

Touring Tips

This information should be read in conjunction with [general advice for motoring in Europe](#).

Drinking and driving: The maximum permitted level of alcohol in the blood is 0.08 per cent. The police can ask a driver suspected of having committed an offence to undergo a breath test. Penalty up to £5,000 and/or 6 months' imprisonment and 12 months withdrawal of driving licence if first time.

The police may also carry out tests to detect a driver who may be under the influence of narcotics.

Driving licence: A visitor may use his national driving licence only if he has reached the minimum age to drive a vehicle in the United Kingdom: Motorcycle with or without sidecar up to 25 kW and a power to weight ratio not exceeding 0.16 kW/kg 17 years, motorcycle with or without a sidecar above 25kw 21 years, a temporarily imported car 17 years.

A provisional (learner's) driving licence issued abroad is not valid for use in the United Kingdom.

Fines: Drivers without a satisfactory UK address who commit traffic offences will have to pay a financial penalty deposit equal to the amount of the fixed penalty or £300 as a deposit in respect of a potential court fine. The deposit has to be paid on the spot. Those who can provide a satisfactory UK address will be issued with a fixed penalty which has to be paid within 28 working days.

The Police and examiners from the Vehicle Operator and Services Agency (VOSA) can collect on-the-spot payments.

Vehicles illegally parked are liable to a fine and may also be wheel-clamped or removed.

Fuel: Unleaded 95 octane petrol is sold as 'premium unleaded' and unleaded 97-octane petrol as 'super unleaded'. All UK petrol and diesel contains 10ppm or less Sulphur.

Leaded '4-star' petrol and lead replacement petrol (LRP) are no longer available. Drivers of older cars designed to use leaded petrol are advised to use lead-replacement additives available widely in filling stations and accessory stores.

Prices vary according to the region, fuel brand and type of outlet; supermarket prices may be lower.

LPG: There are approximately 1,300 filling stations which sell Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

If you are visiting the UK please be aware that UK filling stations use a bayonet type LPG pump attachment that requires an adaptor for use with other European LPG vehicle connectors. UK filling stations do not generally have adaptors available so you should make

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sure that you have a suitable adaptor before travelling. The following two companies can supply 'European to UK' LPG adaptors:

Autogas 2000 Ltd

<http://www.autogasshop.co.uk/autogaslpg-filling-adapters-1-c.asp>

Gasure LPG conversions and adaptors.

<http://www.gasure.co.uk/adaptors.htm>

Lights: Motorists must use sidelights between sunset and sunrise and headlights at night (between half an hour after sunset and half an hour before sunrise) on all roads without street lighting and on roads where the street lights are more than 185m apart or are not lit.

Motorists must use headlights or front and rear fog lights when visibility is seriously reduced, generally to less than 100m use dipped headlights at night in built-up areas unless the road is well lit use headlights at night on lit motorways and roads with a speed limit in excess of 30 mph.

Motorcycles: It is compulsory for riders of motorcycles, scooters and mopeds to wear a safety helmet of an approved design. This also applies to passengers, except those in sidecars. The helmet must be manufactured to a standard similar to the British Standard.

Use of headlights during the day recommended.

Motor insurance: It is prohibited to drive an imported vehicle in the United Kingdom without adequate motor insurance. If the importer does not hold an insurance certificate valid for the United Kingdom, arrangements should be made prior to travel.

Minimum third-party insurance, including trailers.

Passengers/children in cars: Children under three years **must** use a child restraint appropriate for their weight in any vehicle (including vans and other goods vehicles). The only exception is that a child under three may travel unrestrained in the rear of a taxi if the right child restraint is not available. Rear-facing baby seats **must not** be used in a seat protected by a frontal air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically. In vehicles where seat belts are fitted, children 3 years to 12 years and under 135cms in height (approx 4ft 5ins) **must** use the appropriate child restraint.

These children may travel in the rear and use an adult belt:

- in a taxi, if the right child restraint is not available
- for a short distance in an unexpected necessity
- where two occupied child seats in the rear prevent the fitting of a third

Drivers are responsible for non compliance of this law for children under 14 years with the fine varying between £30 and £500.

Seat belts: Seat belts must be worn in front and rear of vehicles, if fitted.

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Speed limits: Standard legal limits, which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers: In built up areas: up to 30 mph (48 km/h) unless otherwise indicated, outside built up areas: 60 mph (96 km/h), motorways and dual-carriageways up to 70 mph (112 km/h).

Motor caravans with an unladen weight exceeding 3.5t or motor vehicles adapted to carry more than eight passengers are banned from the outside lane of a motorway with three or more lanes.

Compulsory equipment in Great Britain:

n/a

Other rules/requirements in Great Britain:

While it is not compulsory, it is recommended that you carry a warning triangle, first-aid kit and fire extinguisher. Motorists must not use a warning triangle on a motorway.

It is an offence to use a hand-held phone or similar device when driving.

It is prohibited to use the horn when the vehicle is stationary, except at times of danger due to another vehicle in movement, or as an anti-theft device. The use of the horn is prohibited in built-up areas from 2330 to 0700 hours.

A toll (also called 'congestion charge') is payable when driving or parking in central London on weekdays (Monday to Friday excluding public holidays) between 0700 and 1800 hours. The entrances to the zone are indicated by the letter C in white on a red background. At present the standard charge for most vehicles is £8.00 if purchased on or before the date of travel,

[More details about London congestion charge here](#)

Tolls are payable when using certain motorway sections and bridges.

Visiting motorists driving left-hand drive vehicles should ensure that, if used, their headlights are adjusted for driving on the left, otherwise they risk being stopped by the police and subsequently fined up to £1,000.

At some intersections called 'box junctions', criss-cross yellow lines are painted on the roadway. Traffic at these junctions must not enter 'the box' (i.e. the area of yellow lines) unless the exit road or lane is clear.

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