

# Across The Pond:



The London Centre's Guide to Traveling  
England and Beyond

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# TRAVELING IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

While you should be sure to allow plenty of time to explore London, there are many other culturally and historically interesting and significant places in England, Scotland, and Wales that you will want to visit. Some parts of the UK are quite rural and the local culture and scenery are very different from London. The neighboring island of Ireland is also a beautiful and overwhelmingly friendly place to visit. Traveling around Britain is not entirely inexpensive, but it is more financially manageable than several trips across the English Channel. Furthermore, take advantage of Britain's small size and transportation network to make several day trips out of London to save money on food and lodging.

## International Youth Hostel Membership Card

Depending on how much you plan on staying in youth hostels, you may want to become a member of the International Youth Hostel Association. You can purchase U26 membership online at [www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk) or at the first hostel you stay at for £9.95. Non-members are welcome at YHA hostels but pay a £3 supplement on the normal overnight price. There are also several alternative hostel associations and many independent hostels and other budget accommodation options.

## Enjoying and Exploring Britain and Ireland

While it is impossible to list all possible places to visit in Britain and Ireland, here is a list of places many past Lawrentians have enjoyed visiting. Lawrence's London Centre Director and FIE staff members can help you find your own favorite places to add to the list.

### Greater London

- Greenwich (accessible by Docklands Light Rail): Home of the Prime Meridian and plenty of naval and maritime history.
- Cambridge and Oxford: These two medieval university towns are noted for the intellectual climate and their beautiful old buildings. Cambridge is the less crowded of the two.
- Canterbury: Medieval walled city, home of Canterbury Cathedral
- Epping Forest: Reachable by Tube. Beautiful forest home of the ancient battle between Queen Boudicca and the Romans.
- Hampton Court: Former palace of British monarchs and has huge and impressive gardens as well as a hedge maze. Accessible by bus or train.

The London Centre is small and traveling is an intense experience. You will have arguments with your roommate and traveling companions. The best way to avoid or mend these troubles is to take a break from one another and do not let these disagreements ruin your trips.

- Windsor: Scenic town of Eton School and the Queen's main palace home outside of London. Accessible by bus or by train from Paddington or Waterloo.
- St. Albans: Only 20 -45 minutes north of London by bus or commuter train, this old Roman capital of Britain has many ruins of the old Roman city, Verulamium, and a large Norman cathedral.

### Along the Southern Coast

- Dover and Rye: Medieval cities on the English Channel. Hike around the white cliffs and explore the castles.
- Brighton: Home of the delightfully kitsch Royal Pavilion (and some of the best clubs in Britain)
- Cornwall: Friendly people, beautiful scenery, quaint towns, and castles built by Henry VII. Very busy in the summer and calm the rest of the year.

### Western England

- Bath: Well-preserved and elegant eighteenth century resort city, home of Roman Baths, Jane Austen, and remarkable Roman ruins.
- Avebury: An ancient circle of standing stones and other prehistoric ruins. This stone circle is much larger and more impressive than Stonehenge and is not roped-off as Stonehenge is.
- Glastonbury: Ruins of a huge abbey that claims to be the oldest above-ground Christian church in the world. It is the reputed burial site of King Arthur. Located near sprawling and rugged Dartmoor National Park.

### Central England

- Cotswolds: The ultimate in quaint English villages. These rural areas are hard to reach with public transportation but are worth the trek. Fantastic hiking and cycling area.
- Salisbury: Salisbury Cathedral, the medieval ruins of Old Sarum, and close to Stonehenge
- Winchester: Huge cathedral with famous altar screen and stained glass, the reputed Round Table of King Arthur, Bishop's Palace, and medieval mystery plays.
- Stratford-upon-Avon: Very crowded and commercial birthplace of Shakespeare with first home, museum, and theatres devoted to William's plays. Nearby Warwick Castle is a well-preserved (and very commercialized) medieval castle.

