naval victory at Trafalgar in 1805 to the Churchill Barriers of World War II.

With our small expedition ships, *Greg Mortimer* and *Sylvia Earle*, as your floating base camp, marvel at the ease that new friends are made as you explore both the most iconic and seldom visited, but also some of the most important historical sites of the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland.





## The art of storytelling

Before the written word there was the spoken word. Ancient man gathered around campfires to hear stories about where to gather food, hunt and find safety with companionship and community both fostered by the stories they shared. Chosen for their spoken prowess, a storyteller told tales passed down over centuries.

At Aurora Expeditions, we believe that every day travelled creates a story. Each of our Exploration Voyages will be hosted by a master storyteller. Selected for their in-depth knowledge, expert storytelling abilities and unbridled passion pertaining to the theme of their specific voyage, our hosts inspire us to explore further and immerse ourselves in the cultures of the regions we visit. Whether a professor, archaeologist or curator, their enthusiasm for their chosen theme is infectious. Supported by our network of local experts who guide our handcrafted onshore 'Your Choice' experiences, our storyteller weaves tales of intrigue, historical facts and entertaining trivia, through each destination, sight and experience. Join them to create your own story. One to endure for eternity.

## Exploration Voyages

On our exploration voyages you will sail in our newest, purpose-built small ship with an expert, international exploration team, through some of the most culturally established regions on earth.

Our limited passenger numbers provide a uniquely intimate and relaxed atmosphere onboard while our ship provides us with a convenient 'base camp', indulging our travel senses with a full enrichment program, ranging from evenings onshore to onboard guests and social events.

Our exploration team is by our side the whole time, enriching our experience with fascinating presentations and insights into remarkable places. Hosted by our expert storytellers, and exploration team, our handcrafted onshore and onboard experiences immerse us in culture, traditions and history whilst following a theme chosen to uncover the hidden histories, secrets shared and enthralling tales of our destinations. Our 'Your Choice' curated excursions and enrichment program are included. They offer you a choice of experiences, designed to surpass your expectations and bring cruising to a whole new level.





## Sustainable Tourism

At Aurora Expeditions we encourage our travellers to practise sustainable tourism whenever and wherever possible. Although these nations have greeted guests for centuries, we trust that you will tread lightly so that generations to come may enjoy the same sights you are privileged to visit today. As traveller numbers increase, so does the strain on local resources. We encourage you to take short showers, turn off lights when leaving your hotel room, minimise waste, and if you plan to hike, take a bag with you for your rubbish.

Central to our journey are the close relationships we've forged with local suppliers, encompassing guides, producers, restaurant owners, and tour operators – the lifeblood of our voyages. To ensure you receive your preferred choice of excursion when selecting your 'Your Choice' experience, please consider the ripple effect. Responsible tourism is our ethos, and by respecting the commitments to our local partners, we collectively contribute to a sustainable travel experience. Therefore, we do not permit changes to your 'Your Choice' experience once selected, out of respect for our suppliers.

## Entrance Requirements & Visas

Visa requirements vary from country to country and can also depend on which country the visitor is from. We therefore recommend that you check with the Embassy or Consulate in your country of residence for the most up-to-date visa requirements for entering the United Kingdom and Ireland. If a transit enroute is required, please ensure that a visa or a visa waiver authorisation (such as an electronic Travel Authorization or eTA) is not required for your transiting country.

Obtaining valid travel documents and adhering to customs regulations of the countries to which you are travelling is the traveller's obligation. Aurora Expeditions does not accept responsibility for any problems associated with these requirements. We recommend carrying a photocopy of your passport, visas and compulsory inoculation certificates when travelling.

Occasionally, fees may be increased or instated without warning. These may be payable locally at an airport or land border crossing. Some airports may also charge an airport usage fee or embarkation fee that is not included in your ticket price.

*Disclaimer: While Aurora Expeditions can offer advice on necessary visas, we are not a consular service. It is the sole responsibility of the traveller to check and obtain the necessary visas before departing your country of residence. All taxes and entrance fees are subject to change, and clients accept this as part of international travel. Aurora Expeditions cannot be held responsible for these charges.*





## Passport

Your passport is a valuable document and attractive to people who may try to use your identity to commit crimes. Always keep it in a safe place. Be aware of attempts to obtain access to your passport by deception. If you are coerced to hand over your passport, contact your embassy immediately for advice.

Your passport must be valid for at least six months after the date you intend to return to your country of residence. The passport validity date varies from one country to the next, but generally a minimum of six months validity from your date of return is applicable.

Some countries also require your passport to have a quota of empty pages for entry. Please check this with the Consulate or Embassy prior to travelling.

## Health Information

There are no statutory vaccination requirements for Scotland or Ireland. Aurora Expeditions recommend that you visit your family doctor or a travel medical centre for the latest information. These websites may also provide useful information on required or recommended vaccinations.

Australia – [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au)

United Kingdom – [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Canada – <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/vaccines>

United States – [www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm)

New Zealand – [www.who.int/ith/en/](http://www.who.int/ith/en/)

It is every traveller's responsibility to ensure they have the vaccinations required for their trip. Aurora Expeditions will not be held responsible for travel delays or refused entry into countries due to travellers not having the necessary vaccinations.

Restrictions may apply due to COVID-19. Regulations are typically stipulated by governments and airlines. A list of vaccines accepted, quotas of doses required, and dates of dosage, must be considered prior to travelling. Regulations can often change with little or without notice, therefore we encourage you to review each countries requirements on a regular basis.





## Packing Essentials

What you pack will depend on when and where you are travelling, and the types of activities included in your itinerary. The following is a useful checklist of essential items that we recommend you include in your packing list:

- Passport – ensure that it is valid, in good condition with empty pages available
- Photocopy of passport
- Travel insurance – ensure that it will be valid for the entire journey and covers all activities you expect to undertake.
- Vaccination certificate
- Photographs of the contents of your luggage, particularly special/expensive items such as cameras, laptops and tablets etc.
- Passport photos for identification passes and certain overseas visas if required
- Airline tickets and itinerary
- Foreign currency and/or debit/credit cards
- Debit/credit card cancellation phone numbers
- Emergency contact numbers
- Day pack for excursions
- Money belt – ensure that it is discreet and comfortable to wear
- Basic first-aid kit – bandaids/bandages, anti-diarrhoea remedy, paracetamol/aspirin, rehydration remedy, antiseptic cream/powder, sterile dressing
- Sea sickness medication
- Personal medication – we recommend carrying this in your hand luggage at all times
- Moisturiser for wind and/or sunburn
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Sunglasses and sunhat
- Mosquito spray and insect repellent
- Comfortable walking shoes and sandals
- Long-sleeved top and full-length trousers – protection against mosquitoes at dawn and dusk and the sun throughout the day
- Lightweight and light-coloured clothing
- Warm clothing and thermal wear (depending on itinerary and time of year)
- Camera with spare battery and memory cards
- Laptop for image processing and other data use
- USB stick to share photos with fellow travellers
- Padlock with security or smart code
- International power adaptor
- Power board for charging multiple devices
- Small torch
- Dry bag or plastic bag for camera
- Refillable water bottle for onshore excursions
- External hard drive for storing downloaded images
- Spare pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses
- Ear plugs (especially if you are sharing a cabin)
- Swimsuit (for sauna and plunge pools)
- Binoculars for wildlife viewing from ship
- Take a photo of your packed items and of your suitcase as evidence for insurance claims in case of loss

## Insurance

Please note travel insurance is mandatory on all Aurora Expeditions' trips. We recommend SureSave, which specialises in travel insurance offering worldwide assistance. SureSave provides world-class, Australian-based assistance through their customer service, claims and emergency assistance teams. SureSave is underwritten by 'certain underwriters at Lloyds – one of the world's largest specialist insurance markets providing services to businesses in over 200 countries and territories.'



