



ROAD TRAVEL REPORT: SCOTLAND



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO...

- Scotland has an excellent road safety record.
- Main roads are in good condition.
- The internal trunk road network is better and more direct on the east coast. The greatest concentration of roads is around Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- Areas where single-track roads are very common are in rural areas. They demand extra care when passing. A passing area is available about every quarter of a mile.
- Road crash rates are highest in summer. Local drivers most likely are to be involved in non-fatal road crashes; tourists most likely are involved in fatal road crashes.



- Fatal road crashes during summer are most frequent in tourist areas, such as Aberdeenshire, the Highlands, Argyll and Bute.
- In Scotland, 0.86 deaths occur per 100 million vehicle kilometers, compared to 1.0 in the US.



ROAD REALITIES

DRIVER BEHAVIORS

- Drivers of private vehicles are about the same as US drivers in regard to passing illegally; obeying the speed limit, traffic signals and road signs; and driving recklessly or aggressively.
- Drivers of private vehicles are more likely to drive under the influence of alcohol than those in the US.
- Taxi and bus drivers are less likely to speed, disobey traffic signals or signs, pass illegally, drive recklessly or aggressively, drive under the influence of alcohol or drive excessive hours than their counterparts in the US.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is more common among rural drivers.
- Speeding is a factor in almost one-third of all road crashes.
- Fatigue-related road crashes are most likely to occur early in the morning or middle afternoon. Fatigue is a factor in 20 percent of road crashes on monotonous roads, such as motorways.

- Motorists frequently fail to see motorcyclists coming out of an intersection and/or anticipate the actions motorcyclists are likely to make.
- Fewer road crashes occur on Saturday and Sunday.
- Road crash fatalities are at their lowest level since road death record keeping began in Scotland, despite a huge increase in the number of cars.

GENERAL ROAD CONDITIONS

- Main roads are in good condition.
- The road system is concentrated around Glasgow and Edinburgh. Otherwise, it is largely undeveloped.
- The internal trunk road network is better and more direct on the east coast.
- Two-lane highways change into dual carriage (single lanes) swiftly and often without warning.
- Some secondary roads are winding and narrow in mountainous areas.



- Traffic often is congested near main cities.
- Gridlock is common, even on motorways and especially on public holidays.
- Road signs are clearly posted as follows:
 - “M” roads (Motorways) are comparable to US interstate highways.
 - “A” (primary) roads are similar to US multi-lane highways and divided highways.
 - “B” roads are single-lane and undivided.
 - A green sign bearing a white “R” indicates a ring road—a beltway around a metropolitan area.
 - Brown signs with white lettering give visitor information. A blue thistle on these signs indicates attractions and facilities approved by the Scottish Tourist Board.
 - A yellow sign with “HR” in black indicates a holiday route.
- Motorways have the lowest road crash rates of all classes of major highways. Local-authority built-up “A” roads have the highest road crash rates. Local authority non-built-up “A” roads have the highest road crash fatality rates.
- The area north of the Great Glen Fault to Cape Wrath and Jonh o’Groats is mountainous and sparsely populated.
- Central Scotland has a toll-free motorway network and dual highways that provide connections with key locations further north, such as Inverness and Aberdeen.
- The roads north of Inverness tend to be slower and often single track.

- Ten National Tourist Routes exist, which go through smaller towns and more rural areas.
- Motorcyclists and bicyclists can be difficult to see, especially at junctions. Give them plenty of room when passing, as they may be thrown off balance by side winds. Check your mirrors carefully before passing another vehicle, turning left, and in roundabouts.
- Encountering horse riders is more common in Scotland than in the US, especially in rural areas. When passing horses, drive slowly and give them plenty of room. Be prepared to stop. Do not blow your horn, as horses are startled easily and may panic in traffic. Watch for the rider’s signals. Riders may turn right without moving to the center of the road.

URBAN TRAVEL

- Roads often are congested in urban areas.
- Outlying car parks with “Park and Ride” services to the cities generally are available in tourist areas.
- Parking can be difficult to find and is expensive. Metered parking often is restricted to 2-3 hours.
- Parking disks or tickets are necessary to park along most roads and in parking lots. They can be obtained from machines in the parking area.
- Parking is not permitted within the area marked by zigzag lines on either side of a “zebra crossing” or in the zone indicated by rows of studs on the approach to a “pelican crossing.”
- A yellow line along the edge of the street indicates parking restrictions (signs will state what they are). A double yellow line means no parking anytime, but you may stop to pick up or drop off passengers of luggage for up to two minutes. Red lines mean no parking or stopping anytime.

