

Directory

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Country-wide practical information is given in this Directory. For details on specific areas, flip to the relevant regional chapter.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in England is as varied as the sights you visit. From hip hotels to basic barns, the wide choice is all part of the attraction.

B&Bs & Guesthouses

The B&B ('bed and breakfast') is a great British institution. Basically, you get a room in somebody's house, and at smaller places you'll really feel part of the family. Larger B&Bs may have around 10 rooms and more facilities. 'Guesthouse' is sometimes just another name for a B&B, although they can be larger, with higher rates.

In country areas, your B&B might be in a village or isolated farm; in cities it's usually a suburban house. Facilities usually reflect price – for around £20 per person you get a simple bedroom and share the bathroom. For around £25 to £30 you get extras like TV or 'hospitality tray' (kettle, cups, tea, coffee) and a private bathroom – either down the hall or en suite.

B&B prices are usually quoted per person, based on two people sharing a room. Solo travellers have to search for single rooms and pay a 20% to 50% premium. Some B&Bs simply won't take single people (unless you pay the full double-room price), especially in summer.

Here are some more B&B tips:

- Advance reservations are always preferred at B&Bs, and are essential during popular periods. Many require a minimum two nights at weekends.
- If a B&B is full, owners may recommend another place nearby (possibly a private house taking occasional guests, not in tourist listings).
- In cities, some B&Bs are for long-term residents or people on welfare; they don't take passing tourists.
- In country areas, most B&Bs cater for walkers and cyclists, but some don't, so let them know if you'll be turning up with dirty boots or wheels.
- Some places reduce rates for longer stays (two or three nights).
- Most B&Bs serve enormous breakfasts; some offer packed lunches (around £5) and evening meals (around £12 to £15).
- If you're on a flexible itinerary and haven't booked in advance, most towns

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- Be ready for a bizarre mix of metric and imperial measures in England; for example, petrol is sold by the litre, but road sign distances are given in miles.
- Use plugs with three flat pins to connect appliances to the 220V (50Hz AC) power supply.
- Read up on current events in the *Sun* or *Mirror* tabloids, or get a more incisive view in (from right to left, politically) the *Telegraph*, *Times*, *Independent* or *Guardian* quality papers.
- Relish the satire, then cringe at tales of corruption, in weekly no-frills mag *Private Eye*.
- Turn on the TV and watch some of the finest programs in the world from the multi-channel BBC, closely followed by boundary-pushing Channel 4.
- Tune into BBC radio for a wide range of shows, and no adverts. Half the households in England have digital radio and TV, but for those still on analogue, main stations and wavelengths are Radio 1 (98-99.6MHz FM); Radio 2 (88-92MHz FM); Radio 3 (90-92.2 MHz FM); Radio 4 (92-94.4MHz FM); Radio 5Live (909 or 693 AM).
- National commercial stations include Virgin Radio (1215Hz MW) and non-highbrow classical specialist Classic FM (100-102MHz FM). Both also on digital, with at least 40 other stations.
- The video and DVD format in England is PAL (incompatible with NTSC/Secam).

have a main drag of B&Bs; those with spare rooms hang up a 'Vacancies' sign.

- When booking, check where your B&B actually is. In country areas, postal addresses include the nearest town, which may be 20 miles away – important if you're walking! Some B&B owners will pick you up by car for a small charge.

Bunkhouses & Camping Barns

A bunkhouse is a simple place to stay, handy for walkers, cyclists or anyone on a budget in the countryside. They usually have a communal sleeping area and bathroom, heating and cooking stoves, but you provide the

sleeping bag and possibly cooking gear. Most charge around £10 per person per night.

Camping barns are even more basic: they're usually converted farm buildings, with sleeping platforms, a cooking area, and basic toilets outside. Take everything you'd need to camp except the tent. Charges are from around £5 per person.

Camping

The opportunities for camping in England are numerous – ideal if you're on a tight budget or simply enjoy the great outdoors. In rural areas, campsites range from farmers' fields with a tap and a basic toilet, costing as little as £3 per person per night, to smarter affairs with hot showers and many other facilities, charging up to £10.

Hostels

There are two types of hostel in England: those run by the **Youth Hostels Association** (YHA; ☎ 01629 592700; www.yha.org.uk) and independent hostels – most of which are listed in the **Independent Hostels** guidebook and website (www.independenthostelguide.co.uk). You'll find hostels in rural areas, towns and cities, and they're aimed at all types of traveller – whether you're a long-distance walker or touring by car – and you don't have to be young or single to use them. The YHA also handles bookings for many bunkhouses and camping barns around the country.

ROOM RATES

Throughout this book, most Sleeping sections are divided into three price bands:
 Budget – under £50 per double
 Midrange – £50-120 per double
 Top end – over £120 per double

These are high season rates for a double room with en suite bathroom; at quieter times of year prices drop. Single rooms are usually about 75% the double rate. The exception is accommodation in London, where 'budget' in this book means under £80 for a double room, midrange is £80-150, and top end is over £150.

YHA HOSTELS

Many years ago, YHA hostels had a reputation for austerity, but today they're a great option for budget travellers. Some are purpose-built but many are converted cottages, country houses and even castles – often in wonderful locations. Facilities include showers, drying room, lounge and equipped self-catering kitchen. Sleeping is usually in dormitories, and many hostels also have twin or four-bed rooms, some with private bathroom.

You don't *have* to be a member of the YHA (or another Hostelling International organisation) to stay at YHA hostels, but nonmembers pay £3 extra per person per night (£1.50 for under-18s), so it's usually worth joining. Annual YHA membership costs £16; under-26s and families get discounts. Throughout this book we have generally quoted the member rates for YHA hostels.

Small basic hostels cost from £10, larger hostels with more facilities are £14 to £19. London's excellent YHA hostels cost £19 to £25. All plus £3 if you're not a member. Reservations and advance payments with credit card are usually possible.

It's important to note that YHA prices (just like train fares) vary according to demand and season. Book early for a Tuesday night in May and you'll get the best rate. Book late for a weekend in August and you'll pay top price – if there's space at all. Throughout this book, we have generally quoted the cheaper rates (in line with those listed on the YHA's website); you may find yourself paying more.

YHA hostels tend to have complicated opening times and days, especially in remote locations or out of tourist season, so check before turning up.

INDEPENDENT HOSTELS

England's independent and backpacker hostels offer a great welcome. In rural areas, some are little more than simple bunkhouses (charging around £6), while others are almost up to B&B standard, charging £15 or more. In cities, backpacker hostels are perfect for young budget travellers. Most are open 24/7, with a lively atmosphere, good range of rooms (doubles or dorms), bar, cafe, internet computer, wi-fi and laundry. Prices are around £15 for a dorm bed, or £20 to £35 for a bed in a private room.

Hotels

A hotel in England might be a small and simple place, perhaps a former farmhouse now stylishly converted, where peace and quiet – along with luxury – are guaranteed. Or it might be a huge country house with fancy facilities, grand staircases, acres of grounds and the requisite row of stag-heads on the wall. With such a great choice your only problem will be deciding where to stay.

How much is a hotel in England? It depends. Charges vary as much as quality and atmosphere. At the bargain end, you can find singles/doubles costing £30/40. Move up the scale and you can easily pay to £100/150 or beyond. More money doesn't always mean a better hotel though – whatever your budget, some are excellent value, while others overcharge.

If all you want is a place to put your head down, budget chain hotels can be a good option. Most are totally lacking in style or ambience, but who cares? You'll only be there for eight hours, and six of them you'll be asleep. **Travelodge** (www.travelodge.co.uk) offers rooms at variable prices based on demand; on a quiet night in November twin-bed rooms with private bathroom start at around £20, and at the height of the tourist season you'll pay £45 or more. Other chains with similar pricing structures include **Premier Inn** (www.premierinn.com), **Etap Hotels** (www.etaphotel.com) and **Hotel Formule 1** (www.hotelformule1.com).

REACH FOR THE STARS

Hotels and B&Bs (and even hostels) in England are awarded stars by the national tourist board and main motoring organisations, according to their levels of quality and service. Don't go by stars alone though. Some five-star hotels have loads of facilities but can feel a bit impersonal, whereas many one- or two-star places are small and owner-managed guests feel especially welcome. In addition, many smaller B&Bs prefer not to pay the necessary fees to register with the tourist board and so don't get any stars, even though their service is absolutely fine. The moral: if you use official accommodation lists as your only source, you might miss out on a real gem.

Pubs & Inns

As well as selling drinks, many pubs and inns offer lodging, particularly in country areas. Staying in a pub can be good fun – you're automatically at the centre of the community – although accommodation varies enormously, from stylish suites to threadbare rooms aimed at (and last used by) 1950s commercial salesmen. Expect to pay around £20 per person at the cheap end, and around £30 to £35 for something better. An advantage for solo tourists: pubs are more likely to have single rooms.

If a pub does B&B, it normally does evening meals, served in the bar or an adjoining restaurant. Breakfast may also be served in the bar next morning – not always enhanced by the smell of stale beer.

Rental Accommodation

If you want to slow down and get to know a place better, renting for a week or two can be ideal. Choose from neat flats (apartments) in towns and cities, or quaint old houses and farms (always called cottages, whatever the size) in country areas. Cottages for four people cost from around £200 to £300 per week in high season. Rates fall at quieter times, and you may be able to rent for a long weekend.

University Accommodation

Many universities offer student accommodation to visitors during vacations. You usually get a functional single bedroom with

private bathroom, and self-catering flats are also available. Prices range from £15 to £30 per person.

ACTIVITIES

This section covers the practical side of outdoor activities. For more description and inspiration see the Outdoor England colour section, p141. In this book, we focus particularly on walking and cycling as these are the most popular, easy and straightforward. Some other activities, such as kitesurfing or mountaineering, are a bit more structured or need some advance preparation – but are still jolly good fun.

Walking

England has a 'right of way' network – public paths and tracks across private property – that is the envy of walkers from many other countries. Nearly all land (including in national parks) in England is privately owned, but if there's a right of way, you can follow it, as long as you keep to the route and do no damage.

The main types of rights of way for walkers are footpaths and bridleways (and open to horse riders and mountain bikers too). You'll also see 'byways', which, due to a quirk of history, are open to *all* traffic, so don't be surprised if you're disturbed by the antics of off-road driving fanatics as you're quietly strolling along enjoying the countryside.

Thanks to the landmark Countryside Act of 2004 – after more than 70 years of

ACCOMMODATION CONTACTS

Locally focused accommodation websites are listed in the regional chapters. For a country-wide view an excellent first stop is **Stilwell's** (www.stilwell.co.uk), a huge user-friendly database of accommodation for independent tourists, listing holiday cottages, B&Bs, hotels, campsites and hostels. Stilwell's is not an agency – once you've found what you want, you deal with the cottage or B&B owner direct. From the website you can also order a hard-copy brochure.

Good agencies include **Bed & Breakfast Nationwide** (☎ 01255-831235; www.bedandbreakfastnationwide.com) and **Hoseasons** (☎ 01502-502588; www.hoseasons.co.uk), the latter covering cottages and holiday parks.