## Ship Information

### The *Sylvia Earle*

Our second purpose-built expedition vessel honours the highly accomplished marine biologist, oceanographer and explorer, Dr Sylvia Earle.

As the first woman to become chief scientist of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and named by Time Magazine as its first “Hero for the Planet” in 1998 – this vessel pays tribute to Dr Earle’s long-standing conservation efforts for marine protected areas and ocean wildlife.

### Specifications

Built: China, 2021

Length: 104.4m

Breadth: 18.4m

Draught: 5.1m

Cruising Speed: 10 knots

Maximum Passenger number: 136\*

Exploration Team: up to 10

Crew: 71 to 80

Registered: Nassau, BS

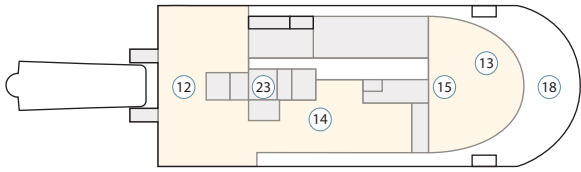
Class Ice: Class 1A, Ulstein X-BOW®

Gross Registered Tonnage: 8500

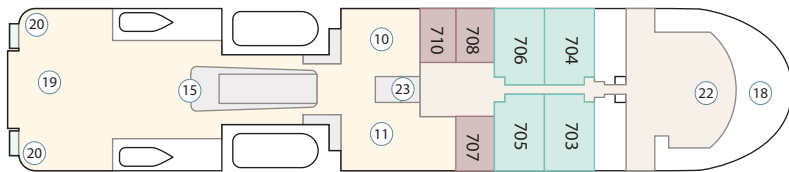
\* For select activity-focused voyages, passenger limit may vary. Please refer to specific itineraries on the website for more information.

# Deck Plan: The *Sylvia Earle*

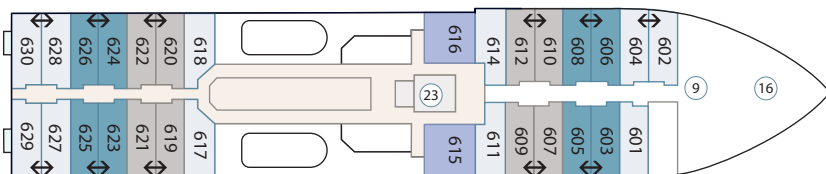
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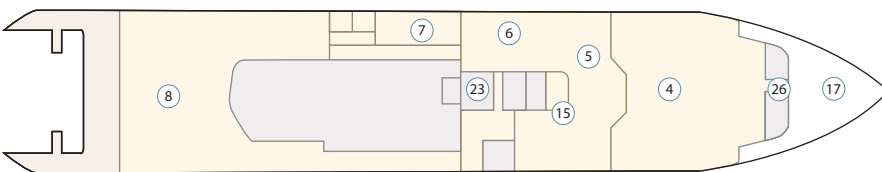
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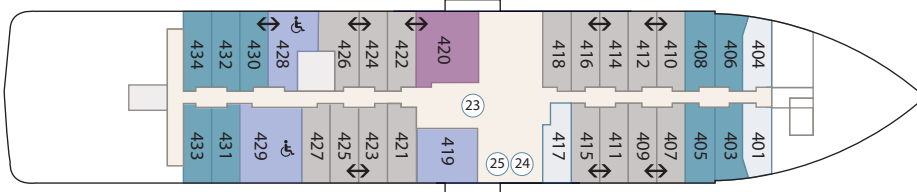
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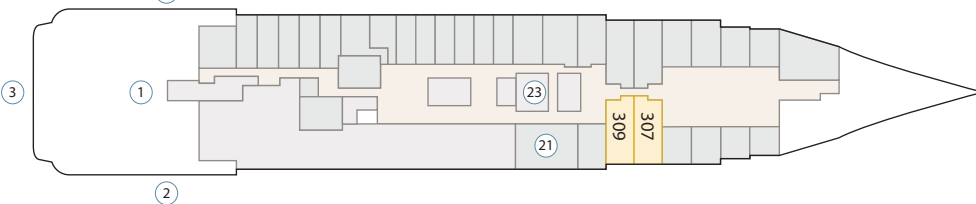
Deck 5



Deck 4



Deck 3



## Cabin Category

- Aurora Stateroom Triple
- Aurora Stateroom Superior
- Balcony Stateroom – C
- Balcony Stateroom – B
- Balcony Stateroom – A
- Balcony Stateroom Superior (formerly Balcony Suite)
- Junior Suite
- Captain's Suite

## Ship Features

- ① Change room / mudroom
- ② Zodiac-loading platforms
- ③ Activity launching platform
- ④ Lecture room & lounge
- ⑤ Assembly station
- ⑥ Reception
- ⑦ Ship shop
- ⑧ Dining room
- ⑨ Library
- ⑩ Gym
- ⑪ Wellness center / sauna
- ⑫ Seating area
- ⑬ Observation lounge
- ⑭ Top deck restaurant
- ⑮ Bar
- ⑯ Upper glass atrium lounge
- ⑰ Lower glass atrium lounge
- ⑱ Observation decks
- ⑲ Swimming pool and sun deck
- ⑳ Jacuzzis / plunge pools
- ㉑ Medical clinic
- ㉒ Bridge
- ㉓ Elevator
- ㉔ Main entrance
- ㉕ Expedition desk
- ㉖ Science center
- ♿ Disability accessible rooms

↔ Connecting staterooms and suites  
 Deck plan is subject to change.





## Ship Features: The *Sylvia Earle*

- Highly qualified and experienced international crew with vast experience, particularly in ice operations and navigation in the polar regions.
- Our exploration team made up of a exploration leader, exploration managers and exploration office managers, are some of the world's best.
- The Ulstein X-BOW® hull allows the ship to pierce through waves to maintain speed of travel thus offering faster, more comfortable travel, lower fuel consumption and reduced emissions.
- All cabins feature twin or king bedding configuration and private bathrooms. 97% of cabins include a private balcony.
- Over 20 interconnecting Balcony Staterooms. 60% of cabins can accommodate a third person (triple share on request).
- Observation lounge and viewing platforms offer spectacular panoramic views of scenery and wildlife.
- Purpose-built activity preparation areas including four Zodiac-launching platforms for fast and safe transition off the ship as you embark on multiple daily excursions.
- State-of-the-art lecture room, science centre and library. In between landings, enjoy our heated saltwater open air swimming pool and jacuzzis or experience our gym & sauna.
- With huge windows and superb views to the front of the ship, the library or the atrium lounge is the perfect place to sit with a drink and watch for wildlife or admire impressive scenery.





