

USEFUL INFORMATION IF GOING TO UK AS A TOURIST IN A PLEASURE CRAFT.



Topic	Comment
Demographic data (population/no of clubs/members/boats)	Estimated 70 million inhabitants; Approx 1,300 clubs affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association (covers yacht, dinghy etc clubs). Unknown number of other clubs not affiliated. Total number of members in such clubs is unknown. RYA (largest boating organisation in UK) has 100,000 personal members. Not everyone involved in boating is an RYA member.
Currency with link for exchange rates	Pound sterling (ISO) GBP symbol £. Exchange rate information: http://www.travelex.co.uk/uk/
Formalities, Customs, passport control, visa	No requirements for EU citizens coming from EU countries (*) although all crew members should carry their passport. UK Border Agency has plans for entry/exit procedures - to be advised when coming into force. Customs and immigration required for anyone arriving from outside EU. Visas required for visitors from some countries including Russia. (*) exceptions are British Channel Islands and Isle of Man. If coming from these autonomous states it is necessary to report to Customs and Immigration on arrival at UK ports. <i>Post Brexit (estimated April 2019) this may all change.</i>
Banned substances	http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/customs/banned-restricted.htm In all cases visitors should advise Customs of what they have on board (mostly referring to medicines).
Boat's documents required	Proof of VAT payment. Should carry insurance documents and useful to have any registration papers from own country but not mandatory.
Insurance	There is no requirement. However most marinas/harbour authorities require a minimum of third party liability insurance for permanent berthing. Therefore most boats are insured
Legislation certificate of competence	No legislation. Skippers/crew generally obtain qualifications voluntarily.
Alcohol limits – on the water and on the road	For marine environment: No specific legislation on level of alcohol. If involved in an accident skipper's intoxication would have a bearing on any court case. Only police may administer the test so person has to be taken to a police station or police called to marine accident. Road users: in England, Wales and Northern Ireland the limit is 0.8/ml (blood), 0.35/ml (breath). In Scotland the limit is 0.5/ml (blood), 0.22/ml (breath). Currently (2018) British Port Association (BPA) is calling for the alcohol limit law for leisure boaters to be enforced and to be in line with the one for commercial mariners in charge of a ship. This is being resisted by yachting organisations.
Legislation re life jackets	No legal requirement to wear a lifejacket although it is recommended by prominent sailing organisations in UK. It is a recommendation that all leisure vessels carry sufficient lifejackets/buoyancy aids for every person on board. Life jackets most relevant to offshore sailing, buoyancy aids for inshore activity.
TSS, esp. new ones	All TSS areas are marked on charts. Rule 10 of Collision Regulations applies but some of these areas are not monitored as strictly as others. Dover Strait is strictly controlled and yachts not complying with Rule 10 are heavily fined.
Military exercise areas	A comprehensive list of these areas is not available. There are submarine exercise areas associated with naval establishments (Plymouth on south coast – Faslane in Scotland and others). Firing practice areas are marked on charts. Warnings given on Navtex and VHF marine broadcasts by local coastguard.
Major construction sites	Mostly associated with wind farm construction.
Windfarms/wave and tidal energy projects	Many windfarms already exist and more planned. See website https://www.thecrownestate.co.uk/en-gb/our-places/asset-map/ for map. General ban on sailing within 50m of each turbine tower but nothing otherwise prevent sailing within the park between the towers. One tidal energy project already working in Northern Ireland. Others planned around coast mostly on tidal lagoon system. Due to reduction in government subsidy wind farms are becoming less attractive to developers whereas tidal and wave energy are gaining popularity. 9.4% of UK energy requirements is currently produced from offshore wind power.