For details on hostels, contact the **YHA** (☎ 01629-592700; www.yha.org.uk); the website also has information about bunkhouses, camping barns and YHA camp sites. The excellent **Independent Hostel Guide** (www.independenthostelguide.co.uk) covers hundreds of hostels in England and beyond – also available as an annually updated book.

If you're planning to tour England with a tent or campervan (motorhome) it's well worth joining the **Camping & Caravanning Club** (☎ 0845 130 7632; www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk), which owns almost 100 campsites and lists thousands more in the invaluable *Big Sites Book* (free to members). Annual membership costs £35 and includes discounted rates on club sites and various other services, including insurance and special rates for cars on ferries.

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?

England has a beguiling selection of accommodation options, and throughout this book we list many that stand out above the crowd. To widen the choice still further, and maybe discover a gem for yourself, contact the **Landmark Trust** (☎ 01628-825925; www.landmarktrust.org.uk), an architectural charity that rents historic buildings; your options include ancient cottages, medieval castles, Napoleonic forts and 18th-century follies.

Another option is **Distinctly Different** (☎ 01225-866842; www.distinctlydifferent.co.uk), specialising in unusual or even bizarre places to stay. Can't sleep at night? How about a former funeral parlour? Need to spice up your romance? Go for the converted brothel or the 'proudly phallic' lighthouse. Feeling brave? We have just the haunted inn for you.

Back safely down to earth with the final option. The **National Trust** (www.nationaltrust.org.uk) has over 300 holiday cottages and 80 B&Bs, many on the land of stately homes and working farms, in some of the finest locations in the country.

campaigning by the Ramblers Association and other groups – walkers (not bikes or other vehicles) can now move freely *beyond* rights of way in some mountain and moorland areas, but not in enclosed fields or cultivated areas. Where this is permitted it's clearly shown on maps, and by 'Access Land' or 'Open Access' notices on gates and signposts. The land is still privately owned, and occasionally Access Land is closed, for example if wild birds are nesting or if the farmer is rounding up sheep, but the 'right to roam' legislation opens up thousands of square miles of landscape previously off-limits to walkers. For more information see www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.

While enjoying your walking, it's always worth remembering the fickle nature of English weather. The countryside can appear gentle and welcoming, and often is, but sometimes conditions can turn nasty – especially on the higher ground. At any time of year, if you're walking on the hills or open moors, it's vital to be well equipped. You should carry warm and waterproof clothing (even in summer), a map and compass (that you know how to use), some drink, food and high-energy stuff such as chocolate. If you're really going off the beaten track, leave details of your route with someone.

Cycling

Cycling is a cheap and enjoyable way of getting around, with a tiny carbon footprint. Legally, you can cycle on any public road except motorways, although main roads (A-roads) can be busy and should also be avoided. Many B-roads suffer heavy motor traffic too, so the best places for cycling are

the small C-roads and unclassified roads (lanes) that cover rural England, where you can tour through quiet countryside relatively untroubled by infernal combustion engines.

Away from the roads, cycling is *not* allowed on footpaths, but mountain bikers can ride on bridleways (also called bridlepaths, originally for horses but now for bikes too), byways and other tracks as long as they're a right of way path.

For trouble-free mountain biking it's often worth seeking out forestry areas; among the vast plantations, signposted routes of varying difficulty have been opened up, ranging from delightful dirt roads ideal for families to precipitous drops and technical stretches for hardcore single-track fans.

Other Activities

COASTEERING

If edging along cliffs interspersed with dunks in the sea appeals, then coasteering is for you. It's not the thing to do on your own,

ROUTE OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

For comprehensive coverage of a selection of long and short walking routes, we (naturally) recommend Lonely Planet's very own *Walking in Britain*, which also covers getting there, and places to stay and eat along the way. If you're on two wheels, *Cycling in the UK* is an excellent handbook published by bike campaign group Sustrans, covering over 40 day-rides and a range of longer 'holiday routes'. For off-roading, the best book is *Where to Mountain Bike in Britain*, or see www.wheretomtomb.com.

THE NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK

Anyone riding a bike through England will almost certainly come across the National Cycle Network (NCN), a UK-wide 10,000-mile web of roads and traffic-free tracks. Strands of the network in busy cities are aimed at commuters or school kids (where the network follows city streets, cyclists normally have their own lane, separate from motor traffic), while other sections follow the most remote roads in the country and are perfect for touring.

The whole scheme is the brainchild of Sustrans (derived from 'sustainable transport'), a campaign group barely taken seriously way back in 1978 when the network idea was first announced. But the growth of cycling, coupled with near-terminal car congestion, has earned the scheme lots of attention – not to mention serious millions from government, regional authorities and (in early 2008) the national lottery.

Several long-distance touring routes use the most scenic sections of the NCN – plus a few less-than-scenic urban sections, it has to be said. Other features include a great selection of artworks to admire along the way. In fact, the network is billed as the country's largest outdoor-sculpture gallery. The whole scheme is a resounding success and a credit to the visionaries who persevered against inertia all those years ago. For more details see www.sustrans.org.uk.

but joining an organised group for a half- or full-day outing is easy enough. The outdoor centres provide wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids. You provide an old pair of training shoes and a sense of adventure. For more information see www.coasteering.org.

HORSE RIDING & PONY TREKKING

Exploring the English countryside on horseback is a great day out – even for total novices. You can find out about riding centres from tourist offices, and many advertise in national park newspapers (available free from hotels, tourist offices and local shops). A half-day pony trek starts from around £15, a full day around £35. Serious riders pay higher rates for superior mounts. The website of the **British Horse Society** (www.bhs.org.uk) lists approved riding centres and – if you fancy a few days in the saddle – outfits offering riding holidays.

ROCK CLIMBING & MOUNTAINEERING

If you want to try your hand (and feet) at rock climbing, local guides can be hired for one-on-one instruction in areas such as the Lake District, or you can join a group organised through an activity centre. As always, local tourist offices can provide contact details. For more info, the website of the **British Mountaineering Council** (www.thebmc.co.uk) includes access rules for outdoor locations (don't forget, all mountains and outcrops are privately owned), tips for beginners and much more.

SAILING & WINDSURFING

Your first port of call for any sailing or windsurfing matter should be the **Royal Yachting Association** (☎ 0845 345 0400; www.rya.org.uk). This organisation can provide all the details you need about training centres where you can improve your skills or simply charter a boat for pleasure.

SURFING & KITESURFING

England may not seem an obvious place for surfing, but conditions are surprisingly good, and the huge tidal range means often a completely different set of breaks at low and high tides. Apart from a board, your essential piece of equipment is a wetsuit – even in summer (when water temperatures are around 13°C). These can be easily hired from surf shops. For more information, the **British Surfing Association** (☎ 01637-876474; www.britsurf.co.uk) website has news on approved instruction centres, courses, competitions and so on. Combine this with comprehensive guidebook *Surf UK* by Wayne Alderson and you're sorted. For kitesurfing, there are several schools along the English coast that can show you the ropes. The **British Kite Surfing Association** (www.kitesurfing.org) has more information.

BEACHES

England has a great many beaches – from tiny hidden coves in Cornwall to vast neon-lined strands such as Brighton or Blackpool. Other great beaches can be found in Devon, Somerset and along the south coast, in Suffolk, Norfolk, Lancashire, Yorkshire and

Northumberland – each with their own distinct character. The best resort beaches earn the coveted international **Blue Flag** (www.blueflag.org) award, meaning sand and water are clean and unpolluted. Other parameters include the presence of lifeguards, litter bins and recycling facilities – meaning some wild beaches may not earn the award, but are still stunning nonetheless.

BUSINESS HOURS **Shops, Banks & Post Offices**

Monday to Friday, most shops and post offices operate 9am to 5pm (possibly 5.30pm or 6pm in cities). Banks open at 9.30am. Saturday, shops open 9am to 5pm, and banks (main branches only) open 9.30am to 1pm. Post offices may open all or half-day Saturday. Sunday shopping hours are around 10am to 4pm or 11am to 5pm, but banks and post offices are closed.

London and other cities have 24/7 convenience stores, but in smaller towns shops often close at weekends and for lunch (normally 1pm to 2pm), and in country areas on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon too. In cities and large towns there's usually 'late-night' shopping on Thursday – up to about 7pm or 8pm.

Museums & Sights

Large museums and places of interest are usually open every day. Some smaller places open five or six days per week, usually including Saturday and Sunday and often closed on Monday and/or Tuesday. Much depends on the time of year, too; they'll open daily in high season but just at weekends (or shorter hours) in quieter periods.

Restaurants & Cafes

Restaurants in England open for lunch (about noon to 3pm) and dinner (about 6pm to 11pm – earlier in smaller towns, midnight or later in cities), or they might open for lunch or dinner – usually every day of the week, although some close on Sunday evening, or all day Monday.

Cafes and teashops vary according to location. In towns and cities, cafes may open from 7am, providing breakfast for people on their way to work. In country areas, teashops will open in time for lunch, and may stay open until 7pm or later in the summer, catering to tourists leaving stately homes or hikers

down from the hill. In winter months country cafe and restaurant hours are cut back, while some places close completely from October to Easter.

Throughout this book we indicate if restaurants and cafes are open for lunch or dinner or both, but precise opening times and days are given only if they differ markedly from the pattern outlined here.

Pubs, Bars & Clubs

Pubs in towns and country areas usually open daily from 11am to 11pm Sunday to Thursday, sometimes to midnight or 1am Friday and Saturday. Most open all day, although some may shut from 3pm to 6pm. Throughout this book, we don't list pub opening and closing times unless they vary significantly from these hours.

In cities some pubs open until midnight or later, but it's mostly bars and clubs that have taken advantage of relatively recent licensing laws ('the provision of late-night refreshment', as it's officially called) until stay open to 2am or beyond. As every place is different, we list opening hours for bars and clubs.

CHILDREN

Many national parks and resort towns organise activities for children, especially in the school holiday periods (see p796), and local tourist offices are a great source of information on kid-friendly attractions.

Some hotels welcome kids (with their parents) and provide cots, toys and babysitting services, while others prefer to maintain an adult atmosphere, so you need to check this in advance. Likewise restaurants: some will have crayons and highchairs, and not mind if the menu lands on the floor; others firmly say 'no children after 6pm'. Pubs and bars ban under-18s, unless they're specifically 'family-friendly' places – and many are, especially those serving food.

Breastfeeding in public remains mildly controversial, but if done modestly is usually considered OK. On the sticky topic of dealing with nappies while travelling, most museums and historical attractions have good baby-changing facilities (cue old joke: I swapped mine for a nice souvenir), as do department stores. Elsewhere, you'll find facilities in motorway service stations and city-centre toilets – although these can be a bit grimy.

For more advice see www.babygoes2.com – packed with tips and encouragement for parents on the move.

CLIMATE CHARTS

England's changeable weather is discussed on p20. The charts shown here give details for specific regions.

CUSTOMS

The UK has a two-tier customs system – one for goods bought in another European Union (EU) country where taxes and duties have already been paid, and the other for goods bought duty-free outside the EU. Below is a summary of the rules; for more details go to www.hmce.gov.uk and search for 'Customs Allowances'.