## Health and Medical Information

All voyages operated by Aurora Expeditions are staffed by a doctor experienced in remote and expedition medicine. Our onboard medical clinic is well equipped to handle most medical illnesses or injuries that may occur.

Medical appointments with our onboard doctor are available free of charge for the initial consult. You will then be advised if costs are applicable for subsequent appointments. Any consultations related to those exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be prioritised and onboard medical treatment will be free of charge.

As supplies are limited it is important you bring your own personal medical requirements (e.g. medication, dressing, etc) with you. We suggest you pack all medications in hand luggage and carry a duplicate supply in the checked luggage. If you wear prescription glasses or contacts, bring an extra pair.

### Motion and sea-sickness

Not everyone feels the affects of sea sickness. Some people are very lucky and don't feel a thing. Others can feel ill for a day or so, but a select few are more prone to the effects of not being on dry land. The good news is that seasickness can often be avoided if managed early, and it usually doesn't last more than a day or so.

A few simple remedies can help:

- Keep your eyes on the horizon.
- Facing in the direction of the travel helps some.
- Try not to change direction too often.
- Keep eating. Small amounts, regularly, is best.
- Try to remain hydrated by drinking plenty of water or perhaps soft drinks if you prefer. Please avoid alcohol while you're experiencing sea-sickness.
- Try to stay active and, if possible, get outside in the fresh air.
- Do not read if you are feeling unwell.

If all else fails, lie down with your eyes closed. Have dry crackers, or biscuits, a bottle of water, and whatever else you fancy, beside your bed.

### What medication to bring

The use of medication can help prevent or treat seasickness. Common medications include:

- Promethazine (Phenergan, Avomine)
- Hyoscine (Kwells, Travelcalm, scop patches)
- Meclizine (Antivert)
- Cinnarazine (Stugeron)
- Dimenhydrinate (Dramamine)





Most medications can cause sedation and dry mouth. However, at low doses, this effect is often minimal.

Please note: Prochlorperazine (Stemetil) or Metoclopramide (Maxolon) are not effective for managing motion sickness.

#### Alternative therapies

With years of trial and error, our passengers and staff have found that alternative therapies such as ginger tablets, pressure point or acupuncture bands are not effective on their own, particularly if the seas happen to be rough. We recommend you bring a supply of medication as a back up.

#### When to take the medication

Generally, we recommend using some form of medication automatically for the first 24 to 36 hours, and then see how you feel. Most people usually get their 'sea legs' after this time. The tablets should be taken early rather than waiting until you feel very unwell, as by this stage, they are no longer well absorbed by the stomach. With the morning dose, take medication while still in your bed, and allow it to work (e.g. wait half an hour) before getting up.

#### Sun protection

Even on overcast days, protection from the sun is important. Regular application of sunscreen and lipscreen (minimum SPF50+) to exposed parts is essential to avoid sunburn.

A dab around the nostrils is also a great idea as burnt nostrils,

from reflected UV radiation, are very painful! Sunglasses with a good UV protection rating are also essential to prevent eye irritation. Remember to attach a cord to your glasses to prevent loss – we recommend carrying a spare pair of glasses in your luggage, just in case.

#### Dehydration

The atmosphere in these regions can be very dry, with low humidity, so it is important to drink enough water. Water stations can be found throughout the ship. Feel free to bring your own water bottle, or, should you require a water bottle, please ask your consultant to add your request to your file.

#### Immunisations

All travellers should be up-to-date on routine immunisations, including:

- Tetanus/diphtheria vaccine (ADT). You can now have a 'Boostrix' that also includes a whooping cough vaccination for adults.
- Influenza vaccine. This is available yearly and could help to prevent spoiling your holiday of a lifetime with a flu infection.

Please consult your General Practitioner for further information. If you are travelling to South America either before or after your Antarctic voyage, please check the advised immunisations for those countries.





## Frequently Asked Questions

How many people are on the ship?

Our vessels will take an average of 132-138 per voyage. Consider this as extra space for you to move around and enjoy the ship! We believe that small groups are the best way to experience our destinations.

When is the best time to go to Antarctica and the Arctic and how cold does it get?

Our expeditions to Scotland and Ireland operate during the spring and summer months. During summer the average daily temperature is 15°C (59°F). These countries offer spectacular scenery due to their high rainfall, which is likely to fall on 10 days a month in summer. You do however receive bonus hours, as both nations have long days in summer, with sunsets as late as 10:00pm in some regions.

Where do your voyages start/finish and why?

The start/finish points for Aurora Expeditions' voyages are carefully chosen for various reasons, including but not limited to: air or rail access, to allow expeditioners to participate in the voyage, ship pier for convenient and safe embarkation and disembarkation, and sufficient tourism infrastructure such as hotels, restaurants, cultural attractions to cater for pre and post-voyage requirements.

What's the onboard currency?

The onboard currency is US dollars. All your onboard purchases including bar, laundry and ship shop are charged to your shipboard account and settled by debit card, credit card or cash (US dollars only) at the end of the voyage.

**Important note** regarding payment of shipboard account:

If you do not have an American based bank account, please contact your local bank before embarking, and make sure you have listed the United States of America as a country that you'll be visiting. While you will not physically be visiting the U.S. during your voyage, onboard payments are charged in US Dollars from a financial institution in Miami. We want to ensure efficient service and ensure hassle-free settling of your onboard account.

Aurora Expeditions also does not automatically link your credit card details from your voyage payment towards your onboard account. A member of staff will therefore contact you during your voyage to help you register your preferred method of payments for onboard transactions.





#### How often do we get off the ship?

We plan our voyages to get off the ship every day to experience the destinations up close. Our 'Your Choice' experiences are all included, so there's always something to enjoy. At many ports we have a half-day excursion for those who prefer to relax onboard for part of the day, or enjoy exploring independently, whereas our full day excursions provide you with a true in-depth exploration of the port town, or its surrounding region.

#### What luggage allowance is permitted on your voyages?

Your luggage allowance is determined by the airline on which you've travelled to participate in the voyage. However, Aurora Expeditions recommends that each expeditioner travel with no more than one large piece of luggage weighing 25 kilograms or less, plus one piece of hand luggage, if the airlines permits this.

Some airlines have differing allowances for international and domestic flights. In cases like this you may need to pay for additional luggage allowance if you exceed the amount permitted by the airline on your international ticket.

For voyages where charter flights are included as part of the voyage package, we will provide advice pertaining to the permitted luggage allowance specified by the charter airline used for the voyage.

#### How do we wash our clothing?

There are no passenger laundry facilities for you to do your own washing, but there is a laundry service available on board. Prices are listed in your cabin. All cabins have a sink.

#### What clothes do I take?

Shipboard clothing is informal and casual. Some people may choose to wear an elegant outfit for the Welcome and Farewell Dinner but formal clothing is not necessary. Please refer to the 'What to Pack' section of this document for our recommendations.