Bridges	There are very few bridges that restrict access to seagoing vessels. Of those that open (e.g. Tower Bridge in London) no purpose in leisure craft entering. See relevant charts for details of other bridges – some open at specific times. River Thames to London: http://www.boatingonthames.co.uk/Thames-Barrier
Fishing equipment	Reference to the website for Marking of fishing gear, retrieval and notification of lost gear gives the current requirements - https://www.gov.uk/guidance/markings-of-fishing-gear-retrieval-and-notification-of-lost-gear Also Advice for Fishermen and Yachtsman is given on - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509685/Fishing_Gear_2008_A3.pdf It should also be noted that various local regulations apply on estuaries and rivers within UK territorial waters.
Habitats and other protected areas	Some areas have been designated as Nature Reserves and Marine Protection Areas or Conservation Zones for the protection of wildlife. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2409 and consult up-to-date charts.
Flag traditions/ application of flag rules	British flagged boats fly an ensign not the national flag. Royal Navy ships fly White Ensign, merchant shipping and yachts fly Red Ensign. Some yacht clubs have a defaced Blue Ensign. Whilst there is a tradition of raising and lower flags morning and evening, this is not strictly adhered to except in naval circles. Visitors must fly a courtesy flag below the starboard spreader for sailing vessels or on the deck mast for motor vessels.
Weather forecast	Forecasts available on VHF marine broadcasts and domestic radio broadcasts as well as the internet. The following website gives details of times and frequencies. http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/info/frequencies.shtml Radio 4 is also available on Long Wave at 198 kHz LW as well as domestic VHF frequencies. Additional websites: BBC Shipping Forecast http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/shipping_forecast includes map of sea areas. BBC Inshore waters forecast http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather Weather information generally http://weather.mailasail.com/
Harbours including approx number of natural harbours	No records for number of harbours. UK divides harbours according to ownership e.g. Trust Ports, Private, Local Authority, Government Dockyards etc. There are numerous natural harbours in the form of anchorages around the shores of UK and Ireland. Many are only suitable in certain wind directions. Too numerous to count.
Mooring booking facilities	No universal booking facility. Advance booking not widely used – if required contact specific harbour master. Navionics charts have harbour telephone numbers. Alternatively use VHF for contact with harbours.
Swinging mooring buoys for pleasure yachts	Very common form of mooring especially in rivers. Most are private and will often be marked as such. Often possible to use a private buoy provided someone remains on board. Check that mooring is suitable for size and weight of boat and take account of tidal range. Visitors' buoys available in many locations.
Anchoring and free access ashore	No restrictions (apart from conservation areas) on anchoring but need to take account of tidal range. Access ashore may be restricted by private landings or difficult/impossible at low water. Anchoring in rivers/river estuaries or in close vicinity to a harbour will be charged in popular yachting areas e.g. the South Coast and rivers on the East Coast.
Good harbour manners	It is necessary to raft out in many UK harbours i.e. boats lie alongside each other. It is courteous to ask permission before tying alongside but this should never be refused unless the maximum number of boats permitted to raft out in a particular harbour has been reached. Both springs and shore lines must be used - springs are most important in tidal waters to prevent boats moving backwards and forwards against each other and shore lines prevent excessive strain on the lines of the inner boats. When rafted out and going ashore, never cross other boats via the cockpits - always walk across the bow deck.
Safety in harbours	Life rings and fire fighting appliances are normally provided but there may be restrictions on the use of BBQs. Speed limits apply where marked.