### Eastern and Northeastern England

- Norwich: Pretty town in East Anglia with a lovely cathedral and several delightful churches.
- York: the discriminating medievalist's town of choice. Featuring the huge York Minster, the extensive remains of the old city wall and gates, ruined monastery in centrally-located park, Tudor era houses and streets, a strong connection to

Get travel advice from others who have gone on this or other study abroad programs and from people you meet along the way in your travels.

- their Viking history, great evening walking tours, and an excellent history museum.
- Durham: Large cathedral and charming university town

### Wales and Northern England

- Cardiff: Hip capital of the old country (Wales), gateway to rugged countryside via bus or minivan tour.
- Chepstow: Tintern Abbey and horse races.
- Llangollen: Scenic town nestled in hills with ruins or abbeys and ancient castles.
- Pembroke: Extensive ruins of castle where King Henry VII was born.
- Snowdonia National Park: Excellent hiking and magnificent Welsh scenery.
- Lake District: Famously beautiful area perfect for hiking and camping.

### Scotland

While Scotland is part of Britain, the Scottish nationalist movement is quite strong, especially with the advent of devolved government. Be sure to enjoy the distinct music, food, and history of Scotland. It is also worth noting that Scotland is often quite a bit cooler than London and southern England.

- Edinburgh: Well-preserved medieval central city complete with imposing castle and cobbled streets. Also has Georgian architecture, Scottish National Gallery, Palace of Holyrood, and magnificent views of the city and the Firth of Forth from Arthur's Seat. Also a good starting point for trips to the rest of Scotland. Try to take a minivan (rather than a bus) tour to get the most out of the sometimes rugged terrain. Great place to buy kilts and sweaters.
- Inverness: Loch Ness, castle, and amazing mountain scenery.
- Highlands: Great scenery, good hiking (if you are experienced), Loch Lomond and Balloch (picturesque town outside of Glasgow).
- Isle of Skye: Off the northern coast of the Highlands, very rural and traditional area with spectacular scenery.
- Shetland and Orkney Islands: Dramatic and desolate landscape, many prehistoric sites.



### Ireland and Northern Ireland

One of the main attractions of Ireland is the culture and way of life. The people are friendly and often have a great sense of humor. Wherever you go in Ireland, be sure to find a local pub with traditional music for a lovely Irish evening. While Northern Ireland has had a violent reputation due to political strife, many Lawrentians have greatly enjoyed their travels there. If you are concerned, ask or find out ahead of time which areas are more likely to be dangerous to travel to (especially certain areas of Londonderry and Belfast). Renting a car may be a more practical way to do extensive travel around Ireland.

### Southern and Western Ireland

- Cork: Home of the Blarney Stone, Blarney Castle and a centre for traditional Irish music.
- Killarney and the Ring of Kerry: Touristy but naturally beautiful area, especially good for hiking and cycling. Be sure to spend a day in Killarney National Park and visit Muckross Abbey and Muckross House.
- Dingle Peninsula: Quiet fishing area near Kerry with historic villages and homes, Gaelic spoken here.
- Galway: The high cliffs of Mohr, Gaelic spoken, colorful seaport town.
- Aran Islands: Gaelic enclave isolated from the rest of Ireland, traditional culture and nice scenery.

While there are undoubtedly many historic places, areas, sites, and museums you will want to see, be sure to budget plenty of time for walking around, trying new foods, listening to music, speaking with locals, taking walking tours with local guides, taking pictures, and writing in your journal. Take time to absorb the culture in each place rather than just hopping from city to city with time enough to see only the major tourist attractions.

### Dublin, areas near Dublin, and Belfast

- Dublin: Book of Kells at Trinity College, James Joyce exhibits, National Museum, Guinness brewery, O'Connell Street, Temple Bar district, good place for folk and Irish music, nice city parks, rich literary history and statues on every corner to prove it. Be sure to travel out of Dublin and into the surrounding countryside.
- Glendalough: Center of medieval Irish Christianity, monastic ruins with Round Tower, stunning scenery. Accessible by train, bus, or any number of bus tours from Dublin.
- Belfast: A city of prime importance in modern history and culture. Rich art and theatre scene.