Duty Free

If you bring duty-free goods from *outside* the EU, the limits include 200 cigarettes, 2L of still wine, plus 1L of spirits or another 2L of wine, 60cc of perfume, and other duty-free goods (including beer) to the value of £145.

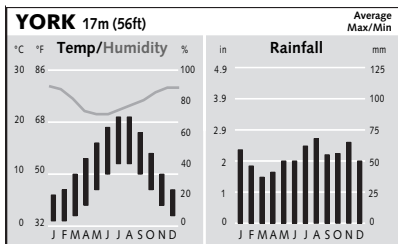
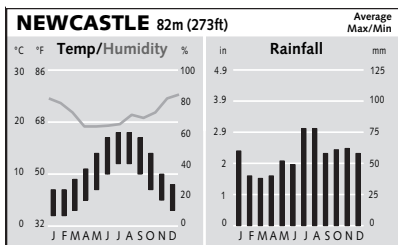
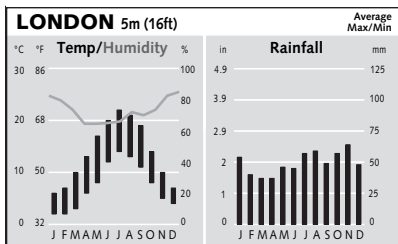
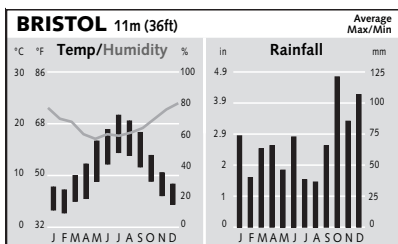
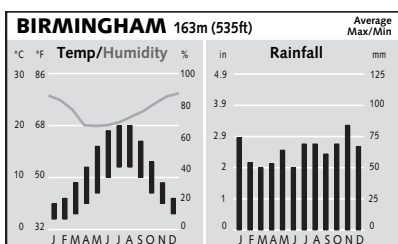
Tax & Duty Paid

There is no limit to the goods you can bring from *within* the EU (if taxes have been paid), but customs officials use the following guidelines to distinguish personal use from commercial imports: 3200 cigarettes, 200 cigars, 10L of spirits, 20L of fortified wine, 90L of wine and 110L of beer. Still enough to have one hell of a party.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

England is a remarkably safe country, considering the wealth disparities you'll see in many areas, but crime is certainly not unknown in London and other cities, so you should take care, especially at night. When travelling by tube, tram or urban train service, choose a carriage containing other people. It's also best to avoid some deserted suburban tube stations at night; a bus or taxi can be a safer choice.

As well as licensed taxis and minicabs (see p809), unlicensed minicabs – essentially a bloke with a car earning money on the side – operate in large cities, but these are worth avoiding unless you know what you're doing. Annoyances include driving round in circles, then charging an enormous fare. Dangers



include driving to a remote location then robbery or rape. To avoid this, use a metered taxi or phone a reputable minicab company and get an up-front quote for the ride. London and other cities have websites and phone lines to help you find licensed cabs; details are in the relevant chapters of this book.

On the main streets of big cities, mugging or bag-snatching is rare, but money and important documents are best kept out of sight and out of reach. Pickpockets operate in crowded public places such as stations or bars (bags and jackets hanging on chair-backs are popular targets), so make sure your stuff is secure here too.

In large hotels, don't leave valuables lying around; put them in your bag or use the safe if there is one. Do the same at city B&Bs, although in rural areas there's far less risk. In hostel dorms, especially independent/backpacker hostels in cities, keep your stuff packed away and carry valuables with you. Many hostels provide lockers, but you need your own padlock.

If driving, remove luggage from the car when parking overnight in cities and towns. The same applies even in some apparently safe rural locations. While you're out walking in the countryside, someone may well be walking off with your belongings. Where possible, look for secure parking areas near tourist offices.

DISCOUNT CARDS

There's no specific discount card for visitors to England, although travel cards (see p807) are discounted for younger and older people. Membership of the YHA (see p789) can get you discounts in bookshops and outdoor gear shops, and on some public transport.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

This selection of embassies, consulates and high commissions in London will be useful if you're from overseas and, for example, lost your passport. But they won't be much help if you're in trouble for committing a crime; even as a foreigner, you're bound by English laws.

Australia (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7379 4334; www.australia.org.uk; The Strand, WC2B 4LA)

Canada (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7258 6600; www.canada.org.uk; 1 Grosvenor Sq, W1X 0AB)

China (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7299 4049; www.chinese-embassy.org.uk; 49-51 Portland Pl, London W1B 4JL)

TRACE THE ANCESTORS

If you're a visitor with ancestors from England, your trip could be a good chance to find out more about them – or simply find long-lost relatives. The best place to start is the website of the **Family Records Centre** (www.familyrecords.gov.uk), full of advice on tracing family history, covering topics such as records of births, deaths, marriages, immigration and adoption, and with links to numerous other handy resource sites. The Family Records Centre cannot search individual records for you, but the **Association of Genealogists & Researchers in Archives** (www.agra.org.uk) lists professional researchers who can.

France (☎ 020-7073 1000; www.ambafrance-uk.org; 58 Knightsbridge, SW1 7JT)

Germany (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7824 1300; www.london.diplo.de; 23 Belgrave Sq, SW1X 8PX)

Ireland (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7235 2171; www.embassyofireland.co.uk; 17 Grosvenor Pl, SW1X 7HR)

Japan (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7465 6500; www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp; 101 Piccadilly, W1J 7JT)

Netherlands (☎ 020-7590 3200; www.netherlands-embassy.org.uk; 38 Hyde Park Gate, SW7 5DP)

New Zealand (☎ 020-7930 8422; www.nzembassy.com/uk; 80 Haymarket, SW1Y 4TQ)

Poland (☎ 0870 774 2700; www.polishembassy.org.uk; 47 Portland Pl, London W1B 1HQ)

USA (Map pp104-5; ☎ 020-7499 9000; www.usembassy.org.uk; 24 Grosvenor Sq, W1A 1AE)

For a complete list of foreign embassies in the UK, see the website of the **Foreign & Commonwealth Office** (www.fco.gov.uk), which also lists Britain's diplomatic missions overseas.

FOOD

For a flavour of England's cuisine, see the Food & Drink chapter (p73). Throughout this book, most Eating sections are divided into three price bands: budget (up to £8), midrange (£8-16) and top end (over £16).

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

England is a generally tolerant place for gays and lesbians. London, Manchester and Brighton have flourishing gay scenes, and in other sizeable cities (even some small towns) you'll find communities not entirely in the closet. That said, you'll still find pockets of homophobic hostility in some areas.

For info, listings and contacts, see monthly magazines (and websites) **Gay Times** (www.gaytimes.co.uk) and **Diva** (www.divamag.co.uk), or the twice-monthly **Pink Paper** (www.pinkpaper.com). In the capital, a useful source of information is the **London Lesbian & Gay Switchboard** (☎ 020-7837 7324; www.llgs.org.uk); there are similar services in cities and regions across the country. See also the boxes of specific information in the major city sections throughout this book.

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

In England and Wales, most businesses and banks close on these official public holidays (hence the term 'bank holiday'):

New Year's Day 1 January

Easter March/April (Good Friday to Easter Monday inclusive)

May Day First Monday in May

Spring Bank Holiday Last Monday in May

Summer Bank Holiday Last Monday in August

Christmas Day 25 December

Boxing Day 26 December

If a public holiday falls on a weekend, the nearest Monday is usually taken instead.

On public holidays, some small museums and places of interest close, but larger attractions specifically gear up and have their busiest times, although nearly everything closes on Christmas Day. Generally speaking, if a place closes on Sunday, it'll probably be shut on bank holidays as well.

As well as attractions, virtually everything – shops, banks, offices – closes on Christmas Day, although pubs are open at lunchtime. There's usually no public transport on Christmas Day, and a very minimal service on Boxing Day.

School Holidays

Most schools have three main terms, interspersed with three main holidays (when roads get busy and hotel prices go up), although the exact dates vary from year to year and region to region:

Easter Holiday Week before and week after Easter

Summer Holiday Third week of July to first week of September

Christmas Holiday Mid-December to first week of January.

There are also three week-long 'half-term' school holidays – usually late February (or


early March), late May and late October. Some regions are moving towards six terms (and six holidays) of more equal length

INSURANCE

Regardless of nationality, everyone receives free *emergency* treatment at accident and emergency (A&E) departments of state-run National Health Service (NHS) hospitals. For other medical treatment, many countries have reciprocal health agreements with the UK, meaning visitors from overseas get the same standard of care from hospitals and doctors as any British citizen. Travel insurance, however, is still highly recommended as it offers greater flexibility over where and how you're treated. It will usually cover medical consultation and treatment at a private clinics – which can be quicker than NHS places – and emergency dental care. Travel insurance will cover loss of baggage or valuable items (such as a camera) and, most important, the cost of any emergency flights home. For more medical information see the Health chapter (p812). Car insurance is covered on p807. Worldwide travel insurance is available at www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services. You can buy, extend and claim online anytime – even if you're already on the road.

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafes are surprisingly rare in England, especially once you get away from tourist spots. Most charge from £1 per hour, and out in the sticks you can pay up to £5 per hour. Public libraries often have computers with free internet access, but only for 30-minute slots, and demand is high. All the usual warnings apply about keystroke-capturing software and other security risks – especially if you're using the internet to keep tabs on, say, your banking while on the move. For information on websites about England, see the Internet Resources section on p24.

If you'll be using your laptop to get online, your connection cable may not fit in English sockets, although adaptors are easy to buy at electrical stores in airports or city centres. Sockets are thankfully becoming a thing of the past as an increasing number of hotels, hostels, stations and coffee shops (even some trains) have wi-fi access, charging anything from nothing to £5 per hour. Throughout this book, we use an  icon to

show if a place has PCs for public use and ‘wi-fi’ if it has wi-fi.

LEGAL MATTERS

Driving Crimes & Transport Fines

Drink-driving is a serious offence. See the Transport chapter for more information and details about speed limits (p808) and parking rules (p808).

On buses and trains (including the London Underground), people without a valid ticket for their journey may be fined – usually around £20 – on the spot.

Antisocial Behaviour

On-the-spot fines, or immediate fines (as for driving offences), can be imposed by police for antisocial behaviour, which includes drinking in public and littering.

Drugs

Illegal drugs are widely available, especially in clubs. All the usual dangers apply and there have been much-publicised deaths associated with ecstasy. Cannabis possession is a criminal offence; punishment for carrying a small amount may be a warning – or a fine or imprisonment. Dealers face stiffer penalties, as do people caught with any other ‘recreational’ drugs.

Age Restrictions

You must be over 18 to buy alcohol, but over-16s may buy cigarettes. You usually have to be 18 to enter a pub or bar, although the rules are different if you have a meal. Some bars and clubs are over-21 only.