#### What is not included in the price of the voyage?

Items that are generally not covered in the cost of the voyage include:

- Flights to and from your voyage (unless specified)
- Passport visa and travel vaccination charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Drinks from the bar (alcohol and soft drinks) outside of dinner service
- Ship shop items
- Laundry costs
- Other items of personal nature

All onboard expenses will be kept on your personal shipboard account throughout the voyage. Your hotel staff will provide you with an invoice of all your expenses in USD at the end of your voyage. Your account is settled by credit card (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Diners or Discover) or in cash (US dollars only).

#### Do you charge a single supplement for solo travellers?

We welcome solo travellers, and their numbers are increasing each year. To support our solo travellers, we've developed our informal 'happy to share' service that matches solo travellers with a cabin mate of the same gender, which allows them to avoid paying the single supplement surcharge. For solo travellers wanting guaranteed sole use of a cabin, a single

supplement surcharge applies. Speak to us or your travel agent about solo traveller special offers available on selected voyages.

#### Do I need travel insurance?

Travel insurance, including medical evacuation cover, is mandatory for all Aurora Expeditions' voyages. We strongly suggest you have insurance for voyage cancellation to ensure you will be covered financially if you are forced to cancel your voyage due to circumstances beyond your control. Please carefully read the General Terms & Conditions on your booking form.

#### Are gratuities included? How much should I tip?

Our team welcomes any gratuities. All gratuities are on a discretionary basis. Thank you

A US\$15 per person per day gratuity for the crew is automatically added to your onboard account. It is at your discretion if you would like to remove the tip (or adjust the amount) when you settle your account. It is not necessary to tip the expedition team members. This gratuity amount is included for suites as part of their 'Suite Benefits'.





### Should I bring along my own walking poles?

A limited amount of walking poles are available on board. If you have your own poles or require them to walk on uneven ground, we recommend that you bring your own. In Antarctica and the Arctic, some of our landings can be on slippery rocks or deep snow, and we may go for extended walks to see different parts of our landing point. We recommend the telescopic poles, with the optional snow-basket tips for polar voyages. You can purchase these poles in most outdoor stores.

### Do you have facilities on board to download digital images from my camera?

Our vessels feature a library with two laptops that all passengers can use during the voyage. We also advise you to bring a USB for photo sharing on board as Aurora Expeditions is unable to distribute passengers' images post voyage.

### What is the electrical supply on board? Do I need a converter?

The electrical supply on board our vessels is 220 volts, 60 hertz. Please bring a converter if your devices use 110 volts. International electrical sockets are available in your cabin and throughout the ship. If you have many devices it is advised you bring a multi power board.



### Is there Internet, email or telephone access on board?

Wireless internet connection is available free of charge on board our vessels (subject to change). The speed and reliability of the connection may vary given the remote locations

we visit. In case of an emergency, our expedition team can facilitate communication with your family members if necessary. A phonecard that allows you to make calls from the phone in your cabin is available for purchase from reception.

### Do you cater for special meal requests?

Yes, we can accommodate most special meal requests if given advance notice. All meals include vegetarian options and our chefs can tailor to expeditioners with specific food intolerances such as gluten intolerance. Please ensure you list any dietary requirements on your online expedition check-in. Although we aim to accommodate most dietary requirements, we are unable to cater to all requirements such as kosher or halal, nor can we guarantee that our meals do not contain traces of peanuts or other nuts. Meals taken on our 'Your Choice' experiences are supplied by our restaurant partners, and may not adhere to all dietary requests. Please contact us to enquire about your specific needs.

### Do you provide toiletries on board?

Bodywash, shampoo, conditioner and handsoap is included in each cabin and refilled throughout the voyage. Please bring your own personal toiletries if you have individual requirements such as skin conditions.

### How fit do I need to be?

To make the most of our voyages, you should be in good general health and able to walk reasonable distances, sometimes over cobblestoned paths, up and down stairs and on uneven terrain. As we visit historic sights some of these may be in a natural state of disrepair. Please consider this when choosing your 'Your Choice' experiences. If you have problems walking on rough ground, you can enjoy the scenery closer to the port. Should you have any physical limitations please notify us well in advance of your departure from participating.





#### What sort of money should I take and how much?

We recommend that you take US Dollars to exchange in your arrival city. However, you can withdraw money from Automatic Teller or Cash Machines at most international airports.

#### Smoking Policy

Smoking is permitted in designated areas on the ship's outer decks only. Smoking inside the ship including on your cabin balcony is strictly prohibited. Please do not throw cigarette butts overboard, but dispose of them in the ashtrays provided.

#### Are there hairdryers on board?

Yes, a hairdryer is available in each cabin.

#### Will I get seasick?

Many people ask us if they will get seasick. It is a very difficult question to answer because it depends so much on the individual. Our experience is that a small percentage of people are seasick on any trip and most of these people are fine after a day or so at sea. If you feel that you are particularly susceptible to seasickness then it is a good idea to talk to your doctor. Come prepared with motion sickness tablets and follow the tips in this booklet. There will be a doctor on board to assist with any bouts of seasickness.

#### Can I change my 'Your Choice' experience once onboard?

Our 'Your Choice' shore-excursions listed in the itinerary are included. These must be reserved through our passenger portal at least 60 days prior to embarkation and cannot be amended once selected. If we do not reserve your preferred option by this time, you will be allocated excursions by our automated system. We will always do our best to provide you with your first preference of shore excursion, however we may occasionally ask you to travel on an alternative excursion for operational reasons.

#### What if it is raining?

It is true to say that some regions we visit are stunning due to their regular rainfall. Many of our onshore experiences include indoor activities but on days where we spend time in the great outdoors we suggest you bring either a rain jacket, or umbrella, as these are not provided.

#### Why do you need my passport details to book my excursions?

The post-COVID travel world has inherited regulations which arose during the pandemic. Governments, local authorities, and sites, which imposed time slots, and quotas have, in some cases, retained them. Tickets must be purchased by our suppliers as early as possible to ensure entrance. We ask that you provide your consultant with the required information as soon as you select your 'Your Choice' experiences so that we have a good chance of obtaining your ticket for your preferred option..

#### Why can't I travel on my preferred 'Your Choice' experience?

Entrance quotas at sites may be restricted due to safety regulations, limited space, or guide and vehicle availability. To maximise your chances of securing your preferred experience, we recommend selecting your 'Your Choice' options well in advance of your travel date. In instances where your first preference is unavailable, or if you do not choose your option at least 40 days prior to your departure, Aurora Expeditions will automatically allocate a 'Your Choice' experience for you. Rest assured, this ensures your spot on one of our shore excursions every day, guaranteeing an enjoyable exploration of your destination.



## Unpacking Geographic Names

Will you be visiting the British Isles, the UK, the Atlantic Archipelago or Great Britain? And where do Northern Ireland

and the Republic of Ireland fit in? First-time visitors to these regions can find it a bit confusing. Here's a brief explanation:







## United Kingdom

Is a sovereign state made up of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, exactly as its name states.