## ACROSS THE CHANNEL AND BEYOND

You may want to travel to mainland Europe for your mid-term break or for a weekend trip. Although the idea of traveling in a country where people do not necessarily speak English can be daunting at first, do not let the language and cultural barrier stop you from visiting this country. Many Europeans speak at least a little English and will treat you politely if you make an effort to learn at least a few words of their language. It is remarkable how much you can communicate without proper sentences.

While travel in other European countries may be more frustrating than in Britain and Ireland, your journeys in these countries will teach you a great deal about communication, versatility, and how other people live. Make the most out of your time abroad by conversing with local people, exploring different cities, and finding your own hidden jewel of Europe. **Above all, do not be afraid of new places.** Most large European cities are far safer than cities in the United States and, as in London, a little common sense should keep you out of trouble.

Budget airlines based in London have made flying between England and other countries in Europe affordable. The Eurostar train service under the English Channel also makes the trip to the continent far more convenient. Once you have reached mainland Europe, the efficient and speedy rail service to capital cities and rural areas throughout Europe puts the whole continent at your disposal.

Whenever you leave the United Kingdom, be sure that you have your **passport** and your **identification letter from Lawrence** as well as the **contact information** for the Centre and staff. Customs officials often search luggage for illegal substances and materials at international airports and train stations. The fines and legal hassles involved with breaking laws in foreign countries are not worth any benefit you might think you will get from this.

# Lodging

## In Great Britain

The hostel system in Great Britain is extensive and most hostels are clean and comfortable. Word of mouth is the best way to discover fun places to stay. Be aware that many hostels have coed dormitories and, unless you ask for a single-gendered room, you may be placed in a coed dormitory. The other main lodging option in Britain is the ubiquitous Bed and Breakfast. These guesthouses are usually quite small and privately owned and operated. In addition to a room and (often) private bathroom or shower, the proprietor will serve a huge English or Irish breakfast in the morning. There are often several B&Bs in one town so be sure to compare prices and quality. These establishments are an essential element of British culture and do not have to cost a great deal so try to stay in one at least once.

## Accommodations Abroad

Lodging can be found on travel review sites, some of which are listed in the Reference section at the end of this book. Travel review sites are good because they display reviews from people who have stayed at places previously. These can help you decide on the quality of the lodging and whether you want to stay there as well. Be sure to check the dates of the reviews as well, as some can contain information that is years old.

**Hostels** range from clean, comfortable, centrally-located and providing free breakfast to dumpy, drab, dirty, and in areas of the city that are hard to reach with public transportation. The best way to find a hostel is to talk to people who have already been to the city or area you are traveling to. Many students consult online reviews of hostels for information from past guests. International Youth Hostel (IYH) hostels must adhere to a basic level of cleanliness and service. Private hostels are often either significantly better or worse than the standards. Choosing a dorm bed instead of a private room will save you money. Be sure to bring a padlock or other means of securing your belongings. Also consider how many others will be sharing your room; you may get more sleep in a room with five others than in a room with twenty filled beds.

While most people will choose the hostel route, be sure to evaluate all of your options in an area. Do not rule out **hotels** just because hostels might seem cheaper; there are some 3 star hotels that can be cheaper, nicer, and more conveniently located than hostels. This is particularly true if you purchase a double or triple room in a hotel or B&B and share the cost amongst a few people. Also – always check the addresses of accommodations on a map, as some inexpensive places are farther away from their destination and require means of getting into the heart of the city.

The European equivalent of English **Bed and Breakfasts** is the *pension* which is a small, locally-run business. Many Europeans also rent out single rooms in their homes. These alternatives to hostels often provide a more cozy and authentic experience. Other cities, such as Rome, have very few hostels. Look for alternatives in guidebooks, on the internet, or ask others who have traveled to these destinations.