MAPS

For a map of the whole country, a road atlas is handy – especially if you’re travelling by car. The main publishers are Ordnance Survey (OS) and Automobile Association (AA), with atlases in all sizes and scales. If you plan to use minor roads, you’ll need a scale of about 1:200,000 (3 miles to 1in). Most road atlases cost £5 to £10 and are updated annually, which means old editions are sold off every January – look for bargains at motorway service stations.

For greater detail, the OS *Landrangers* (1:50,000) are ideal for walking and cycling. OS *Explorer* maps (1:25,000) are even better for walking in lowland areas, but can sometimes be hard to read in complex mountain

landscapes. Your best choice here is the excellent specialist series produced for rambles, walkers, mountaineers and other outdoor types by **Harvey Maps** (www.harveymaps.co.uk), covering upland areas and national parks, plus routes for hikers and bikers.

If you’re spending any length of time in London, iconic A-Z street maps (online and in book form) are incredibly detailed and invaluable. The books are sold at newsagents and souvenir shops – remember to pronounce it ‘A to Zed’. Similar street maps are available for other cities and big towns across the country.

MONEY

The currency of England (and Britain) is the pound sterling. Paper money comes in £5, £10, £20 and £50 denominations, although £50s can be difficult to change because fakes circulate. Prices quoted in this book are in UK pounds (£), unless otherwise stated, although other currencies are very rarely accepted if you’re buying goods and services, except for some places in the ferry ports of southern England, which take euros, and the smarter souvenir and gift shops in London, which may take euros, US dollars, yen and other major currencies. A guide to exchange rates is given on the inside front cover of this book, and there are some pointers on costs on p20.

ATMs

Debit or credit cards are perfect companions – the best invention for travellers since the backpack. You can use them in most shops, and withdraw cash from ATMs (often called ‘cash machines’) which are easy to find in cities and even small towns. But ATMs aren’t fail-safe, and it’s a major headache if your only card gets swallowed, so take a backup. And watch out for ATMs which might have been tampered with; a common ruse is to attach a card-reader to the slot; your card is scanned and the number used for fraud.

Credit & Debit Cards

Visa and MasterCard credit and debit cards are widely accepted in England, and are good for larger hotels, restaurants, shopping, flights, long-distance travel, car hire etc. Smaller businesses, such as pubs or B&Bs, prefer debit cards (or charge a fee for credit cards), and some take cash or cheque only.

Since early 2006, nearly all credit and debit cards use the 'Chip and PIN' system; instead of signing, you enter a PIN (personal identification number). If you're from overseas, and your card isn't Chip and PIN enabled, you should be able to sign in the usual way, but some places will not accept your card.

Moneychangers

Finding a place to change your money (cash or travellers cheques) into pounds is never a problem in cities, where banks and bureaux compete for business. Be careful using bureaux, however; some offer poor rates or levy outrageous commissions. You can also change money at some post offices – very handy in country areas, and exchange rates are fair (and usually commission free).

Tippling & Bargaining

In restaurants you're expected to leave a tip of around 10%, but at smarter restaurants in larger cities waiters can get a bit snifty if the tip isn't nearer 12% or even 15%. Either way, it's important to remember that you're not obliged to tip if the service or food was unsatisfactory (even if it's been added to your bill as a 'service charge'). At smarter cafes and teashops with table service, around 10% is fine. If you're paying with a credit or debit card and you want to add the tip to the bill, it's worth asking the waiting staff if they'll actually receive it. Some prefer to receive tips in cash.

Taxi drivers also expect tips (about 10%, or rounded up to the nearest pound), especially in London. It's less usual to tip minicab drivers. Toilet attendants (if you see them loitering) may get tipped around 50p.

In pubs, when you order drinks at the bar, or order and pay for food at the bar, tips are not expected. If you order food at the table and your meal is brought to you, then a tip may be appropriate – if the food and service have been good, of course.

Bargaining is rare, although it's occasionally encountered at markets. It's fine to ask if there are student discounts on items such as theatre tickets, books or outdoor equipment.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques offer protection from theft, so are safer than wads of cash, but are rarely used in England, as credit/debit

cards and ATMs have become the method of choice. If you prefer travellers cheques, note that they are rarely accepted for purchases (except at large hotels), so for cash you'll still need to go to a bank or bureau.

POST

There are two classes of post within the UK: a standard letter costs 36p first-class (normally delivered next day) and 27p second-class (up to three days). The cost goes up if the letter is heavier than 100g, larger than 240x165mm or thicker than 5mm, and up again if heavier than 750g and bigger than 353x250x25mm. Stamps are available at post offices, and there's usually a handy device for checking the size of your letters before you buy. Stamps for straightforward 1st and 2nd class mail can also be bought at shops and newsagents. Letters by airmail start at 50p to EU countries and 56p to the rest of the world (up to 10g). For details on all prices, see www.postoffice.co.uk.

TELEPHONE

England's iconic red phone boxes can still be seen in city streets and especially in conservation areas, although many have been replaced by soulless glass cubicles. With the advent of mobile phones (cellphones), many phone booths have been removed and not replaced at all. Where they do exist, public phones usually accept coins and credit/debit cards. The minimum charge is 20p.

Area codes in Britain do not have a standard format and vary in length, which can be confusing for foreigners (and locals). For example ☎020 for London, ☎0161 for Manchester, ☎01225 for Bath, ☎015394 for Ambleside, followed as usual by the individual number. In this book, area codes and individual numbers are listed together, separated by a hyphen.

As well as the geographical area codes, other codes include: ☎0500 or ☎0800 for free calls and ☎0845 for calls at local rate, wherever you're dialling from within the UK. Numbers starting with ☎087 are charged at national-call rate, while numbers starting with ☎089 or ☎09 are premium rate, and should be specified by the company using the number (eg in their advertising literature), so you know the cost before you call. (These codes and numbers are not separated by hyphens, as you always have to dial the whole

number.) Note that many numbers starting with 08 or 09 do not work if you're calling from outside the UK, or if they do you'll be charged for a full international call – and then some.

Codes for mobile phones usually start with 07 – more expensive than calling a landline.

International Calls

To call outside the UK dial 00, then the country code (01 for USA, 061 for Australia etc), the area code (you usually drop the initial zero) and the number.

Direct-dialled calls to most overseas countries can be made from most public telephones, and it's usually cheaper between 8pm and 8am Monday to Friday and at weekends. You can usually save money by buying a phonecard (usually denominated £5, £10 or £20) with a PIN that you use from any phone by dialling an access number (you don't insert it into the machine). There are dozens of cards, usually available from city newsgagents, with rates of the various companies often vividly displayed.

To make reverse-charge (collect) calls, dial 155 for the international operator. It's expensive, but at least the person at the other end is paying.

To call England from abroad, dial your country's international access code, then 44 (the UK's country code), then the area code (dropping the first 0) and the phone number.

Most internet cafes now have Skype or some other sort of VOIP system, so you can make international calls for the price of your time online.

Local & National Calls

From public phones the weekday rate is about 5p per minute; evenings and weekends are cheaper, but still with a minimum charge of 20p. Local calls (within 35 miles) are cheaper than national calls. All calls are cheaper between 6pm and 8am Monday to Thursday, and from 6pm Friday to 8am Monday. From private phones, rates vary between telecom providers.

For the operator, call 100. For directory inquiries, a host of agencies compete for your business and charge from 10p to 40p; numbers include 118 192, 118 118, 118 500 and 118 811.

Mobile Phones

Around 50 million people in the UK have mobile phones, and thus the ability to tell their loved ones they're on the train. The terse medium of SMS is a national passion, with a billion text messages sent monthly.

Phones in the UK use GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with Europe and Australia but not with North America or Japan (although phones that work globally are increasingly common).

Even if your phone works in the UK, because it's registered overseas a call to someone just up the road will be routed internationally and charged accordingly. An option is to buy a local SIM card (around £30), which includes a UK number, and use that in your own handset (as long as your phone isn't locked by your home network).

A second option is to buy a pay-as-you-go phone (from around £50, including SIM and number); to stay in credit, you buy 'top-up' cards at newsgagents.

TIME

Wherever you are in the world, time is measured in relation to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT, or Universal Time Coordinated, UTC as it's more accurately called), so a highlight for many visitors to London is a trip to Greenwich and its famous line dividing the western and eastern hemispheres.

To give you an idea, if it is noon in London, it is 4am on the same day in San Francisco, 7am in New York and 10pm in Sydney. British summer time (BST) is Britain's daylight saving; one hour ahead of GMT from late March to late October.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Before leaving home, check the informative, comprehensive and wide-ranging websites **VisitBritain** (www.visitbritain.com) and **EnjoyEngland** (www.enjoyengland.com), covering all the angles of national tourism, with links to numerous other sites. Details about local and regional websites and tourist organisations listed throughout this book.

Tourist Offices Abroad

In recent years, VisitBritain has moved away from physical offices in overseas capitals, and instead improved their web-based services. From the www.visitbritain.com portal

you can follow links to a wealth of information on Britain aimed at visitors from many different countries and in many different languages. For specific questions, you can email your nearest VisitBritain office via the website, but only a few have public phone numbers. Main contacts include the following:

Australia (☎ 1300 85 85 89; www.visitbritain.com/au; 15 Blue St, North Sydney, NSW 2060)

Canada (☎ 1 888 847 4885; www.visitbritain.com/ca)

France (www.visitbritain.com/fr)

Germany (www.visitbritain.com/de)

Netherlands (www.visitbritain.com/nl)

New Zealand (☎ 0800 700741; www.visitbritain.com/nz)

USA (☎ 800 462 2748; www.visitbritain.com/us)

Local Tourist Offices

All English cities and towns (and some villages) have a tourist information centre (TIC). Some TICs are run by national parks and often have small exhibits about the area. You'll also see visitor welcome centres or visitor information centres, often run by chambers of commerce or civic trusts. For ease we've called all these places 'tourist offices' in this book. Whatever the name, these places have helpful staff, books and maps for sale, leaflets to give away and loads of advice on things to see or do. They can also assist with booking accommodation. Most tourist offices keep regular business hours; in quiet areas they close from October to March, while in popular areas they open daily year-round. For a list of all tourist offices around Britain see www.visitmap.info/tic.

Look out for tourist information points – usually a rack of leaflets about local attractions set up in a post office or shop in a village not big enough to have its own full-on tourist office.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

If you happen to be us wheelchair or crutches, or just find moving about a bit tricky, you'll find England a mixed bag. All new buildings have wheelchair access, and even hotels in grand old country houses often have lifts, ramps and other facilities added, although smaller B&Bs are often harder to adapt, so you'll have less choice here. In the same way, you might find a restaurant with ramps and excellent wheelchair-access loo, but tables so close you can't get past.

When getting around in cities, new buses have low floors for easy access, but few have conductors who can lend a hand when you're getting on or off. Many taxis take wheelchairs, or just have more room in the back, so that might be a better way to go.

For long-distance travel, coaches may present problems if you can't walk, but the main operator, **National Express** (www.national-express.com) has wheelchair-friendly coaches on many routes, with plans for more. For details, ring their dedicated Disabled Passenger Travel Helpline on ☎ 0121-423 8479 or try the website. On most inter-city trains there's more room and better facilities, and usually station staff around; just have a word and they'll be happy to help.