CITY	PROBLEMS	USEFUL INFORMATION
GLASGOW	Driving is not recommended due to abundance of one way streets. Parking is scarce and expensive. Avoid parking in permit-only zones. Finding specific addresses is sometimes confusing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Streets may be interrupted by squares or terraces. 	Walking is the best way to get around the city center, which is laid out on a grid system. Comprehensive public transportation is available to other sites. Bus service is extensive.

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CITY	PROBLEMS	USEFUL INFORMATION
GLASGOW (CONTINUED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Houses may have even or odd numbers and may run clockwise or counterclockwise. ○ Some locations have no street number, just the name of the street. <p>Road signs may be hidden by overgrown trees in the southern and western sections of the city.</p>	<p>The Glasgow Underground (called the “Clockwork Orange” by residents) supplies frequent service to many parts of the city.</p> <p>Cycling is a good option, especially in flatter sections. Rental bikes are available.</p>
EDINBURGH	<p>Driving is not recommended.</p> <p>Parking is expensive and very scarce. Avoid parking in “Permit Holders Only” zones.</p>	<p>Old Town is best explored on foot. The streets are very narrow; many are cobble-stoned.</p> <p>New Town’s streets are broad, straight and laid out in a symmetrical pattern.</p> <p>Bus service is excellent.</p> <p>Taxis can be hailed, picked up at taxi ranks, or phoned.</p> <p>Rental cars and bikes are available.</p> <p>The city is hilly but cycle-friendly. It has several cycle paths. Cycle maps are available at www.spokes.org.uk.</p>

RURAL TRAVEL

- Repairs are needed to make many busy rural roads safer.
- Single-track roads are very common in rural areas. They demand extra care when passing. A passing area is available about every quarter of a mile.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is a problem in rural areas.
- Big trucks pass through small villages, posing safety risks.
- Unenclosed sheep graze freely almost everywhere in the highlands. Be prepared to stop suddenly.

PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL

- Pedestrians have the right of way when on the black and white “zebra crossings”.
- The area just before each zebra crossing is marked by zigzag lines. This is a no passing zone.
- “Pelican crossings” are lights that are equivalent to streetlights. These lights can be activated by pedestrians who wish to cross the street. You must stop if the light is red, and you must yield to pedestrians if the light is flashing amber.

- “Puffin” crossings do not have a flashing yellow light. The light is either red or green. The Puffins ensure that pedestrians have time to get across the street but will cancel the change to red if pedestrians walk away and do not cross.
- More than 60 child pedestrians are seriously injured or killed in road crashes each week.
- Pedestrians older than 60 years account for 50 percent of all pedestrian fatalities.

SEASONAL TRAVEL

- Fatal crashes during summer are most frequent in tourist areas, such as Aberdeenshire, the Highlands, Argyll and Bute.
- During summer, significantly higher rates of road crashes occur. Local drivers most likely are involved in non-fatal road crashes; tourists are most likely involved in fatal road crashes. Most road crashes involving British tourists occur when passing on two-lane roads; those involving tourists from countries that drive on the right generally are due to driving on the wrong side of the road.



- On the uplands, snow is common in the winter, and fog and mist may occur at any time of the year. Motorists are advised to follow local advice concerning weather conditions.
- Driving in the winter in the Highland areas can be dangerous. You may encounter arctic or alpine conditions. Motorists are advised to follow local information concerning weather conditions.
- Winter conditions are possible from October 1 to May 15, with the most adverse weather conditions occurring from November 1 to March 31.
- Snow and ice are removed from footpaths and cycle ways that form a part of the trunk road system. Priority is given to urban areas, steep hills, areas near hospitals, schools and public buildings.
- Winter driving tips include the following:
 - Check the weather forecast and road conditions and allow extra time for trip for these reasons. Take blankets, hot drinks, flashlight, shovel, and radio. Listen to travel bulletins.
 - Reduce speed and use low beams in poor weather conditions.
 - Observe information on Variable Message Signs, and do not pass closed snow gates.
 - If stranded, stay in vehicle. Try to get as far off the road as possible, so emergency equipment will not be blocked.
 - If vehicle is buried by snow, keep an airway open if possible.
 - Great caution is needed when heavy snowfall begins to melt. Roads may be dangerously flooded. Black ice or slush may make roads treacherous. Even main routes may be affected.
- Traffic tends to be more congested on national holidays: January 1, April 14, May 8, August 7, and December 25 and 26.

