

Let's Go 2006 Britain



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Welcome to Britain. You've arrived on an island half the size of Spain with a population almost twice that of California, whose people have managed to colonize two-fifths of the globe and win just about every war they've gotten into. If they seem to keep more to themselves these days, it's because they feel safe in the knowledge that the world is coming to them—in the form of an endless spate of visitors. Though small, Britain somehow has enough variety of terrain and regional flavor to keep you occupied for your entire stay and then some. The rolling farms of the south and the rugged peaks of the north are only hours apart by train, and even on a two-week trip, you'll come across peoples as diverse as London clubbers, Welsh students, and Scottish crofters. Prepare to experience a multiplicity of cultures living in remarkably close quarters, a quirk that has resulted in a bloody past whose defiant fortresses, subterranean dungeons, and ensuing ruins account for much of the island's appeal. But even if the

disparate regions of Britain are perpetually at odds, they all embrace the fruits of the cultures they've come across in their globetrotting days: Brits eat kebab and curry as often as they do scones and lemon curd, and watch American TV shows as much as the BBC. Despite the survival of a bucolic “Merry Olde England,” in today’s Great Britain, the hum of the big city draws as much attention as the picturesque views of a country inn.

Make sure to set aside plenty of time for Ireland as well; between the dramatic mist-cloaked mountain peaks and the dazzling green of the landscape, you'll find that the “Emerald Isle” is no mere marketing slogan. But perhaps nothing will stay with you more than the vibrant Irish culture, where traditional music and pub life survive in village and city alike. Wherever in the British Isles you choose to swing through, one thing is decidedly clear: you've chosen the right place to travel.

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