Making **reservations** usually requires nothing more than making an online booking or phoning a hostel or inn a few days ahead of time (be aware that the need for reservations increases over holidays or in the summer and peak travel times). Most places will only take reservations with a credit card number to secure your booking. Be sure to note arrival times required by the hostel as they may cancel your reservation and your credit card may still be charged. The easiest way to book hostels is often on the internet. There you can also find sites with independent hostel reviews and remarks from people who have stayed at these establishments. Hostels on the IYH system allow you to make reservations for your next few destinations by paying ahead of time at your current location. Most cities also have an **accommodation office** in the tourist information centre or in the train station. These services will find you a room but will charge you a fee to do so, and oftentimes are not open on the weekends or certain days of the week. For the most part, you should avoid this unnecessary cost by making reservations yourself. However, in countries where few people speak English and the local language is an enigma to you, these services might serve as a valuable and worthwhile resource.



# Methods of Transport

## Air Travel within Europe

A number of budget airlines that fly out of Stansted, Luton, and Gatwick airports have made flying between the UK and mainland Europe or within Europe quite economical. In many cases, round-trip flights cost less than train or ferry tickets and certainly save time when you are traveling farther distances. You do not have to buy these tickets from the United States, and, in fact, it is usually better to wait to buy these tickets to take advantage of last-minute discounts or offers. You can purchase these tickets online on the websites of these companies, call the airline directly, or make arrangements through a student-oriented travel agency like STA Travel. Some of the cheapest flights can be purchased online through UK-based budget airlines and these prices are often cheaper than any you can get at travel agencies. Be aware that departures for these budget-airlines are sometimes only available very early in the morning - and often very late at night or before the Tube opens, which requires you to – in descending order of cost - call a taxi to the airport, take an all-night bus from Victoria, or spend the night in the airport. Budget airlines also may restrict the luggage you can take or charge large fees for checking bags. Check into EasyJet ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)), Ryan Air ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)), Aer Lingus ([www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)), British Airways ([www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com)), and Last Minute ([www.lastminute.com](http://www.lastminute.com)). Remember that initial prices you get from these sites are before taxes and fees and you will also need to add the cost to get to and from the airport.

## Specifics: How to Get to Ireland

As with the continent, the least expensive way to cross the water separating the two-islands is to fly on one of the budget airlines such as Ryan Air or EasyJet. It is also possible to buy train and ferry combination tickets. These tickets can be purchased at either Paddington or Euston stations (depending from which port you would like to leave). Be sure to specify that you are a foot passenger. If you want to visit Dublin, Northern Ireland, or Galway/Shannon, it is best to leave from Holyhead in North Wales. Fishguard Harbour provides access to Killarney, Cork, Waterford, and the rest of the southern portion of the Republic of Ireland. Be sure to check both ferry and train schedules as they do not always coordinate easily.

Once you are in Ireland, train travel can be fairly frustrating. The train routes reach only a few major cities, service is slow, and trains run only a few times a day. Use the trains if you have a Eurail pass, an Irish Rover pass (see below), or if you want to travel between two large cities such as Dublin and Cork. Otherwise stick to the buses. Remember that Northern Ireland and Ireland are two separate countries and you will need your **passport** and **identification letter from Lawrence** to travel between them.

# By Train

## Train Travel in Great Britain and Ireland

Train travel in Britain can be an efficient and pleasant way to visit many places around the country. Be sure to check your dates of travel against public holidays because trains get very

Be flexible and have a sense of humor. You will inevitably miss a train, get rained on, or choose the wrong hostel. But some of your best memories can come from the unexpected challenges you will encounter and the way in which you react to these.

crowded over holidays. If you do not buy a Britrail pass, look into buying a Young Persons Railcard ([www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/)). These discount cards cost £30 initially, but will pay for themselves in the amount you will save in reduced ticket prices. They are available at all major rail stations in London and require a passport-sized photo. Also look at prices for day return tickets which are good for a roundtrip on a single day and are usually only slightly more expensive than one-way fares.

There are eight major train stations in London, all of which serve a certain area of the country so be sure to check which station you need to leave from. All stations are conveniently linked to the Underground system. Below is a list of stations for major destinations. As you can see, a train for certain destinations may leave from more than one station. If in doubt, check the internet, call the station, or consult a guidebook. You can check schedules online ([www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)). The national rail network is a collective term encompassing the many train companies that provide service in Britain. For the most part, you can only buy tickets from the particular company you will be traveling with through their online or telephone sales departments or in person from the particular train station from which you will be departing.