Rescue services	Coordinated by Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) from one coordination centre near Southampton and 11 local centres. Life boats provided by voluntary organisation - Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). There are in addition some locally funded rescue boats in popular cruising areas. Telephone 999 or 112. No charges made by RNLI.
Pyrotechnics - legislation re carrying - if flareguns (Very pistols) permitted - if so is licence required? - procedure for disposal	No obligation to carry flares but strongly recommended. Very pistols permitted but licensing required through the Police. Visitors to UK must obtain a visitors' Firearms Certificate if carrying a Very pistol. Out-of-date flares can be handed over to the Police.
Staying during the winter	EU flagged boats may stay as long as they wish. <i>Post Brexit (estimated April 2019) this may all change.</i> Numerous marinas, boat yards and boat clubs offer winter storage ashore (mostly outside) or afloat. Under cover storage is rare and expensive. Cradles need to be hired, the use of the "Seaquip" type stand is extremely rare. Timber props are in common use.
Antifouling regulations	Strong antifouling is used in UK waters. Many products available in chandleries. Available substances comply with EU regulations. <i>Post Brexit (estimated April 2019) this may all change.</i>
Fuel availability	Diesel sold for yachts at alongside fuel berths is red in colour although that proportion used for propulsion is taxed at the full rate - a lesser rate of tax applies to the proportion used for heating. It is recommended that vessels visiting the UK and taking on fuel should pay 100% of tax and retain their receipts for possible inspection in other countries. Do not carry spare red diesel in cans as this is not acceptable in some countries. All white diesel contains biodiesel and is obtainable only from filling stations used by motor vehicles. Petrol is available from most alongside fuelling points but is not high octane. There is no biodiesel added to the red diesel at coastal filling stations, only those on inland waterways. Where biodiesel is added it is in accordance with EN590 2004 (7% biodiesel).
Gas and electricity systems available - necessity for adapters	Calor gas or Camping Gaz International widely available. GRP gas bottles also available in sizes 5kg (height 393mm, dia. 305mm) and 10kg (height 587mm, dia. 305mm). All marinas in UK use the blue bodied IEC 60309 16A system. Adapter required to convert from the European 10/16A system. Adapter required to connect to domestic 3 pin sockets i.e. for hairdryers in showers.
Repair and maintenance facilities	All UK leisure boating areas have numerous facilities and in more remote locations help will be available within a reasonable travelling distance. This may not apply in the some Scottish Island areas.
Pump out stations for sewage and oily water	Stations for sewage pump out exist in a few harbours mainly in popular yachting areas. Emptying of tanks is chargeable in some harbours. No requirement for holding tanks but all new craft built will have holding tanks.
Pump out stations – type(s) of nozzle used in the country	Nozzles used in UK have a tapering end. They cannot be used with deck fittings where the cap is permanently attached by a chain. The standard size of deck fitting is 38.1mm diameter (BS7162 1990). Some harbour masters have a range of adapters available.
Public transport	Train and bus service covers most of the country. Services often limited in rural areas. Senior citizens' discount available only to UK nationals. http://traveline.info/
Major source of charts/pilot books in the country with link	British Admiralty and Imray. BA mostly sheet charts but some folios available for leisure craft. Imray in two series, C series for general coverage and Y charts and 2000 series for larger scale coverage. https://www.admiralty.co.uk . https://www.imray.com . Electronic charts available Navionics, Garmin, C-map and SeaPro. Also Raymarine ID10 East Coast and North Sea, ID20 North coast of France and UK South coast, ID30 covers the rest of Great Britain and Ireland. Availability from chandlers and marine mail order companies.
Shopping hours	Supermarkets vary but generally 0800-2000. Some 24 hours. Mon-Sat inclusive. Smaller shops generally 0900-1730 Mon to Sat. Most shops open Sundays - larger shops for 6 consecutive hours between 1000 and 1800, small shops unrestricted hours. Purchase of alcohol may be restricted on Sundays.

Important phone numbers, home pages and useful links	<p>Cruising Association www.theca.org.uk (much information available only on the members' pages) Tel. + 44 (0)207 537 2828.</p> <p>Royal Yachting Association Tel. www.rya.org.uk. Tel. +44 (0)23 8060 4100.</p> <p>Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation www.rccpf.org.uk (no phone number) - useful for passage planning.</p> <p>Nautical Charts: British Admiralty http://www.ukho.gov.uk/ProductsandServices/PaperCharts/Pages/Home.aspx</p> <p>Safety at sea: http://rnli.org/Pages/Default.aspx</p> <p>Emergency telephone number in UK – 999 and 112. Both are free calls from landlines and mobiles. Non-emergency calls for assistance – 101 (charged at a fixed rate of 15p per call from a landline. Mobile charges may vary). Non-emergency calls for medical assistance – 111.</p>
Tick borne diseases	<p>Lyme disease in some areas, particularly The New Forest (land north of the western Solent). See http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/blog/2014/08/staying-alert-to-ticks-and-lyme-disease/ for map and further information.</p>
Legislation re visiting with pets aboard	<p>See https://www.gov.uk/pet-travel-information-for-pet-owners. <i>Post Brexit (estimated April 2019) this may all change.</i></p>
Practical advice and miscellaneous information	<p>UK is completely surrounded by tidal waters which create both a directional current and a rise and fall of water level. Tides vary in strength and size around the coast. Consult tide timetables (see urls below). The time of high and low water is totally predictable and can be relied upon absolutely. This may be a new experience to Baltic sailors – do not be afraid but always take the tide into account when passage planning. Be aware of spring (stronger) and neap (weaker) tides which occur in a cycle of about two weeks. The strongest tides are equinoctial.</p> <p>Tidal information: http://www.tidetimes.org.uk/ has interactive map for all parts of the British Isles. Also http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/tide_tables Also http://www.ntsif.org/</p> <p>Tide tables are included in nautical almanacs of which the Cruising Association Almanac is the least expensive and available in major nautical suppliers around the Baltic.</p> <p>Carry a small amount of cash in local currency.</p>

This document does not claim to include all known information on the subjects covered but the compilers and the Baltic Sea Cruising Network (BSCN) believe that the information contained represents a useful aid to those visiting the country by pleasure craft. Visitors should make prudent use of the information available on the websites quoted. No responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of the material in this publication is accepted by the compilers or the Baltic Sea Cruising Network.

BSCN/Useful Information/UK-G&FC

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The Cruising Association www.theca.org.uk