Useful organisations and websites

All Go Here (www.allgohere.com) Comprehensive info on hotels and travel.

Disability UK (www.disabilityuk.com) Excellent information resource; shopping, benefits, diseases, drugs, and more.

Good Access Guide (www.goodaccessguide.co.uk) The name says it all.

Holiday Care Service (☎ 0845 124 9971; www.holiday-care.org.uk) Travel and holiday information; publisher of numerous booklets on UK travel.

Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation (RADAR; ☎ 020-7250 3222; www.radar.org.uk) Published titles include *Holidays in Britain and Ireland*. Through RADAR you can get a key for 7000 public disabled toilets across the UK.

Shopmobility (www.shopmobilityuk.org) Directory of cities and towns across Britain where manual or powered wheelchairs can be hired, often for free.

VISAS

If you're a European Economic Area (EEA) national, you don't need a visa to visit (or work in) England or any other part of the UK. Citizens of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA are given leave to enter the UK at their point of arrival for up to six months (three months for some nationalities), but are prohibited from working. If you intend to work, see opposite.

UK immigration authorities are tough, and if they suspect you're here for more than a holiday, you may need to prove that you have funds to support yourself, details of any hotels or local tours booked, or personal letters from people you'll be visiting. Having a return ticket helps.

Visa and entry regulations are always subject to change, so it's vital to check before leaving

HISTORY TIPS

For many visitors, a highlight of a journey through England is visiting the numerous castles and historic sites that pepper the country. Membership of the **National Trust** (NT; ☎ 0844 800 1895; www.nationaltrust.org.uk) and **English Heritage** (EH; ☎ 0870 333 1181; www.english-heritage.org.uk) gets you free admission (quite a saving when individual entry to NT sites can be around £5, while EH sites range from free to about £6), as well as reciprocal arrangements with other heritage organisations (in Wales, Scotland and beyond), information handbooks and so on. You can join at the first NT or EH site you visit. If you are a member of a similar organisation in your own country, this may get you free or discounted entry at NT and EH sites in England.

The NT protects hundreds of historic buildings plus vast tracts of land with scenic importance. Annual membership costs £46 (with discounts for under-26s and families), reduced by about 25% if you pay by direct debit. Alternatively, a Touring Pass allows free entry to NT properties for one/two weeks (£19/24 per person); families and couples get cheaper rates.

English Heritage is a state-funded organisation responsible for numerous historic sites. Annual membership costs £42 (couples and seniors get discounts). An Overseas Visitors Pass allows free entry to most sites for seven/14 days for £19/23 (with cheaper rates for couples and families).

We have included the relevant acronym (NT or EH) in the information brackets after properties listed throughout this book.

home. Your first stop should be www.ukvisas.gov.uk or www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk, and if you still have queries contact your local British embassy, high commission or consulate.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES

England is in transition when it comes to weights and measures, as it has been for the last 40 odd years – and probably will be for 40 more. For length and distance, most people still use the imperial units of inches, feet, yards and miles, although mountain heights on maps are given in metres.

For weight, many people use pounds and ounces, even though since January 2000 goods in shops must be measured in kilograms. And nobody knows their weight in pounds or kilograms; Brits weigh themselves in stones, an archaic unit of 14 pounds.

When it comes to volume, things are even worse: most liquids are sold in litres or half-litres, except milk and beer – which are available in pints. Garages sell petrol priced in pence per litre, but measure car performance in miles per gallon. Great, isn't it?

In this book we have reflected this wacky system of mixed measurements. Heights are given in metres (m) and distances in miles and metres. For conversion tables, see the inside front cover.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Occasional wolf whistles from building sites aside, solo women will find England fairly

enlightened. There's nothing to stop women going into pubs alone, for example (although you may feel conspicuous in a few places). Restaurants may assume you're waiting for a date unless you specify a table for one, but it's no big deal once you've clarified.

Safety is not a major issue, although commonsensical caution should be observed when walking in big cities, especially at night. Hitching is always unwise, and see p794 for advice on travel by minicab. Unfortunately, women having their drinks spiked with 'date-rape drugs' can be a problem in some bars and clubs, so once again precautions (such as not leaving your drink unattended) should be taken.

The contraceptive pill is available free on prescription in England, as is the morning-after pill (also on sale at chemists/pharmacies). Most cities have Well Woman Clinics that can advise on general health issues; they're listed in the local phone book. Most cities and towns have a rape crisis centre, where information or counselling is free and confidential; see www.rapecrisis.org.uk.

WORK

Nationals of most European countries don't need a permit to work in England, but everyone else does. If you're a non-European and work is the main purpose of your visit, you must be sponsored by an English company.

Exceptions include most Commonwealth citizens with a UK-born parent; the 'Right of

Abode' allows you to live and work in England and the rest of the UK. Most Commonwealth citizens under 31 are eligible for a Working Holidaymaker Visa. It's valid for two years, you can work for a total of 12 months, and it must be obtained in advance, but you're not allowed to establish a business or work as a professional athlete.

Once you've got permission to work, the next step is finding some. Many bars, restaurants and shops in London seem to be staffed by Australasians, so that gives a clue to one option – and it's not restricted to London at all. Some visitors arrange work in small towns and villages in remote areas, and enjoy getting under the skin of a local community for a

few months. Other options include teaching in language schools, nursing, nannying and general office temping. Obviously, you'll need to appropriate qualifications and other paperwork for some of these jobs.

Useful websites are listed below. Also very useful is the 'Living & Working Abroad' thread on the Thorntree forum at lonelyplanet.com.

BUNAC (www.bunac.org)

Go Work Go Travel (www.goworkgotravel.com) Working holidays worldwide, including the UK.

UK Border Agency (www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)

UK Employment & Recruitment Agencies (www.employmentrecruitment.co.uk)

Working Holiday Guru (www.workingholidayguru.com) Aimed mainly at Australians coming to Europe.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

London is a global transport hub, so you can easily fly to England from just about anywhere in the world. In recent years, the massive growth of budget ('no-frills') airlines has increased the number of routes – and reduced the fares – between England and other countries in Europe.

Your other main option for travel between England and mainland Europe is ferry, either port-to-port or combined with a long-distance bus trip – this type of travel has less environmental impact than flying, although journeys can be long and financial savings not huge compared with budget airfares. International trains are much more comfortable, and another 'green' option; the Channel Tunnel allows direct rail services between England, France and Belgium, with onward connections to many other European destinations.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Getting from England to Scotland and Wales is easy. The bus and train systems are fully integrated and in most cases you won't even know you've crossed the border. Passports are not required – although some Scots and Welsh may think they should be!

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online by accessing www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services.

AIR

Airports

London's main airports for international flights are Heathrow and Gatwick. Luton and Stansted deal largely with charter and budget European flights, and London City Airport specialises in business flights. For details on getting between these airports and central London, see p169.

Some planes on European and long-haul routes go direct to major regional airports including Manchester, while smaller regional airports such as Southampton and Birmingham are served by flights to and from continental Europe and Ireland.

HEATHROW

Some 15 miles west of central London, **Heathrow** (LHR; ☎ 0870 000 0123; www.heathrowairport.com) is the world's busiest airport, often chaotic and crowded, with five terminals. Check which terminal your flight departs from.

GATWICK

Smaller than Heathrow, but still the UK's number-two airport, **Gatwick** (LGW; ☎ 0870 000 2468; www.gatwickairport.com) is 30 miles south of central London.

STANSTED

London's third-busiest airport, **Stansted** (STN; ☎ 0870 000 0303; www.stanstedairport.com) is 35 miles northeast of central London, and one of Europe's fastest-growing airports.

LUTON

Some 35 miles north of central London, **Luton** (LTN; ☎ 01582-405100; www.london-luton.co.uk) is especially well-known as a holiday flight airport.

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motor travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening; two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow jetsetters to offset the greenhouse gases they are responsible for with contributions to energy-saving projects and other climate-friendly initiatives in the developing world – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: lonelyplanet.com.

LONDON CITY

A few miles east of central London, **London City** (LCY; ☎ 020-7646 0088; www.londoncityairport.com) has flights to/from European and other UK airports.

MANCHESTER

In northern England, the airport for England's second city, **Manchester** (MAN; ☎ 08712 710711; www.manchesterairport.co.uk) is increasingly busy with direct flights to/from Europe, the Gulf states, South Asia and beyond.

Airlines

Most of the world's major airlines have services to England from many parts of the world, and budget airlines fly between England and other European countries. Charter flights are another option; you can buy seat-only deals on the planes that carry tourists between, for example, England and numerous Mediterranean resorts. The best deals are usually available online, and to save going to every airline's site individually, it's worth using an internet travel agency or price comparison site; these include the following:

Cheapflights.co.uk (www.cheapflights.co.uk)

Expedia (www.expedia.com)

Flightline.co.uk (www.flightline.co.uk)

LowCostAirlines.org (www.lowcostairlines.org)

skyscanner (www.skyscanner.com)

Travelocity Travel (www.travelocity.com)

Tickets

Because London is one of the world's main air travel hubs, there's cooption between the airlines, and that means competitive fares. You can purchase your airline ticket from a travel agency (in person, by telephone or on the internet), or direct from the airline (the best deals are often available online only). It always pays to shop around. Internet travel agencies work well if you're doing a straightforward trip, but for anything even slightly complex there's no substitute for a real-live travel agent who knows the system, the options, the special deals and so on.

Australia & New Zealand

The route to England from the southern hemisphere is very popular, with a wide range of fares from about AUD\$1500 to AUD\$3000 return. From New Zealand it's often best to go via Australia. Round-the-world tickets can sometimes work out cheaper than a straightforward return.

Continental Europe

You can fly between England and pretty much every capital city in Europe (and many other

cities too), using national airlines such as Air France, Lufthansa and so on, or budget airlines such as Ryanair, easyJet and Virgin Express.

Ireland

There are numerous flights each day between the capitals Dublin and London, and many more between other cities in Ireland and England. If you book early and avoid the busy periods (such as Friday afternoon and evening), fares on budget airlines can be just a few pounds or euros.

Canada & the USA

There's a continuous price war on the world's busiest transcontinental route. Return fares from the east coast to London range from US\$300 to US\$600. From the west coast, fares are about US\$100 higher.

LAND Bus

You can easily get between England and other European countries via long-distance bus or coach. The international network **Eurolines** (www.eurolines.com) connects a huge number of destinations; the website is full of information on routes and options, and you can buy tickets online via one of the national operators. Services to/from England are operated by **National Express** (www.nationalexpress.com) and some sample journey times to/from London are: Amsterdam 12 hours; Paris eight or nine hours; Dublin 12 hours; Barcelona 24 hour. If you book early, and can be flexible with timings (ie travel when few other people want to) you can get some very good deals – some branded as 'fun fares' and 'promo fares'. For example, London to Paris or Amsterdam one-way starts at just £18, although paying nearer £25 is more usual. It's still worth checking the budget airlines, though. You may pay a similar fare and knock a large chunk off the journey time.