King's Cross (Home of Harry Potter's Platform 9 3/4): Edinburgh and Scotland, Cambridge, York, Norwich, Durham, and East Anglia.

St. Pancras: Eurostar terminal (to France and Belgium)

Euston: North Wales, Northwest coast, Holyhead (ferry connections for Ireland), the Midlands, Glasgow and Western Scotland

Paddington (Home of Paddington Bear): Oxford, Salisbury, Bath, Bristol, Windsor, Fishguard Harbour (ferry connections for Ireland), Cardiff, South Wales, Portsmouth, Cornwall

Victoria: Gatwick Airport, Brighton, Croydon, Southeastern England, Dover and the Kent coast, Canterbury

Charing Cross: Dover and the South coast, Canterbury

Waterloo: South Coast, Windsor

Liverpool Street: Cambridge, Stansted Airport, Harwich (ferry connections to Holland and Denmark)

## **Crossing the English Channel** (see also “By Boat” Pg.)

### Eurostar

The Eurostar train runs several times each day between London and Paris and London and Brussels. Trains leave from very early in the morning to late at night. The entire journey takes less than two and a half hours. You can book tickets from [www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com) as well as calling them directly or going through a travel agent like STA travel. You will want to book your ticket at least a week in advance because the trains often fill up fast and fares often are higher as the travel date approaches. Be aware that travel from Monday to Thursday is less expensive than travel on the weekends. On the day of your departure, go to the Eurostar terminal in St. Pancras Station. You need to check-in at least 20 minutes in advance and go through passport control so plan to arrive at St. Pancras quite early. You then wait in the lounge area until your train is called. Eurail passes may not be used on the Eurostar. Tip: neither the Eurostar nor the Channel tunnel are referred to as ‘the Chunnel’ – this is often a uniquely American mistake to make.

## **Train Travel in Europe**

The easiest way to get to port cities from London and away from port cities to the rest of Europe is by train. Buses also frequently make journeys to Dover and other ports (**see ‘Traveling in Great Britain’ section**). The national rail network will sell combination train and ferry tickets from London to any continental destination (if you plan on using your Eurail pass, make sure that you do not buy a ticket for any farther than you need). Trains depart for Dover or other coastal cities (except Harwich – Liverpool Street) from either Victoria or Charing Cross train stations.

Trains in Europe go almost anywhere you would want to go and, anywhere trains do not go is served by buses. For the most part, you will be traveling on trains. Check the Thomas Cook Train Guide for a comprehensive list of schedules and destinations but, keep in mind that these schedules change. Always check schedules posted in train stations for up-to-date information. Trains leave quite promptly and you must be on board before the doors close or you will be left behind.

If you are traveling with a **Eurail pass**, make sure to have it dated and validated before you get on the train. This only needs to be done once and involves getting a little stamp on the inside cover and can be done at any train station. With a Eurail pass you are usually allowed to jump on and off any train at any time but, make sure to read the fine print on the back of your ticket. Trains are often labeled “ICE,” “IC,” “TGV,” or other acronyms that relate how fast the train goes and how often it stops. The Eurail pass will allow you to travel on most of these trains for free but, the fastest trains occasionally require you to pay a supplement. Avoid these trains if you do not want to pay an additional fee. Also, make sure that the train you are on will stop at your desired destination as some trains only run between two large cities without making stops. Also check to see if your Eurail or other train pass covers special trains and ferries not on the state railway system. Eurail passes are valid on many of these local services, although they will require a day of travel on a flexipass ticket. Keep in mind that there are often reservation or other fees that might apply when using a Eurail pass.

Mix in at least a few visits to more rural areas as well as spending time in cities; this can be a valuable part of your experience as well as introduce you to more everyday life in a country.

Although you usually do not need to **reserve seats** on trains, there are important exceptions to this rule. Europeans generally travel on holidays and trains are often full (or very crowded) on these weekends. This is especially true on Easter weekend and May 1<sup>st</sup> or the nearest Monday (the European Labor Day). Reserving seats for these days is often the only way to travel without waiting for hours for a standing-room spot.

