PLANNING YOUR FIRST TRIP TO BRITAIN

Nothing can ever match the thrill of your first visit to Britain. You can go back to Britain numerous times, but it is never quite the same as that first visit.

Entry into Britain

Getting a tourist visa into Britain is not a problem for Australians, so long as they don't intend to stay longer than 6 months, the maximum time allowed for tourists.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required unless you travel to Britain through countries that insist on them such as Kampuchea. If you are planning a stop over in South East Asia along the way, it is advisable to have cholera and typhoid vaccinations.

The Flight

The flight from Australia to Britain is one of the longest in the world, over 23 hours depending on which route you take. British Airways' one stop flight takes 23 hours and 5 minutes - the flight leaves Sydney in the early evening and stops only once on the way to London.

Credit Cards

If you intend to rely on credit cards abroad you should never only take one kind - this gives you double the chance of having a card accepted. If you use traveler's cheques, always change them in banks rather that at hotels where you will receive much less for them.

Travel Insurance

Australians are covered for doctor's fees and public hospital charges in Britain under an agreement by the two countries. However, if you prefer not to risk having to use a public ward, private travel insurance is available.

Touring by Car

The most popular form of traveling through Britain by Australian tourists is by hire car. Driving in Britain comes easy to most Australians because they drive on the same side of the road and the traffic rules are much the same. Also you only need your Australian license to drive there.

How to Get a Hire Car

You can easily rent a car when you get to Britain. However, it is cheaper to hire the car in advance in Australia before you leave. There are many fly-drive packages available. To avoid the stress of driving out of London, you can arrange to collect the car at a town outside the city using the train to get out of London.

Coach Tours

Coach tours have the advantage that they are the cheapest way of getting around the country. There are coach services linking all of Britain's larger cities. There are also coach holidays - these allow people to make to most of their holiday without having to worry about accommodation and transport. A further advantage is that high-deck coaches allow you to see over hedgerows, something that can be a problem when touring by car.