## Ireland

Although Ireland became part of the UK in 1801, a war of independence in the early 20th century saw the partition of the island, creating the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 saw the end of decades of civil unrest and formalised the Republic of Ireland (officially named Ireland), which covers five-sixths of the island, and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom.



## Great Britain

Great Britain consists of England, Wales and Scotland.

## British Isles

Islands in the North Atlantic off the northwest coast of mainland Europe, consisting of Great Britain, Ireland, the Inner and Outer Hebrides, the Isle of Man, the Northern Isles (Shetland and Orkney) plus more than 6,000 smaller islands.







## A Brief History of the UK and Ireland

On the west coast of Papa Westray, in Scotland's Orkney Islands, two oval structures with stone walls and entrances that face the sea, rest unremarkably along the fence line of an adjacent property. The structures are called the Knap of Howar, Old Norse for 'mound of mounds', or more informally, 'the farmstead'. They consist of two interconnected buildings: one a living quarters, the other a workshop/storage area. Their simple but enduring construction belies the fact that they are estimated to have been built between 3,700 and 3,500 years ago, making them the oldest stone buildings in northern Europe.

Sitting on the soft grass overlooking the Knap of Howar, listening as our historian conjures up family life in Neolithic (Stone Age) times, is but one of the delights awaiting you on a voyage to the UK and Ireland. Here is a brief chronicle of human history to help prepare you for your trip and reveal one aspect that makes this Atlantic archipelago so enthralling.

The first modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) arrived during the last Ice Age (35,000 to 10,000 years ago), migrating across the land bridge from continental Europe. Thanks to the geology of the region, the new residents found ample material to manufacture tools, weapons and, as with the Knap of Howar, relatively comfortable, stone-walled dwellings with turf roofs. These early settlers took up agriculture and raising livestock, gazing up to the heavens to begin their search for understanding about their place in the universe.

As the Stone Age drew to a close, they built amazing monuments like the Callanish Stones on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, a complex pattern of stone circles and avenues that some believe formed a prehistoric lunar observatory. Between about 6,000 and 4,000 years ago, these were just some of the many megalithic monuments that dotted the landscape across the UK and Europe. Some other uses for megaliths

included elite burials, mass burials, meeting places, temples, shrines, processional lanes, territory markers and status symbols.

In Ireland, the first people arrived from Scotland and possibly Wales between 10,000 and 6,500 years ago. They were true hunter-gatherers, who moved along the coast and waterways living off fish, shellfish, birds, nuts, apples, berries and wild boar. Initially they lived in circular dwellings of about 6 metres (20 feet) in diameter and remaining post holes indicate they were formed of branches bent inwards to form a dome. The floor was dug out and a fire pit was placed in the centre. Eventually, Stone Age ancestors built houses, walls and stone-walled fields (the oldest known in the world) complete with megalithic tombs dating back nearly 6,000 years. Farther south, the Dingle Peninsula boasts one of the richest concentrations of archaeological monuments in Western Europe, with more than 2,500 sites that date from 8,000 to 3,700 years ago.

In Scotland, whether you visit the semi-subterranean village of Skara Brae, the standing Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar, the chambered tombs of Maeshowe or the fortified tower of Mousa Broch, one thing is certain, the mystery and wonder they evoked many millennia ago remains just as strong today.

As the Bronze Age (4,500 to 2,800 years ago) progressed, Celtic tribes migrated from Central Europe and France to Britain and mixed with the indigenous inhabitants, creating a new culture slightly distinct from Continental Celtic.

As early as 55 BC, Julius Caesar landed the first Roman military expedition in Britain. Over the next 400 years of conquest and guerrilla wars, road building and colonisation, Rome ruled Britannia from the south coast up to Hadrian's Wall, built to separate the Romans from the barbarian tribes from the north (Scotland).





Near the start of the fifth century, Christianity was introduced in Ireland, probably by the Romans. Monasteries were built in isolated places and flourished for monks who wanted permanent communion with God. Soon after, the Romans progressively abandoned Britannia, as their empire was falling apart, and legions were needed to protect Rome. In their absence, Celtic tribes began warring again and local chieftains enlisted help from the Germanic tribes on the continent.

Over the next century, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes arrived to fight, but when the battles were over, instead of returning to their homelands in Europe, they tried to seize the country for themselves, pushing back the Celts to Wales and Cornwall, and founding their respective kingdoms of Kent (the Jutes), Essex, Sussex and Wessex (the Saxons), and further northeast, the kingdoms of Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria (the Angles). These seven kingdoms, which ruled over the UK from about 500 to 850 AD, became known as the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy.

In 563 AD, Saint Columba, a native of Donegal, accompanied by a few companions, crossed the sea to Scotland and founded a monastery on the desolate island of Iona. In time it became a flourishing institution. Like many other monasteries, it excelled in the fields of illuminated manuscripts, metalworking, and sculpture, and produced such treasures as the Book of Kells, the Ardagh Chalice, and many carved stone crosses.

In the late ninth century, the Norse people from Scandinavia invaded Europe, with the Swedes settling in the east and the Danes in the west. Monasteries, with their treasures of golden religious ornaments, became the favourite targets for the waves of Norse warriors ransacking the countryside. Pagans and pirates, they were formidable foes both on land and sea. In Ireland, as elsewhere, they desecrated altars, carried away gold and silver works, leaving behind smoking ruins and murdered monks to attest to the fury of their assaults.

At the turn of the century, one group of Danes invaded north-eastern England and founded the kingdom of Danelaw, while another took control of Paris. In the wash-up, they were granted land that became the Duchy of Normandy,

whose inhabitants were called Normans (from 'North Men' or 'Norsemen', another term for 'Viking').

Over the 10th century, the Anglo-Saxons vanquished the Danes from England, but at the start of the following century, Canute the Great, king of a unified Denmark and Norway, led two invasions, crushed the Anglo-Saxons and in 1016, became King of England.

During the 11th century, the Normans put down further claims to the Crown and, after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror became William I of England, thus fortifying the Norman hold on Britannia, and making French the official language of England until 1362, 25 years after the start of the Hundred Years War between England and France.

The Hundred Years War (1337–1416), one of the most significant conflicts of the Middle Ages, outlasted five generations of kings; the bubonic plague, which killed one-third of England and Europe; Joan of Arc; and the Wars of the Roses. The latter was fought between the House of Lancaster (the Red Rose, supporters of Henry VI) and the House of York (the White Rose, supporters of Edward IV). The end of the wars saw Henry VII ushered in as founder of the House of Tudor, to be followed by one of England's most historically significant rulers, Henry VIII (1491–1547).

Henry VIII became the first ruler to declare himself the king of both Wales and Ireland. When he divorced Katherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn, the Pope excommunicated him from the Catholic Church, so he proclaimed himself as the head of the Church of England. He was the last English king to claim the title of King of France, and he sent out ships to explore the globe and begin trading outside Europe. In time his daughters, Mary I and Elizabeth I, would expand England's colonial reach to a global empire. This was the age of great explorers like Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, and the age of enlightenment, which included philosophers such as Francis Bacon and playwright William Shakespeare.