POLICE ENFORCEMENT

- Officers with clearly marked mobile cameras monitor for speeders.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured in road crashes has dropped from 47 percent to 60 percent at sites where police have set up speed cameras.
- Efforts to catch drunk drivers are aided by private citizens' calls to a Crime Stoppers Hotline.



ROAD REGULATIONS

- Traffic drives on the left.
- Any holder of an overseas driving license may drive for up to one year.
- Speed limits are
 - Motorways and dual highways 70 mph (113 km/h)
 - Single carriageways 50 mph (80 km/h)
 - Urban areas 30-40 mph (50-65 km/h) unless otherwise posted.
 - In general, in any area with street lighting the speed limit is 30 mph (50 km/h), unless posted otherwise.
- Visitors bringing their own car must have green card insurance and registration papers.
- All drivers, with the exception of motorcyclists, are required to carry a warning triangle in their vehicle.
- At intersections, yield to traffic on the other road if dashed or double-dashed line is found across a path or triangle, or a series of triangles pointing toward you. If the triangles or series of triangles is pointing away from you, you have the right of way.
- The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.80. The legal limit of alcohol in the breathalyzer is 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 milliliters of breath (BRAC of 35 ug/100 ml).
- Penalties for drunk driving are severe.
- Drivers are strongly advised not to use cell phones or other equipment while driving.
- Seat belt laws:
 - Driver and passengers older than 14 years must wear seatbelt if fitted.



- o Children younger than 3 years must have appropriate child restraint if available.
- o With children aged 3-11 years and vehicles under 1.5 meters (about 5 feet) in height, appropriate child restraint must be worn if available. If not, an adult seat belt must be worn.
- o Children aged 12-13 years or a younger child in a vehicle of 1.5 meters or more in height, an adult seat belt must be worn if available.



ROAD WATCH

SOME GENERAL ROAD INFORMATION

ROADS	CONDITIONS
GLASGOW TO CARSLILE	Begins and ends as an interstate, but middle section is an open-access, four-lane road
TROSSACHS AND GRAMPIAN MOUNTAINS	Only a few major roads; most in valleys
BEYOND THE GREAT GLEN BETWEEN FORT WILLIAM AND INVERNESS IN NORTHERN SCOTLAND	Major roads almost disappear; single highway runs up east coast toward John o’Groats; smaller roads diverge from it
THE FIRTH OF FORTH AND THE CLYDE	Roads well-developed around Edinburgh and Glasgow
A74 FROM CARLISLE TO GLASGOW	Main access to England
A696/A68 FROM NEWCASTLE TO EDINBURGH	Well-developed routes
NORTH OF INVERNESS	Roads slower and often single track
THE A898 STRETCH THAT CROSSES ERSKINE BRIDGE	Safest stretch of road in Scotland
THE M80 FROM JCT 4, CASTLECARY ARCHES TO THE M9	Safe stretch of road in Scotland

SOME DANGEROUS ROADS

ROADS	CONDITIONS
81.5 MILE STRETCH OF THE A889 NEAR DALWHINNIE, INVERNESS-SHIRE	One of most dangerous roads in the United Kingdom; almost 4 times as many road crashes as the second worst road in Scotland
A99 IN CAITHNESS	Second most dangerous road in Scotland
A99 LATHERON TO WICK ROAD	High road crash rate
A82 GLASGOW TO INVERNESS TRUNK ROAD	Inadequate provision for accident prevention and crash protection
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**SOME DANGEROUS ROADS (CONTINUED)**

ROADS	CONDITIONS
A99 IN CAITHNESS	Second most dangerous road in Scotland
A99 LATHERON TO WICK ROAD	High road crash rate
A82 GLASGOW TO INVERNESS TRUNK ROAD	Inadequate provision for accident prevention and crash protection
A70 FROM CUMNOCK	Fifth most dangerous road in the United Kingdom
A70 EDINBURGH TO AYR ROAD	High road crash rate
A77	High road crash rate, with high percentages of serious and fatal road crashes
A9 BALLINLUIG JUNCTION AND COMISTON ROAD, BUCKSTON AND MORNINGSIDE IN EDINBURGH	High road crash rate
A80 GLASGOW TO STIRLING ROAD	High road crash rate
PINKIE ROAD IN EAST LOTHIAN	High road crash rate

**ROAD RECOMMENDATIONS****TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS****BUSES**

- Public transportation generally is safe.
- Almost every place in Scotland is accessible by bus or train. Service to more remote areas is less frequent and more expensive.
- Bus fares are lower than train fares, but both are fairly high. Buses generally are comfortable. On busy routes, book ahead to assure getting a seat.
- Local buses are run by private companies, but the timetables and routes are well-integrated. Some privately owned minibuses provide transport service in rural areas.
- The Post Bus Network serves areas not reached by bus or train. Post buses transport the mail and carry up to 8 passengers. They leave from post offices early in the morning, taking mail and passengers to remote rural areas. Fares are reasonable. For information, contact Royal Mail, Road Transport Consultancy, Room BT 20/3rd Floor, Rowland Hill House, Boythorpe Road,

Chesterfield S49 1HQ (Phone: 0845/774 0740 or 01246/546329) or via website:
www.royalmail.com/postbus.