Train

CHANNEL TUNNEL SERVICES

The Channel Tunnel makes direct train travel between England and continental Europe a fast and enjoyable option. High-speed **Eurostar** (☎ 08705 186 186; www.eurostar.com) passenger services hurtle at least 10 times daily between London and Paris (the journey takes 2½ hours) or Brussels (two hours). You can buy tickets from travel agencies, major train

stations or direct from the Eurostar website. The normal single fare between London and Paris/Brussels is around £150, but if you buy in advance and travel at a less busy period, deals drop to around £90 return or less. You can also buy 'through fare' tickets from many cities in England – for example York to Paris, or Manchester to Brussels. You can also get very good train and hotel combination deals – bizarrely sometimes cheaper than train fare only.

If you've got a car, use **Eurotunnel** (☎ 08705 353535; www.eurotunnel.com). At Folkestone in England or Calais in France, you drive onto a train, go through the tunnel and drive off at the other end. The trains run about four times an hour from 6am to 10pm, then hourly. Loading and unloading is an hour; the journey takes 35 minutes. You can book in advance direct with Eurotunnel or pay on the spot (cash or credit card). The standard one-way cost for a car (and passengers) is £90 to £150 depending on the time of day (less busy times are cheaper). Promotional fares often bring the cost nearer to £50.

TRAIN & FERRY CONNECTIONS

As well as Eurostar, many 'normal' trains run between England and mainland Europe. You buy one ticket, but get off the train at the port, walk onto a ferry, then get another train on the other side. Routes include Amsterdam–London (via Hook of Holland and Harwich). Travelling between Ireland and England, the main train-ferry-train route is Dublin to London, via Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead. Ferries also run between Rosslare and Fishguard or Pembroke (Wales), with train connections on either side.

SEA

The main ferry routes between England and Ireland include Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire. Between England and mainland Europe, ferry routes include Dover to Calais or Boulogne (France), Harwich to Hook of Holland (Netherlands), Hull to Zeebrugge (Belgium) and Rotterdam (Netherlands), Portsmouth to Santander or Bilbao (Spain), and Newcastle to Bergen (Norway) or Gothenberg (Sweden). There are many more.

Competition from Eurotunnel and budget airlines has forced ferry operators to discount heavily and offer flexible fares, meaning great

bargains at quiet times of day or year. For example, the short cross-channel routes such as Dover to Calais or Boulogne can be as low as £20 for a car plus up to five passengers, although around £50 is more likely. If you're a foot passenger, or cycling, there's often less need to book ahead, and cheap fares on the short crossings start from about £10 each way.

Some ferry operators take only online bookings; others charge a supplement (up to £20) for booking by phone. Main operators include the following.

Brittany Ferries (www.brittany-ferries.com)

DFDS Seaways (☎ 0871 522 9955; www.dfds.co.uk)

Irish Ferries (☎ 08705 17 17 17; www.irishferries.com)

Norfolkline (☎ 08701 450603; www.irishferries.com)

P&O Ferries (☎ 08716 645 645; www.poferries.com)

Speedferries (☎ 0871 222 7456; www.speedferries.com)

Stena Line (www.stenaline.com)

Transmanche (☎ 0800 917 1201; www.transmancheferries.com)

Another very handy option is www.ferrybooker.com, a single site covering all sea-ferry routes and operators, plus Eurotunnel.

GETTING AROUND

For getting around England your first main choice is going by car or public transport. While having your own car helps you make the best use of your time to reach remote places, rental and fuel costs can be expensive for budget travellers – while the trials of traffic jams and parking in major cities hit everyone – so public transport is often the better way to go.

Your main public transport options are train and long-distance bus (called coach in England). Services between major towns and cities are generally good, although at 'peak' (busy) times you must book in advance to be sure of getting a ticket. Conversely, if you book ahead early and/or travel at 'off-peak' periods, tickets can be very cheap.

As long as you have time, using a mix of train, coach, local bus, the odd taxi, walking and occasionally hiring a bike, you can get almost anywhere without having to drive. You'll certainly see more of the countryside than you might slogging along grey motorways, and in the serene knowledge that you're doing less environmental damage.

Traveline (☎ 0871 200 2233; www.traveline.org.uk) is a very useful information service covering bus, coach, taxi and train services nationwide, with numerous links to help plan your journey. By phone, you get transferred automatically to an advisor in the region you're phoning *from*; for details on another part of the country, you need to key in a code number (81 for London, 874 for Cumbria etc) – for a full list of codes, go to the Traveline website.

AIR

England's domestic air companies include British Airways, BMI, BMIbaby, EasyJet and Ryanair, but flights around the country aren't really necessary for tourists unless you're really pushed for time. Even if you're going from one end of the country to the other (eg London to Newcastle, or Manchester to Newquay) trains compare favourably with planes, once airport down-time is factored in. You might get a bargain air fare, but with advance planning trains can be cheaper.

BICYCLE

England is a compact country, and getting around by bicycle is perfectly feasible – and a great way to really see the country – if you've got time to spare. For more inspiration see *Outdoor England*, p141. For road rules and other hard facts see p791. For taking bikes on trains, see the boxed text on p811.

Renting a bike is easy in London (outlets include www.londonbicycle.com; see www.lcc.org.uk for a list) and at other tourist spots such as Oxford and Cambridge. Rates start at about £10 per day, but £20 per day is more usual for something half decent. Bike rental is also possible in country areas, especially at forestry sites and reservoirs now primarily used for leisure activities, for example Kielder Water in Northumberland (www.thebikeplace.co.uk), Grizedale Forest in the Lake District (www.forestry.gov.uk/grizedale), and the Peak District in Derbyshire, where disused railway lines are now bike routes (www.derbyshire-peakdistrict.co.uk/cycling.htm).

Finally, mention must be made of Bristol – England's first 'cycling city'. From mid-2008 to mid-2011, around £11 million is planned to be invested in bike paths and other facilities, including a major rental network modelled on Paris's famous Vélib ('freedom bike') project. Other cities, such

as York, Cambridge and Chester will also get similar schemes.

BUS & COACH

If you're on a tight budget, long-distance buses are nearly always the cheapest way to get around, although they're also the slowest – sometimes by a considerable margin.

In England, long-distance express buses are called coaches, and in many towns there are separate bus and coach stations. Make sure you go to the right place!

National Express (☎ 08717 818181; www.national-express.com) is the main operator, with a wide network and frequent services between main centres. Fares vary: they're cheaper if you book in advance and travel at quieter times, and more expensive if you buy your ticket on the spot and it's Friday afternoon. As a guide, a 200-mile trip (eg London to York) will cost around £15 to £20 if you book a few days in advance.

Megabus (www.megabus.com) operates a budget airline-style coach service between about 30 destinations around the country. Go at a quiet time, book early, and your ticket will be very cheap. Book later, for a busy time and...you get the picture.

For information about short-distance and local bus services see p808.

Bus Passes & Discounts

National Express offers discount passes to full-time students and under-26s, called Young Persons Coachcards. They cost £10 and get you 30% off standard adult fares. Also available are coachcards for people over 60, families and disabled travellers.

For touring the country, National Express also offers Brit Xplorer passes, which allow unlimited travel for seven days (£79), 14 days (£139) and 28 days (£219). You don't need to book journeys in advance with this pass; if the coach has a spare seat, you can take it.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travelling by private car or motorbike means you can be independent and flexible, and reach remote places. For solo budget travellers a downside of car travel is the expense, and in cities you'll need superhuman skills to negotiate heaving traffic and deep pockets for parking charges. But if there's two or more of you, car travel can work out cheaper than public transport.

HOW MUCH TO...?

When travelling long-distance by train or bus/coach in England, it's important to note that there's no such thing as a standard fare. Prices vary according to demand and how early you buy your ticket. Book long in advance and travel on Tuesday mid-morning, and it's cheap. Buy your ticket on the spot late Friday afternoon, and it'll be a lot more expensive. Ferries (eg to the Isles of Wight or Man) use similar systems. Throughout this book, to give you an idea, we have generally quoted sample fares somewhere in between the very cheapest and most expensive options. The price you pay will almost certainly be different.

Motorways and main A-roads are dual carriageways and deliver you quickly from one end of the country to another. Lesser A-roads, B-roads and minor roads are much more scenic and fun, as you wind through the countryside from village to village – ideal for car or motorcycle touring. You can't travel fast, but you won't care.

Hire

Compared to many countries (especially the USA), hire rates are expensive in England; you should expect to pay around £250 per week for a small car (unlimited mileage) but rates rise at busy times and drop at quiet times. Some main players:

1car1 (☎ 0113 263 6675; www.1car1.com)

Avis (☎ 0844 581 0147; www.avis.co.uk)

Budget (☎ 0844 581 9998; www.budget.co.uk)

Europcar (☎ 0870 607 5000; www.europcar.co.uk)

Sixt (☎ 08701 567567; www.sixt.co.uk)

Thrifty (☎ 01494-751540; www.thrifty.co.uk)

Many international websites have separate web pages for customers in different countries, and the prices for a car in England on the UK webpages can differ from the same car's prices on the USA or Australia pages. The moral is – you have to surf a lot of sites to find the best deals.

Another option is to look online for small local car-hire companies in England who can undercut the big boys. Generally those in cities are cheaper than in rural areas. See

under Getting Around in the main city sections for more details, or see a rental-broker site such as **UK Car Hire** (www.ukcarhire.net).

Yet another option is to hire a motor-home or campervan. It's more expensive than hiring a car but it does help you save on accommodation costs, and gives almost unlimited freedom. Sites to check include these:

Cool Campervans (www.coolcampervans.com)

Just Go (www.justgo.uk.com)

Wild Horizon (www.wildhorizon.co.uk)

Motoring Organisations

Large motoring organisations include the **Automobile Association** (www.theaa.com) and the **Royal Automobile Club** (www.rac.co.uk); annual membership starts at around £35, including 24-hour roadside breakdown assistance. A greener alternative is the **Environmental Transport Association** (www.eta.co.uk); it provides all the usual services (breakdown assistance, roadside rescue, vehicle inspections etc) but doesn't campaign for more roads.

Parking

England is small, and people love their cars, so there's often not enough parking space to go round. Many cities have short-stay and long-stay car parks; the latter are cheaper though maybe less convenient. 'Park and Ride' systems allow you to park on the edge of the city then ride to the centre on regular buses provided for an all-in-one price.

Yellow lines (single or double) along the edge of the road indicate restrictions. Find the nearby sign that spells out when you can and can't park. In London and other big cities, traffic wardens operate with efficiency; if you park on the yellow lines at the wrong time, your car will be clamped or towed away, and it'll cost you £100 or more to get driving again. In some cities there are also red lines, which mean no stopping at all.

Road Rules

A foreign driving licence is valid in England for up to 12 months. If you plan to bring a car from Europe, it's illegal to drive without (at least) third-party insurance. Some other important rules:

- drive on the left (!)
- wear fitted seat belts in cars
- wear crash helmets on motorcycles

- give way to your right at junctions and roundabouts
- always use the left-side lane on motorways and dual-carriageways, unless overtaking (although so many people ignore this rule, you'd think it didn't exist)
- don't use a mobile phone while driving unless it's fully hands-free (another rule frequently flouted).