When Queen Elizabeth I died, she was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England – thus creating the United Kingdom. James, a Protestant, tried to improve relations with the Catholic Church, but when a group of Catholic extremists led by Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up the parliament's state opening (the origin of the festival of fireworks known as Guy Fawkes Day or Bonfire Night), the divide worsened, culminating in the English Civil War (1642–1651) during the reign of Charles I.

In 1649, Charles was found guilty of treason and executed. Oliver Cromwell ruled as a dictator until his death in 1658, and eventually the throne was claimed by Charles II, who through his Portuguese wife had acquired Bombay and Tangiers, thus beginning the British Empire. When Charles II died in 1685, the throne passed to his Catholic brother James, then quickly to James's Protestant daughter Mary and her equally Protestant husband, William of Orange.

While they were in power, parliament ratified a bill stating that all kings and queens had to be Protestant. Upon the death of first Mary, then William, they were succeeded by James's second daughter, Anne, who in 1707 joined the Scottish and the English parliaments, thus creating the single Kingdom of Great Britain. When Anne died without an heir, her distant German cousin, George of Hanover, became the King of England.

Due to his inability to speak English, George I appointed Robert Walpole as prime minister, thus setting up the model where the monarch lent the reins of government to the prime minister. George I was succeeded by his German-born son, George II, who expanded the British Empire. His son, George

III, was the first Hanoverian to be English-born and during his reign, the British fought the French and won, but lost to the colonialists in the American War of Independence in 1782, resulting in the formation of the United States of America.

In 1800, the Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland merged, just in time to face Napoleon and his ambition to conquer Europe. Admiral Nelson's naval victory at Trafalgar in 1805, along with Wellington's decisive victory at Waterloo, saved the UK and further reinforced its international position. Over the nineteenth century, the British Empire would spread on all five continents, inciting the Opium Wars in China, the Boer Wars in South Africa and the Crimean War against Russia. Over her 64 years in power, Queen Victoria reigned over 40 per cent of the globe and a quarter of the world's population.

Sadly, the twentieth century brought even greater conflict, first in Europe, then throughout the world. The Great War, World War I (1914–1918), left more than 16 million dead (including one million Britons) and bankrupted most countries involved. Then, in 1939, when a powerful and menacing Nazi Germany under Hitler invaded Poland, Britain and France declared war. World War II would last six, bloody years, leaving 50–56 million direct war deaths and another 19–28 million deaths from war-related disease and famine.

Following World War II, the UK was bankrupt and in the ensuing years, much of the British Empire was dismantled but with many of the ex-colonies forming the British Commonwealth, now known as the Commonwealth. In 1952, Elizabeth II, at 26 years of age, ascended the throne where she remained until 2022, the longest-serving monarch of the UK and 14 other member nations of the Commonwealth.





## Scotland

Population: 5.5 million

Capital: Edinburgh

### Welcome to Scotland

Thanks to author, Robert Louis Stevenson, and the many movies made about his country, you may expect every man you see to wear a kilt and every woman you meet to be strong minded and ready to put you in your place, however Scotland is all that and much, much more.

Tucked away in the far northwest corner of the United Kingdom, Scotland may be remote, but it is certainly not isolated. The seemingly empty lands of the wild northwest coast are only a few hours drive from Edinburgh and Glasgow, two of the UK's most densely populated and intriguing urban centres. Cultural events, from comedy festivals to bag piped tattoos attract revellers from around the world, while gastronomers come for Scottish langoustine, Aberdeen Angus steaks or a simple supper of deep-fried haggis and chips. Adventurers will be awed by the majesty and sheer scale of Scotland's landscape, as they experience the country's rich historical past where they will encounter legends, myths and tales of intrigue dating back centuries that remain an influence on contemporary Scottish culture.

### The Past is the Present

Rule number one. Never ask a Scot about their country's history unless you have all afternoon, and a bottle of whisky handy. Scottish history is as fascinating as it is complex. There were tribal Celts and ancient, face-painted Picts, Roman Emperors who tried and failed, audacious red-haired Vikings, fallen monarchs, powerful warrior-royals, noble clansmen, great explorers, pensive philosophers, bright inventors... Each time you flick on a light switch, use the telephone, turn on the T.V., take a dose of penicillin, pump up a tyre – it is all thanks to a Scot.

Think ancient and mysterious standing stones, clan castles and lavish stately homes, derelict fortresses and world-famous feats of engineering. From the Scottish Borders to Orkney and the Fife of Forth to the Isle of Skye, fierce uprisings and bloody battles were won and lost, lasting unions forged, and new discoveries and world-changing creations invented. They shared this all with the world, with Scottish emigration amongst the most prolific influences on many of our own nations.

Relive the past and witness the wondrous monuments that today tell their stories with pride. <https://www.visitscotland.com/about/history/>





## Time

Scotland has a single time zone with a Standard Time of GMT + 0, with the exception of Scotland Daylight Savings Time (GMT + 1) typically from late April to the end of October.

## Contact

Emergency Numbers: 999

Country code: +44

## Climate

Scotland's climate can be summed up in one word - wet. Jokes abound about the Scot who laughed when Noah declared it rained for 40 days and 40 nights as just another Scottish summer. Brisk winds beat the land into rugged peaks and craggy outcrops and lochs turn to black watery pits, yet somehow the Scots embrace the weather as a part of their country's character. Snowcapped peaks, endless green-grassed valleys and windswept islands charm visitors, while summer, although not balmy, offers long hours of daylight and clear blue skies. Perfect for trekking and travelling.

Summer temperatures - 12°C (53°F) to 24°C (75°F)

Winter temperatures - 2°C (35°F) to 6°C (43°F)

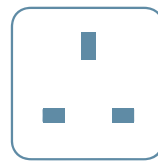
## Language

If you're in a pub in Scotland and you cannae understand a word, dinna fash yirsel – you're not alone. English is the main language spoken in Scotland, albeit a little offbeat. It is pitted with jargon and iconic words affording the Scottish their own dialogue simply known as Scots. Strangely, conversations make more sense after you have had a whisky or two.

The ancient guttural highlander language of Gaelic (pronounced gah-lick) is also spoken in parts of Scotland, particularly in the Outer Hebrides where it is used by

approximately 60 per cent of the population. On the mainland Gaelic is making a comeback with many schools reintroducing Gaelic lessons into their curriculum in recent years.

## Electrical Plug



Type G

UK power sockets deliver an average of 230v.

## Arriving in Scotland

Fortunately, several international airlines fly to Scotland, with Glasgow considered the major airport. Access to the city is easy with Glasgow Airport Express buses reaching Glasgow Central rail station within 15 minutes. Here you can board rail connections which travel throughout the country, the most notable being the train to Edinburgh. This takes between one hour and one-and-a-half hours. Privately owned airlines offer a milk run of island routes, which keep the country connected, and scenic rail journeys abound, while ferries are also a popular way to access the country's numerous idyllic island communities.

Airports at Edinburgh and Aberdeen service both international and regional flights.

**Edinburgh:** A modern tram service departs every seven minutes from Edinburgh airport, taking only 30 minutes to reach Edinburgh CBD.