If you want to sleep **overnight** on a train, you can reserve a couchette (a padded bunk in a compartment of five other bunks). This mode of transport is not luxurious but it is better than sleeping in regular train seats. Couchettes generally cost between 10 and 20 dollars more than regular seats and need to be reserved ahead of time (although typically not very far ahead of time). Trains often run all night between cities and sleeping on the train will allow you to save money on lodging and will keep your days free for exploring (rather than sitting on a train). Bring water and a little food with you on the overnight train because the journey is often rather dehydrating and food sold on the train will likely be expensive.

Train stations in Europe often have a number of **amenities for travelers** such as: public showers, grocery stores, toilets, and luggage-minding services. You can drop your backpack off for a nominal fee and pick it up at the end of the day. These services are usually safer than lockers and make for a much less tiring and more enjoyable day of sightseeing.

While the **Czech Republic** is not part of the Eurail system, it remains a popular destination for students. This beautiful country is bordered by two countries that are in the Eurail system (Germany and Austria) and your Eurail passes will get you to the Czech border. You can then purchase a ticket for your destination in the Czech Republic. Train travel (like most other things in the Czech Republic) is inexpensive so you should not let the fact that this country is not part of the Eurail system deter you from visiting.

## Train Passes

If you are planning on traveling extensively around Europe during your mid-term break or after the term is over, a Eurail Pass will may save you time and money. Students are advised to consider how many train journeys they plan to use and evaluate whether a Eurail pass will really be the cheapest way to approach these. These passes must be purchased before you leave the United States. You can purchase them from a travel agent or from the internet at [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com). However, many London Centre students have found it more cost-effective to purchase individual tickets with youth, student, or group concessionary rates.

There are two main types of **Eurail passes**: the classic pass (is good for any number of consecutive days or months) or the flexipass (has a certain number of days that you can use individually or over a specified period). If you plan on only using your Eurail pass for the mid-term break, the basic 15 consecutive days pass is probably the least expensive. If you anticipate using your pass over a greater period of time, the flexipass option will be cheaper, as you only have to pay for the days you are actually traveling. With a flexipass, you can choose to use it only for long journeys, then augment this pass by purchasing tickets for shorter trips.

Perhaps the greatest drawback to the Eurail pass is that, although valid in 17 countries (including the Republic of Ireland), it is not valid for travel in the United Kingdom. If you want to travel extensively in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, or Wales, you can purchase a **Britrail pass**. Like the Eurail pass, the Britrail pass can only be purchased from outside of the UK so you will need to buy this before you leave the United States. Again, you can choose between a consecutive-day pass or a flexipass. Keep in mind, however, that travel in Britain usually involves shorter distances; additionally, there are many other ways to save money on transportation in the UK. Also know that it takes time for these passes to arrive, so be sure to order them at least five weeks in advance of your departure date.

In addition to Eurail and Britrail passes, there are also a plethora of other **country or regional passes** to choose from. These options may prove economical if you are limiting your travel to a few countries or a small area. In particular, the Europass is good for travel in five Western European countries including France and Italy. Investigate online or ask your travel agent if one of these passes would save you money over a Eurail pass.

Students have found the **Young Person's Railcard** good value for use on the United Kingdom's national rail network. It costs £28 and is good for 1/3 discounts on most inter-city rail travel in Britain. You can purchase a Young Person's Railcard online or at any of the major National Rail stations (e.g., Victoria, Paddington, King's Cross, etc.) and will need a passport-size photo. Go to [www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/) for more information.

## **By Bus**

### **Bus Travel in the U.K.**

Because of Britain's size, and extensive highway system, buses are an economical way to see more of Britain than just London. While trains are faster, the bus is considerably less expensive.

Do be aware, however, that buses do not run as often as trains. The National Express bus service provides the majority of transportation options in England. Private lines such as Hairy Hog in Wales and Haggis Backpackers in Scotland operate tours geared towards younger travelers that last from an afternoon to several days, and can be especially good if you are traveling alone.