Speed limits are 30mph (48km/h) in built-up areas, 60mph (96km/h) on main roads and 70mph (112km/h) on motorways and most (but not all) dual carriageways. Drinking and driving is taken very seriously; you're allowed a minimum blood-alcohol level of 80mg/100mL (0.08%) – campaigners want it reduced to 50mg/100mL.

All drivers should read the *Highway Code*. It's available at main newsagents and some tourist offices, and online from www.direct.gov.uk.

HITCHING

Hitching is not as common as it used to be in England, maybe because more people have cars, maybe because few drivers give lifts any more. It's perfectly possible, however, if you don't mind long waits, although travellers should understand that they're taking a small but potentially serious risk, and we don't recommend it. If you decide to go by thumb, note that it's illegal to hitch on motorways; you must use approach roads or service stations.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

English cities usually have good local public transport systems, although buses are often run by a confusing number of separate companies. The larger cities have tram and underground rail services too. Tourist offices can provide information, and more details are given in the city sections throughout this book.

Bus

There are good local bus networks year-round in cities and towns. Buses also run in rural areas year-round, and in tourist spots (especially national parks) there are frequent services from Easter to September. Elsewhere in the countryside, bus timetables are designed to serve schools and industry, so there can be few midday and weekend

services (and they may stop running during school holidays), or buses may link local villages to a market town on only one day each week. It's always worth double-checking at a tourist office before planning your day's activities around a bus that may not actually be running.

In this book, along with the local bus route number, frequency and duration, we have provided indicative prices if the fare is over a few pounds. If it's less than this, we have generally omitted the fare details.

BUS PASSES

If you're taking a few local bus rides in a day of energetic sightseeing, ask about day-passes (with names like Day Rover, Wayfarer or Explorer), which will be cheaper than buying several single tickets. If you plan to linger longer in one area, three-day passes are a great bargain. Often they can be bought on your first bus, and may include local rail services. Passes are mentioned in the regional chapters, and it's always worth asking ticket clerks or bus drivers about your options.

POSTBUS

A postbus is a van on usual mail service that also carries passengers. Postbuses operate in rural areas (and some of the most scenic and remote parts of the country), and are especially useful for walkers and backpackers. For information and timetables contact **Royal Mail Postbus** (☎ 08457 740 740; www.royalmail.com/postbus).

Taxi

There are two sorts of taxi in England: the famous black cabs (some with advertising livery in other colours), which have meters and can be hailed in the street; and minicabs, which are cheaper but can only be called by phone. (See p794 for information on the dangers of unlicensed minicabs.) In London and other big cities, taxis cost £2 to £3 per mile. In rural areas it's about half of this, which means when you find the next bus out of the charming village you've been staying in won't arrive for three days, a taxi can keep you moving. The best place to find the local taxi's phone number is the local pub. Alternatively, if you call **National Cabline** (☎ 0800 123444) from a land-line phone, the service pinpoints your location and transfers you to an approved local taxi company. Also useful is [.co.uk – designed to help you 'bridge the final gap' between the train station and your hotel or other final destination.](http://www.traintaxi</p>
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TRAIN

For long-distance travel around England, trains are generally faster and more comfortable than coaches but can be more expensive, although with discount tickets they're competitive – and often take you through beautiful countryside. In the 1990s, rail travel had a bad reputation for delays and cancellations. A decade later, the situation had improved markedly (so much so that passenger numbers have increased massively), with around 85% of trains running on or pretty close to schedule. The other 15% of journeys that get delayed or cancelled mostly impact commuters rather than long-distance leisure travellers. If your journey from London to Bath runs 30 minutes late, what's the problem? You're on holiday!

About 20 different companies operate train services in Britain (for example: First Great Western runs from London to Bristol, Cornwall and South Wales; National Express East Coast runs London to Leeds, York and Scotland; Virgin Trains run the 'west coast' route from London to Birmingham, Carlisle and Scotland), while Network Rail operates track and stations. For some passengers this system can be confusing at first, but information and ticket-buying services are mostly centralised. If you have to change trains, or use two or more train operators, you still buy one ticket – valid for the whole of your journey. The main railcards are also accepted by all operators.

Your first stop should be **National Rail Enquiries** (☎ 08457 484950; www.nationalrail.co.uk), the nationwide timetable and fare information service. This site also advertises special offers, and has real-time links to station departure boards, so you can see if your train is on time (or not). Once you've found the journey you need, links take you to the relevant train operator or to centralised ticketing services (www.thetrainline.com, www.qjump.co.uk, www.raileasy.co.uk) to buy the ticket. These websites can be confusing at first (you always have to state an approximate preferred time and day of travel, even if you don't mind when you go), but with a little delving around they can offer some real bargains.

You can also buy train tickets on the spot at stations, which is fine for short journeys,

but discount tickets for longer trips are usually not available and must be bought in advance by phone or online.

For planning your trip, some very handy maps of the UK's rail network can be downloaded from the National Rail Enquiries website.

Classes

There are two classes of rail travel: first and standard. First class costs around 50% more than standard and, except on very crowded trains, is not really worth it. However, at weekends some train operators offer 'upgrades' for an extra £10 to £15 on top of your standard class fare, so you can enjoy more comfort and leg room.

Costs & Reservations

For short journeys (under about 50 miles) it's usually best to buy tickets on the spot at rail stations. You may get a choice of express or stopping service – the latter is obviously slower, but can be cheaper, and may take you through charming countryside or grotty suburbs.

For longer journeys, on-the-spot fares are always available, but tickets are much cheaper if bought in advance. Essentially, the earlier you book, the cheaper it gets. You can also save if you travel at 'off-peak' times, Fridays and Sundays. Advance purchase usually gets a reserved seat too. The cheapest fares are nonrefundable though, so if you miss your train you'll have to buy a new ticket.

If you buy by phone or website, you can have the ticket posted to you (UK addresses only), or collect it at the originating station on the day of travel, either at the ticket desk (leave time to spare, as queues can be long) or from automatic machines.

Whichever operator you travel with and wherever you buy tickets, these are the three main fare types:

Advance Buy ticket in advance, travel only on specific trains

Off-peak Buy ticket any time, travel off-peak

Anytime Buy anytime, travel anytime

Advance tickets are subject to availability, and usually available as singles only, but if you're making a return journey (ie coming back on the same route) you just buy two singles.

For an idea of the price difference, an Anytime single ticket from London to York

will cost around £100, and an Off-peak around £80, while an Advance single can be less than £20, and even less than £10 if you book early enough or don't mind arriving at midnight.

Off-peak and Anytime tickets are available as returns and the price can vary from just under double the single fare to just a pound more than the single fare.

Children under five travel free on trains; those aged between five and 15 pay half price, except on tickets already heavily discounted. A Family & Friends Railcard is usually better value (see Train Passes, below).

If train doesn't get you all the way to your destination, a **PlusBus** supplement (usually around £2) validates your train ticket for onwards travel by bus – more convenient, and usually cheaper, than buying a separate bus ticket. For details see www.plusbus.info.

And finally, it's worth a look at **Megatrain** (www.megatrain.com) – from the people who brought you Megabus; ultra-low train fares on ultra off-peak services between London and a few destinations in southwest England and the East Midlands.

Train Passes

Local train passes usually cover rail networks around a city (many include bus travel too), and are mentioned in the individual city sections throughout this book. If you're staying in England for a while, passes known as 'railcards' are available:

16-25 Railcard – for those aged 16 to 25, or a full-time UK student

Senior Railcard – for anyone over 60

Family & Friends Railcard – covers up to four adults and four children travelling together.

These railcards cost around £25 (valid for one year, available from major stations or online) and get you a 33% discount on most train fares, except those already heavily discounted. With the Family card, adults get 33% and children get 60% discounts, so the fee is easily repaid in a couple of journeys. Proof of age and a passport photo may be required. For full details see www.railcard.co.uk.

A **Disabled Person's Railcard** costs £18. You can get an application from stations or from the railcard website. Call ☎ 0191-281 8103 for more details.

If you're concentrating your travels on southeast England (eg London to Dover, Weymouth, Cambridge or Oxford) a **Network**

BIKES ON TRAINS

Bicycles can be taken free of charge on most local urban trains (although they may not be allowed at peak times when the trains are too crowded with commuters) and on shorter trips in rural areas, on a first-come-first-served basis – though there may be space limits. Bike can be carried on long-distance train journeys free of charge as well, but advance-booking is required for most conventional bikes. (Folding bikes can be carried on pretty much any train at any time.) In theory, this shouldn't be too much trouble as most long-distance rail trips are best bought in advance anyway, but you have to go a long way down the path of booking your seat, before you start booking your bike – only to find space isn't available. A better course of action is to buy in advance at a major rail station, where the booking clerk can help you through the options, or phone the relevant operator's Customer Service department. Have a large cup of coffee and a stress-reliever handy. And a final warning: when railways are repaired, cancelled trains are replaced by buses – and they won't take bikes.

A very useful leaflet called 'Cycling by Train' is available at major stations or downloadable from www.nationalrail.co.uk/passenger_services/cyclists.html.

Railcard covers up to four adults and up to four children travelling together outside peak times. For details see p173.

For country-wide travel, **BritRail** (www.britrail.com) passes are good value, but they're only for visitors from overseas and not available in England. They must be bought in your country of origin from a specialist travel agency. There are many BritRail variants, each available in three different versions: for England only; for the whole of Britain (England, Wales and Scotland); and for the UK and Ireland. Below is an outline of the main options, quoting adult prices. Children's passes are usually half price (or free with some adult passes), and seniors get discounts too. For about 30% extra you can upgrade to first class. Other deals include a rail pass combined with the use of a hire car, or travel in Britain combined with one Eurostar journey. For more details see the BritRail website.

BritRail England Consecutive Unlimited travel on all trains in England for four, eight, 15, 22 or 30 days, for US\$209/299/449/569/675. Anyone getting their money's worth out of the last pass should earn some sort of endurance award.

BritRail England Flexipass No need to get on a train every day to get full value. Your options are four days of unlimited travel in England within a 60-day period for US\$265, eight in 60 days for US\$385, or 15 in 60 days for US\$579.

If you don't (or can't) buy a BritRail pass, an **All Line Rover** gives virtually unlimited travel for 14 days anywhere on the national rail network. You can travel at any time, but aren't guaranteed a seat (reservations cost extra), so it's best to travel at off-peak times if you can. The pass costs £565 and can be purchased in England, by anyone.

Of the other international passes, Eurail cards are not accepted in England, and InterRail cards are only valid if bought in another mainland European country.

Health

Dr Caroline Evans

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England is a healthy place to travel, and the excellent National Health Service (NHS) is free on the point of delivery, which – although Brits may complain – is better than most other countries offer. Across the country, hygiene standards are high (despite what your nose tells you on a crowded tube train) and there are no unusual diseases to worry about. Your biggest risks will be from overdoing activities – physical, chemical or other.

BEFORE YOU GO

No immunisations are mandatory for visiting England or the rest of the UK. Travel insurance, however, is highly recommended, for the reasons outlined in the Insurance section on p796.