**Aberdeen:** Several airport coach services take approximately 30 minutes to the town centre.





## Airport Transfers

Aurora Expeditions include an arrival transfer from the voyages joining airport to our pre-voyage hotel, and a departure transfer from our post-voyage hotel to the nearest major airport. These are included on the first and final day of your voyage package only.

Should you require a transfer to alternative locations, or on other dates, please ask your consultant for assistance.

## Aurora Expeditions Voyage Gateway and Departure Cities

Edinburgh, Aberdeen or Glasgow

## Getting Around

Cities and towns in Scotland have well established public transport services. A trip across town on a double decker bus or tram add to your enjoyment and open top scenic bus options abound in major cities. Metered taxis are safe and moderately priced, with some taxis accommodating 4, 5 or 6 people, depending on the size of the taxi. Other taxis offer minibuses for larger groups. Booking your taxi in advance guarantees the size of taxi you need. Uber taxis are also a popular option in Scotland.

Scotland attracts self-drive travellers year-round. Well signposted routes make driving easy and friendly locals are always willing to help if you feel lost or need advice. For those who prefer local transport, a scenic rail or ferry journey are highly recommended while coach travel is efficient, well-priced and popular.





## Money

The unit of currency in Scotland is the British Pound (GBP).

Cash can be withdrawn from automatic teller machines (ATM/ABM), found in virtually every city or town. With the introduction of lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses in Scotland prefer contactless payment made by credit or debit cards, however, cash is still accepted. Please note that a fee for cash withdrawals may be charged.

Major credit cards, such as Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted at most shops and restaurants. While some market vendors may accept card payment methods, others may only accept cash. Travelling to Scotland with a combination of cards and cash is still advised.

## Shopping and Dining

Many of the world's famous department stores and franchises were founded in the United Kingdom, however with most of their 'bargains' now sourced from foreign shores we encourage you to 'shop small' if possible. Supporting local businesses is the best way to inject money into local economies and to encourage traditional crafts to flourish. We visit regions which take great pride in the quality of goods produced by their local, sometimes indigenous, communities. Purchases

from family-owned stores, pick-ups from craft centres or hand-made treasures bought at markets make a positive difference to the friendly folk whose livelihoods depend on the continuation, and success, of local production.

- Shops are generally open 9.00 am–5.00 pm, seven days a week, with some stores closed on Sundays. Food stores and franchises may stay open later.
- Most bars and pubs stay open until 11.00 pm or midnight, while nightclubs will be open longer, however COVID restrictions may apply. We recommend carrying a face mask in case it is required for entry. The legal drinking age in Scotland is 18 years of age.

## Tipping and Tax

Although tipping is not compulsory in Scotland, 10 per cent is a good rule of thumb and always appreciated when dining, on tours and excursions and for assistance at hotels. Restaurants may apply a tip or service charge to your final bill, in which case an additional tip is not required. Surcharges may also apply in some establishments on the weekend or during public holidays.

Value added Tax (VAT) is a 20 per cent tax applied to most goods and services.





## Cuisine

Traditional Scottish fare draws from the country's past. When clans cluttered the countryside, communal eating was commonplace, and this meant one thing – hunting.

Heavy stews, braised and roasted meats and the indomitable haggis are still favourites. Scotland's most iconic dish combines sausage meat made from the innards of the sheep with onions, oatmeal, suet, stock, dried herbs, and other seasonings. These ingredients are combined and then boiled inside the lining of a sheep's stomach. Some say you have to be born into it to appreciate the dish but try it once with neeps (mashed swede or turnips) and tatties (mashed potatoes) and you'll be cooking it at home before you know it.

Scotland is, of course, the traditional home of oats, and where there's oats there's porridge. This heart-warming breakfast dish may date back to the early days of Scotland, but on many Scottish breakfast tables it remains centre stage. Unlike the porridge that many people outside of Scotland are accustomed to, Scottish porridge is often made with salt instead of sugar - making it a savory breakfast rather than a sweet one.

Pescatarians will be spoiled for choice with both salmon and trout commonly featured on most menus. Cullen skink is a local delicacy, which consists of smoked haddock, cream, potatoes, and onions, and is typically served with a side of toasted bread – wonderful cold winter days.

Anyone with a sweet tooth will enjoy some traditional Scottish Tablet. This sweet snack is made with sugar, condensed milk, and butter. As sweet as fudge, but harder, tablet is often flavored with vanilla or whisky, and can be found in shops all over Scotland.

## Wildlife

Rosettes of swords may be considered a Scottish art form, but trophies of stag horns come a close second. Red deer are scattered throughout the highlands, and as the United Kingdom's largest land mammal, these majestic creatures seen in their natural habitat are breathtaking.

With thousands of kilometers of coastline and over 700 islands, the rugged sheer cliffs and sandy beaches of Scotland attract hardy, characterful birds such as puffins, guillemots and manx shearwater. The pristine waters, endless streams and rivers found in Scotland may be famed for their trout and salmon but the seas in Scotland are also home to an array of marine mammals including otters, dolphins, and seals. Grey seals are especially prolific along the coastlines in autumn. If you are lucky, you may even spot their cute, fluffy pups.

Please refer to our United Kingdom Primer for detailed information on the wildlife and history of the United Kingdom (Note: you will receive the Primer on board).





## Republic of Ireland

Population: 5 million

Capital: Dublin

### General Information

The Republic of Ireland, located on the westernmost edge of Europe, lies on the second largest island in Europe. Occupying some 80 per cent of the island, it borders Northern Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom. Known for its wide expanses of lush, verdant fields, Ireland's nickname is the Emerald Isle. Officially consisting of 26 counties, Ireland offers something for every traveller. Marvel at country's majestic coastlines that are pounded and carved by the powerful Atlantic Ocean, hike rugged trails, wander its cobblestoned villages, enjoy delicious home-style pub meals while downing a few pints of Guinness or shots of Irish whiskey with locals who love to share a story. For a small island nation, Ireland packs a powerful punch when it comes to travel destinations. Its greatest export, its people, have made the country world famous and a destination not to be missed.

### From the Past to the Present

Originally established as Celtic farming communities, Ireland remained a haven until the eighth century, when it fell to marauding Vikings, and later, to invading Normans, cementing its future in the Middle Ages. Hoping to recover their lands and political dominance in Ireland, the Catholic majority took the side of the British Catholic king, James II in the 17th century, but they shared in his eventual defeat suffering under new laws, the Penal Laws, enacted by the victors - the Protestant elite. The future looked bleak, with the majority of Irish living in poverty. Four years of brutal winters brought the country to its knees with one of the most tragic and profoundly devastating events in Ireland's history - the Great Famine. The famine forced over one million Irish to flee the country resulting in the diaspora of Irish around the world. The eventual result - years of English rule came to a head in the uprisings of 1916 with Ireland finally gaining Independence in 1922. In 1948, the country officially became known as the Republic of Ireland.





## Time

Ireland has a single time zone with a Standard Time of GMT + 1 with the exception of Irish Daylight Savings Time (GMT + 0) typically from late April to the end of October.