TAXIS

- Taxis are readily available in most cities.

RENTAL CARS

- Both fuel prices and rental fees are high compared to most US cities. Arrange rentals prior to travel to get lower rates.
- A valid national license is required to rent a car. Also, drivers must have at least one year of driving experience and be aged 21-75 years.

AUTO SHUTTLE EXPRESS

- The auto shuttle express allows you fast and efficient car transportation to and from Scotland. It operates between London and Edinburgh and Glasgow and Inverness.



MOTORCYCLES & BICYCLES

- Crash helmets are required for motorcyclists and passengers.
- See Edinburgh Cycling Cooperative's website at www.edinburgh-bicycle.co.uk/routes/ for information on recommended cycle routes throughout Scotland.
- Over 50 percent of road crashes involving motorcycles occur in urban areas. Cyclists involved in road crashes in rural areas more likely are seriously injured or killed. The most frequent errors motorcycle drivers make on rural roads are losing control on a bend or making an unsafe passing maneuver.
- Casualties among motorcyclists has increased partly due to the growing popularity of this sport.

CRIME & SECURITY

- Political demonstrations generally are orderly and well policed. However, a history of terrorist violence is related to the political situation in Northern Ireland. US citizens have not been specifically targeted.
- Generally crime rates are low, and incidents of violent crimes are minimal.
- Incidents of pick-pocketing and theft of unattended bags are common in urban areas.
- Thieves sometimes target unattended cars at tourist sites.
- The crime rate in Glasgow is similar to that in most large US cities.



EMERGENCY INFORMATION

TOURIST ASSISTANCE

- Radio Scotland (FM 92.4-94.7/MW810Kh) and local stations broadcast reports of road conditions throughout the day. Road condition information is also available from Britain's Automobile Association. Call 01336 401 110 for hourly UK traffic reports.
- The national emergency number for fire, police and emergency medical service (EMS) is #999.
- The Automobile Association (AA), Royal Automobile Club (RAC), and Green Flag provide 24-hour emergency roadside assistance. The AA and RAC have a reciprocal agreement with many overseas motoring associations to provide free assistance to their members. Check to see if this applies to your association. If not, join when help arrives (a surcharge will be added). In an emergency, call AA and RAC from a roadside booth on motorways. Elsewhere, call 0800-887766 for the AA, 0800-828282 for the RAC or 0800-400600 for Green Flag.
- Fuel stations are plentiful, except in remote areas.
- Unleaded gas and four-star gasoline are available widely.

MEDICAL CARE

- Good medical services are available widely, but free health care under the National Health System is available only to residents. Visitors can expect charges roughly comparable to those charged in the US.
- Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health care services.
- In Glasgow, the Royal Infirmary (82-86 Castle St.) is the largest hospital. For dental emergencies, go to the Glasgow Dental Hospital and School NHS Trust, 378 Sauchiehall St, Phone: 0141-211-9600.
- In Edinburgh, the largest hospital is the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 1 Lauriston Place, Phone: 0131-536-1000. Dental emergencies, go to the Edinburgh Dental Institute, 39 Lauriston Place, Phone: 0131-536-4900.
- US medical insurance is not always valid in other countries. Medicare and Medicaid do not cover medical expenses rendered outside the US.

EMBASSY INFORMATION

- For more information contact the British Embassy, 3100 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 2000. Phone: (202) 588-7800. Website: www.britainusa.com/embassy.



- The US Consulate General, 3 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BW. Phone: in country, 0131-556-8315; from the US, 011-44-131-556-8315. After hours in country, 01224-857097; from the US, 011-44-1224-857097. Fax in country, 0131-557-6023. Website: www.usembassy.org.uk/scotland.
- For weather forecasts and road conditions in Edinburgh, Lothian, the Borders, Tayside and Fife, call 0891-505-322.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company accident on the roads of Turkey. © ASIRT 2004

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This report is intended to represent general road conditions, driving environment, quality of public transportation, medical care and emergency response. It may not be totally accurate in a specific location or circumstance.