Local and county-owned transport systems take over where the National Express leaves off.

Another tour that leaves from Edinburgh to explore the Highlands is The Hairy Coo. It is a free tour – the workers are paid only in your tips, what you think the tour is worth.

The National Express buses (regardless of destination) depart from Victoria Coach Station which is located a few blocks away from the train station along Grosvenor Road. Take a map or ask for directions as it can be a bit tricky to find. You can buy your tickets at the station or over the phone. Be sure to buy a student discount card. Like the train card, this requires a passport-sized photo and will give you a substantial discount on any ticket you buy. You can also save money on buses by purchasing day-return tickets which are often only slightly more expensive than one-way fares. Make sure to ask about night buses; the London-Edinburgh over-night bus is a time-saving (though somewhat uncomfortable) option.

Local tours and private bus tours from London are also a fun way to see parts of the countryside. While these trips may be a bit expensive, they usually include a guide and trips to rural areas that are hard to reach using public transportation. These services are particularly useful in Scotland where the roads are more rugged but the scenery is beautiful.

In Ireland, the national bus system (BusEireann) travels to quite a few places to compensate for the relative lack of train options (although students have had mixed experiences with this service). You can either purchase point-to-point tickets (as in Britain) or an Irish Rover pass which allows unlimited train and bus travel for a specified period of time. These passes can be purchased at the main train and bus stations in Dublin and other larger cities.

## **Bus Travel in Europe**

While bus travel is certainly slower than with trains, you can save money and see more of the local scenery on a bus. Additionally, although the train network is extensive, it does not stop everywhere. Several international bus lines (such as Eurobus and Magic Bus) operate out of London. Check the internet, local papers, or travel agents for details. Some companies offer a pass similar to the Eurail pass which is good for unlimited travel within a certain time period. Check with the bus companies or the internet for information about this.

## **Other Alternatives**

### **Boat**

If you want to cross the Channel by boat, you have several options from which to choose. First, you must decide whether you want to cross via ferry or via hovercraft. The ferries cost less but often take twice as long as the jetfoils or hovercrafts. Secondly, you must decide your departure and arrival locations. If you want to go to Paris, you will either travel the Dover-Calais or Newhaven-Dieppe routes (although some boats also leave from Ramsgate). If you want to go to Belgium, you will probably travel from either Ramsgate or Dover to Ostend (Oostende). Dover, Ramsgate, and Newhaven are all located on the south eastern coast. Some boats leaving for Holland also leave from Harwich which is northeast of London in Essex.

### **Car Rentals**

Although you must be 25 to rent a car on the continent, you technically only need to be 21 to rent in Ireland and England. Finding a place that will rent to students can be a bit tricky. Although you do not need an International Driver's License to drive abroad unless you are out of the US for a year, it does not hurt to have one. Dividing the rental fees and gas among three or four people makes renting a car an economical way to see rural areas in England, Scotland, and Ireland where public transportation does not reach.



## **Travel References**

### **General Travel**

US Dept of State Students Abroad ([www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov))

US Dept of State Travel Registration ([www.step.state.gov/step/](http://www.step.state.gov/step/))

British Tourist Authority ([www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com))

Student Universe [www.studentuniverse.com](http://www.studentuniverse.com)

STA Travel ([www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com))

### **Tube and Rail**

TfL Journey Planner ([www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk))

Eurostar ([www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com))

UK National Rail ([www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk))

British Airports Authority ([www.heathrowairport.com](http://www.heathrowairport.com))

Young Person's Railcard ([www.16-25railcard.co.uk/](http://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/))

Rail Europe ([www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com))

### **Budget Air**

EasyJet ([www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

Ryan Air ([www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com))

Aer Lingus ([www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com))

British Airways ([www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com))

Last Minute ([www.lastminute.com](http://www.lastminute.com))

Bookit ([www.bookit.com](http://www.bookit.com))

### **Lodging**

Youth Hostel Association ([www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk))

Hostel World ([www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com))

Hostels ([www.hostels.com](http://www.hostels.com))