## Contact

Emergency Numbers: 999 Country code: +353

## Climate

The climate in Ireland is as unpredictable as its politics; however, extreme conditions are unusual. Fields filled with flowers, lush green paddocks scattered with livestock and brick-bridged rivers all benefit from Ireland's year-round rainfall. Spring and summer invite travellers to explore the great outdoors, with long hours of daylight and intermittent sunshine. Autumn and winter entice museum buffs and gastronomic enthusiasts, with days spent contemplating the country's history and evenings enjoyed in cozy pubs around an open fire hearing tales. Pack warm clothing and a raincoat or umbrella, as in Ireland, 'you just never know'.

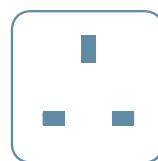
Summer temperatures - 12°C (53°F) to 20°C (68°F)

Winter temperatures - 4°C (40°F) to 10°C (50°F)

## Language

For 200 years, English has been the main language spoken in Ireland as a language. A distinct accent is encountered in each county, and the Irish lyrical accent typically hits you at pace making any conversation fascinating, even when you may have little idea of what is being said. But you will find a smile will answer every question. Irish as a language is also known as Gaelic or Fíonn and dates to the days of the Celts. Spoken as a first language in some regional areas and counties, it has spread throughout the world but is not often spoken on a day-to-day basis.

## Electrical Plug



Type G

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## Airport Transfers

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## Aurora Expeditions Voyage Gateway and Departure Cities

Arrival airport: Dublin

Departure airport: Dublin

## Getting Around

The larger centres in Ireland have well established public transport services, with coaches and buses being the most popular way for travellers to get around. Metered taxis are safe and moderately priced, with some taxis accommodating 4, 5 or 6 people, depending on the size of the taxi. Other taxis offer minibuses for larger groups. Booking your taxi in advance guarantees the size of taxi you need. Uber taxis are also a popular option in Ireland.

Ireland attracts self-drive travellers year-round. Well signposted routes make driving easy and friendly locals are always willing to help if you feel lost or need advice. For those who prefer local transport, coach travel is efficient, well-priced and popular, however it's not unusual for even the express coaches to stop numerous times and take an extended route to their destination. Hotels are a convenient means of accommodation, but it is the bed and breakfast establishments, typically owned by hosts who lavish guests with cordiality that place Ireland at the top of the list of friendliest nation to travel.





## Money

As a member of the European Union, Ireland's unit of currency is the Euro (EUR).

Cash can be withdrawn from automatic teller machines (ATM/ABM), found in virtually every city or town. With the introduction of lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses in Ireland prefer contactless payment made by credit or debit cards, however, cash is still widely accepted. Please note that a fee for cash withdrawals may be charged.

Major credit cards, such as Visa and Mastercard are accepted at most shops and restaurants. While some market vendors may accept card payment methods, others may only accept cash. Travelling to Ireland with a combination of cards and cash is still advised.

## Shopping and Dining

You will find that Ireland has embraced some department stores and franchises, however with most 'bargains' now sourced from foreign shores we encourage you to 'shop small' if possible. Supporting local businesses is the best way to inject money into local economies and to encourage traditional crafts to flourish. We visit regions which take great pride in the quality of goods produced by their local communities. Purchases from family-owned stores, pick-ups from craft centres or hand-made treasures bought at

markets make a positive difference to the friendly folk whose livelihoods depend on the continuation, and success, of local production.

- Shops are generally open 9.00 am–5.00 pm, seven days a week, with some stores closed on Sundays as a traditional church day. Food stores and franchises may stay open later.
- Most bars and pubs stay open until 11.00 pm or midnight, with those in regional areas often locking the doors but allowing patrons to remain on for a few 'quiet pints'. Nightclubs will be open longer, however COVID restrictions may apply. We recommend carrying a face mask in case it is required for entry. The legal drinking age in Ireland is 18 years of age.

## Tipping and Tax

Although tipping is not compulsory in Ireland, 10 per cent is a good rule of thumb and always appreciated when dining, on tours and excursions and for assistance at hotels. Restaurants may apply a tip or service charge to your final bill, in which case an additional tip is not required. Surcharges may also apply in some establishments on the weekend or during public holidays.

Value added Tax (VAT) will revert to 20 per cent tax from 01 April 2022. This applies to most goods and services.





## 17yards PUB

### Cuisine

The purity of the natural produce in Ireland has made the island a popular food destination in Europe, with an emphasis on artisan cheese, exceptional beef and lamb and fresh-off-the-boat seafood. The green pastures, deep valleys and abundant waters surrounding the island have helped create outstanding natural flavours that is not replicated elsewhere. From sublime smoked salmon to the creamiest butter imaginable, Ireland's food boasts an impeccable provenance and can be best enjoyed here – in the very place it comes from.

Seafood chowder by the fire in a coastal pub, traditional Irish stew in the surrounds of an 18th century market, afternoon tea in a castle overlooking a misty lough. Food in Ireland is about the place, the experience, the land and sea, and the people who created it. From bustling farmers' markets, to incredible local ingredients, craft brewing and distilling, and innovative chefs who celebrate the rich connection between place and plate, the island is buzzing with incredible food experiences. Lovers of seafood will delight in delicious Atlantic Salmon, seafood chowder, fresh oysters, cockles, mussels and, of course, fish and chips.

Farmers' markets offer a casual way to experience Irish food. You will find stalls laden with artisan cheese, local charcuterie, beech-smoked Irish salmon, soda breads, grass-fed beef and mountain lamb that reflect the richness and variety of Ireland's culinary traditions. It's a great place to sample the flavours, find out about the producers and meet local foodies. Try the

English Market in Cork, St George's Market in Belfast and the Temple Bar Food Market in Dublin for starters.

If you are in search of more traditional flavours, start the day with an Ulster Fry - a feast of black and white pudding, bacon, sausages, tomato and potato farls (potato bread). Later in the day, tuck into a hearty bowl of creamy chowder, generously packed with salmon and smoked haddock and served with floury soda bread. Ireland's famous, grass-fed beef is legendary so save room for a traditional Irish beef stew.

Bread and potatoes form an important part of the Irish diet. Bread usually accompanies the main meal while potatoes have been an important part of Irish cuisine since the 18th century. Mashed potato is a favorite accompaniment often eaten as the cabbage and potato-based colcannon and champ, or boxty, a type of Irish rosti. Although unless you have a spare day or two, do not mention the infamous potato famine

Local pubs are a great way to sample traditional Irish food, down a few pints of the world-famous Guinness beer and meet friendly locals. For something more sophisticated, the island also boasts Michelin-star, fine dining establishments to delight the most discerning gastronomes.

Please refer to our United Kingdom Primer for detailed information on the wildlife and history of the United Kingdom (Note: you will receive the Primer on board).



For more information please contact your travel agent, or Aurora Expeditions on:

Australia and New Zealand

Freecall: 1800 637 688

+61 2 9252 1033

email [info@auroraexpeditions.com.au](mailto:info@auroraexpeditions.com.au)

or visit [auroraexpeditions.com.au](http://auroraexpeditions.com.au)

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or visit [auroraexpeditions.co.uk](http://auroraexpeditions.co.uk)

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email [info@aurora-expeditions.com](mailto:info@aurora-expeditions.com)

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