You should also check reciprocal medical arrangements between the UK and your own country. Everyone gets emergency treatment (see In England, right) and European Economic Area (EEA) nationals get free non-emergency treatment (ie the same service British citizens receive) with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) validated in their home country. Reciprocal arrangements between the UK and some other countries (including Australia) allow free medical treatment at hospitals and surgeries, and subsidised dental care. For details see the **Department of Health** (www.doh.gov.uk) website –

NATIONAL HEALTH WEBSITES

If you're visiting England from overseas, it's a good idea to consult your government's travel health website before departure. Try the following:

Australia (www.dfat.gov.au/travel)

Canada (www.travelhealth.gc.ca)

USA (www.cdc.gov/travel/)

follow links to 'Health care', 'Entitlements' and 'Overseas Visitors'.

Internet Resources

Useful sites include the following:

Age Concern (www.ageconcern.org.uk) Advice on travel (and much more) for the elderly.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Foreign & Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk)

The Travelling & Living Overseas section is for Brits going abroad, but useful for incomers.

Marie Stopes International (www.mariestopes.org.uk) Sexual health and contraception.

MD Travel Health (www.mdtravelhealth.com) World-wide recommendations, updated daily.

World Health Organization (www.who.int) Go to the International travel and health section.

IN TRANSIT

Deep Vein Thrombosis

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) refers to blood clots that can form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom is swelling or pain in the foot, ankle or calf. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and breathing difficulties. To prevent DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract and release leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol.

Jet Lag

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones), try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust to a local schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

IN ENGLAND

Medical Services

Regardless of nationality, everyone receives free emergency treatment at accident and emergency (A&E) departments of state-run NHS hospitals.

If you don't need full-on hospital treatment, chemists (pharmacies) can advise on

minor ailments such as sore throats and ear-aches. In large cities, there's always at least one 24/7 chemist.

Sunburn

In summer in England, you can get sunburnt quickly – even under cloud cover and especially on water. Use sunscreen, wear a hat and cover up with a shirt and trousers.

Water

Tap water in England is safe unless there's a sign to the contrary (eg on trains). Don't drink

from streams in the countryside – you never know if there's a dead sheep upstream.

Women's Health

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travel through time zones can upset the menstrual pattern. If using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop them from working.

If you're already pregnant, travel is usually possible, but you should consult your doctor. The most risky times are the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

Glossary

almshouse – accommodation for the aged or needy

bailey – outermost wall of a castle

bairn – baby or child (northern England)

banger – old, cheap car (colloquial)

bap – bun

bar – gate (York, and some other northern cities)

beck – stream (northern England)

bent – not altogether legal (slang)

billion – the British billion is a million million (unlike the American billion – a thousand million)

bloke – man (colloquial)

bodge job – poor-quality repair (colloquial)

bonnet (of car) – hood

boot (of car) – trunk

bridleway – path that can be used by walkers, horse riders and cyclists

Brummie – native of Birmingham

bum – backside (not tramp, layabout etc as in American English)

bus – local bus; see also *coach*

cairn – pile of stones marking path, junction or peak

canny – good, great, wise (northern England)

cheers – goodbye; thanks; also a drinking toast

chemist – pharmacist

chine – valley-like fissure leading to the sea (southern England)

circus – junction of several streets, usually circular

coach – long-distance bus

coasteering – adventurous activity that involves making your way around a rocky coastline by climbing, scrambling, jumping or swimming

cob – mixture of mud and straw for building

cot – small bed for a baby ('crib' to Americans)

courette – sleeping berth in a train or ferry

court – courtyard

crack – good conversation, or good times (anglicised version of Gaelic 'craic')

croft – plot of land with adjoining house worked by the occupiers

dear – expensive

DIY – do-it-yourself, ie home improvements

dosh – money, wealth (colloquial)

dough – money (colloquial)

downs – rolling upland, characterised by lack of trees

duvet – quilt replacing sheets and blankets ('doona' to Australians)

EH – English Heritage

en suite room – hotel room with private attached bathroom (ie shower, basin and toilet)

Essex – derogatory adjective (as in 'Essex girl'), meaning showy/tarty

EU – European Union

evensong – daily evening service (Church of England)

fat – cigarette; also boring task (colloquial)

fagged – exhausted (colloquial)

fanny – female genitals (offensive slang), not backside as in American English

fell race – tough running race through hills or moors

fen – drained or marshy low-lying flat land

five – five-pound note

flat – apartment

flip-flops – plastic sandals with a single strap over toes ('thongs' to Australians)

footpath – path through countryside and between houses, not beside a road (that's called a 'pavement')

gaffer – boss or foreman (colloquial)

gate – street (York, and some other northern cities)

ginnel – alleyway (Yorkshire)

graft – work (colloquial term; not corruption, as in American English)

grand – one thousand (colloquial)

grockle – tourist (colloquial)

gutted – very disappointed (colloquial)

guv, guvner – from governor, a respectful term of address for owner or boss; can sometimes be used ironically

hammered – drunk (colloquial)

hart – deer

HI – Hostelling International (organisation)

hire – rent

hosepipe – garden hose

hotel – accommodation with food and bar, not always open to passing trade

Huguenots – French Protestants

inn – pub with accommodation

jumper – woollen item of clothing worn on torso ('sweater' to Americans)

karst – landscape usually featuring limestone rock, caves, sinkholes and a lack of surface water

kirk – church (northern England)

lager lout – see *yob*

lass – young woman (northern England)

ley – clearing

lift – machine for carrying people up and down in large buildings ('elevator' to Americans)

lock – part of a canal or river that can be closed off and the water levels changed to raise or lower boats

lolly – money (colloquial); candy on a stick (possibly frozen)

lorry – truck

love – term of address, not necessarily to someone likeable

machair – grass- and wildflower-covered sand dunes

mad – insane (not angry, as in American English)

Marches – borderlands (ie between England and Wales or Scotland) after the Anglo-Saxon word *mearc*, meaning 'boundary'

Martello tower – small, circular tower used for coastal defence

mate – friend of any gender; also term of address, usually male-to-male

midge – mosquito-like insect

motorway – major road linking cities (equivalent to 'interstate' or 'freeway')

motte – mound on which a castle was built

naff – inferior, in poor taste (colloquial)

nappies – worn by babies before they're toilet trained ('diapers' to Americans)

NCN – National Cycle Network

NT – National Trust

oast house – building containing a kiln for drying hops

off-license ('offie') – carry-out alcoholic drinks shop (colloquial)

OS – Ordnance Survey

owlers – smugglers

p (pronounced 'pee') – pence (ie 2p is 'two p' not 'two pence' or 'tuppence')

pargeting – decorative stucco plasterwork

pele – fortified house

pissed – drunk (slang; not angry)

pissed off – angry (slang)

pitch – playing field

ponce – colloquial term for ostentatious or effeminate male; also to borrow (usually permanently)

pop – fizzy drink (northern England)

postbus – minibus delivering the mail, also carrying passengers

provost – mayor

punter – customer (colloquial)

quid – pound (colloquial)

ramble – short easy walk

red-tops – 'popular' newspapers such as the *Sun* and *Daily Mirror*, as opposed to 'serious' newspapers such as the *Times* and *Guardian*

reiver – warrior (historic term – northern England)

return ticket – round-trip ticket

roll-up – roll-your-own cigarette

RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

RSPCA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

rubber – eraser; also (and less commonly) condom

rubbish bin – what Americans call a 'garbage can'

rugger – rugby union

sarsen – boulder, a geological remnant usually found in chalky areas (sometimes used in neolithic constructions eg Stonehenge and Avebury)

shag – have sex (slang); also a tough or tiring task (colloquial)

shagged – tired (colloquial)

sheila-na-gig – Celtic fertility symbol of a woman with exaggerated genitalia, often carved in stone on churches and castles. Rare in England, found mainly in the Marches, along the border with Wales.

shout – to buy a group of people drinks, usually reciprocated (colloquial)

shut – partially covered passage

single ticket – one-way ticket

sixth-form college – further-education college

snicket/snickleway – narrow alley (York)

snog – long, drawn-out kiss (colloquial term; not just a cheek on the cheek)

spondulicks – money (colloquial)

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

stone – unit of weight equivalent to 14lb or 6.35kg

subway – underpass (for pedestrians)

sweets – what Americans call 'candy' and Australians call 'lollies'

ta – thanks

tenner – £10 note

thwaite – clearing in a forest (northern England)

ton – one hundred (colloquial)

tor – pointed hill (Celtic)

torch – flashlight

Tory – Conservative (political party)

towpath – path running beside a river or canal, where horses once towed barges

trainers – running/tennis shoes

traveller – nomadic person (traditional and New Age hippy types)

twit – foolish (sometimes annoying) person (colloquial)

twitcher – obsessive birdwatcher

twitten – passage, small lane

Tube, the – London's underground railway system (colloquial)

Underground, the – London's underground railway system

VAT – value-added tax, levied on most goods and services, currently 17.5%

verderer – officer upholding law and order in the royal forests

wanker – stupid/worthless person (offensive slang)

wide boy – ostentatious go-getter, usually on the make (colloquial)

wolds – open, rolling countryside

YHA – Youth Hostels Association

job – hooligan (colloquial)

GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE

aisle – passageway or open space along either side of a church's *nave*

apse – area for clergy, traditionally at the east end of the church

barrel vault – semicircular arched roof

boss – covering for the meeting point of the ribs in a *vaulted* roof

brass – memorial consisting of a brass plate set into the floor or a tomb

buttress – vertical support for a wall; see also *flying buttress*

campanile – free-standing belfry or bell tower

chancel – eastern end of the church, usually reserved for choir and clergy

chantry – *chapel* established by a donor for use in their name after death

chapel – small church; shrine or area of worship off the main body of a cathedral

chapel of ease – *chapel* built for those who lived far away from the parish church

choir – area in the church where the choir is seated

cloister – covered walkway linking the church with adjacent monastic buildings

close – buildings grouped around a cathedral

corbel – stone or wooden projection from a wall supporting a beam or arch

crossing – intersection of the *nave* and *transepts* in a church

flying buttress – supporting *buttress* in the form of one side of an open arch

font – basin used for baptisms, often in a separate *baptistry*

frater – common or dining room in a medieval monastery

lady chapel – *chapel* dedicated to the Virgin Mary

lancet – pointed window in Early English style

lierne vault – *vault* containing many tertiary ribs

minster – church connected to a monastery

misericord – hinged choir seat with a bracket (often elaborately carved)

nave – main body of the church at the western end, where the congregation gather

presbytery – eastern area of *chancel* beyond the choir, where the clergy operate

precincts – see *close*

priory – religious house governed by a prior

pulpit – raised box where the priest gives sermons

quire – medieval term for *choir*

refectory – monastic dining room

reeredos – literally 'behind the back'; backdrop to an altar

rood – archaic word for cross (in churches)

rood screen – screen carrying a *rood* or crucifix, separating *nave* from *chancel*

squint – angled opening in a wall or pillar to allow a view of a church's altar

transepts – north–south projections from a church's *nave*, giving church a cruciform (cross-shaped plan)

undercroft – vaulted underground room or cellar

vault – roof with arched ribs, usually in a decorative pattern

vestry – priest's robing room

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