



UK Internet Access Tips

An Outlandish Extra PDF

OutlandishScotland.com

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

Outlandish Scotland Journey

UK Internet Access

Begin your research by reading the following Internet resources. (We've included a few highlights from each, to pique your interest.) Then, peruse the Internet access pointers offered by *A Novel Holiday* authors and contributors.

Rick Steves' Internet Access Tips

Internet Security for Travelers

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/internet-security-for-travelers>

These tips are important to Outlanderites traveling *anywhere*—we suggest you read the entire article.

Safety Tips for Traveling with Your Own Device

“If you're taking your devices on the road, be aware that gadget theft is an issue in Europe [as well as destinations in the UK]. Not only should you take precautions to protect your devices from thieves, but you should also configure them for maximum security so that if they are stolen, your personal data will stay private. ...

“At the very least, make sure your device is password- or passcode-protected so thieves can't access your information if it's stolen. If it's already protected, consider decreasing the time it takes for the screen to lock when not in use—while it's annoying to have to keep entering your code, that's not nearly as annoying as identity theft (and you can relax your security settings once you're home). For an extra layer of security, consider setting passwords on [phone] apps that access key info (such as email or Facebook). ...

“Once on the road, use only legitimate WiFi hotspots. Ask the hotel or café for the specific name of their network, and make sure you log on to that exact one. **Hackers sometimes create bogus hotspots with a similar or vague name (such as 'Hotel Europa Free WiFi') that shows up alongside a bunch of authentic networks.** It's better if a network uses a password (especially a hard-to-guess one) rather than being open to the world. If you're not actively using a hotspot, turn off WiFi so that your device is not visible to others. ...”

Safety Tips for Using Public Computers

“It's perfectly safe to use a public computer for tasks that don't require you to log in to an account. For instance, checking train schedules, maps, or museum hours doesn't pose a security risk. The danger lies in accessing personal accounts that require you to enter a login and password (such as email, Facebook, or any ecommerce site). ...

“Public computers may be loaded with damaging malware, such as key-logger programs that keep track of what you're typing—including passwords. ... ”

Accessing Personal Information Online

“While you're away, you may be tempted to check your online banking or credit-card statements, or to take care of other personal-finance chores. Internet security experts advise against accessing these sites entirely while traveling. ...

“Savvy password habits are also critical. Above all, don’t use individual dictionary words, don’t reuse passwords (or even similar passwords) across different sites (a password-manager program really helps), and think in terms of using a “passphrase” — the longer your password, the better. ...”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passphrase>

Internet Calling and Messaging

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/calling-over-internet>

Rick offers terrifically helpful tips about Internet calling/messaging apps that allow you to inexpensively connect with family and friends back home.

“A cheap way to stay in touch while traveling is to use Internet calling/messaging apps, such as Skype, Apple’s FaceTime and iMessage, or Google+ Hangouts, to make free calls online or message to your heart’s content. Many travelers use a mix of these apps, based on what their friends and family are already using at home. ...”

Reid Bramblett’s Internet Access Tips

Jacking In: Getting On-line on the Road—Cybercafes and Internet access while Traveling.

http://www.reidsguides.com/t_cm/cybercafes.html

“Postcards can take up to a week [to reach their recipient]. Tweeting, posting updates, blogging, or simply sending your jealous friends a quick email rundown of what a fantastic vacation you’re having is [received almost instantaneously]. (Plus, it’s a great way to create installments of a trip journal for your own uses.) ...”

“There are four major types of places where you can get online:

Cybercafes—A little room, disused office space, rented storefront, corner table in a pub or café, pretty much anywhere an enterprising entrepreneur can plug in a bunch of computers and hook them up to his DSL connection. That’s a Cybercafe. Access fees can range anywhere from 10¢ per minute to \$10 an hour or more. ...

Your Hotel—Increasingly, hotels have a PC jacked in and available for guest use. Sometimes it’s free; sometimes it costs a bit (rarely more than a regular Internet café, though). It’s always convenient. ...

Public Kiosks—These suck. They’re basically like payphones, only with a big screen and a keyboard attached. ...

Libraries—The big traveler’s secret that no Internet café wants you to know about. ...”

WiFi on The Road: How to Find WiFi Hotspots—Free and Paid—while Traveling.

http://www.reidsguides.com/t_cm/wifi.html

“Many hotels these days offer WiFi—some for free, others for a modest fee. But WiFi floats around elsewhere in [the UK] as well. Travel telecom—email, web surfing, Skyping, even making VoIP telephone calls—can be free if you know how to find these floating, free-range WiFi hotspots (or carry your own). ...”

Extra Outlandish Tips

The Cheapest Convenient UK Internet Access Option:

Lodging at Places that Offer Free WiFi

These days, almost all UK lodgings that have a Website offer free WiFi Internet access to their lodgers—even small, Mom-&-Pop-run B&Bs. When investigating UK lodgings, pay particular attention to whether or not they offer *free* WiFi. If it doesn't say "free," they charge for it—keep searching.

Oddly enough, it is some of the most expensive UK hotels that still charge a fee for WiFi access. The Heathrow Hilton Hotel, for example, offers free WiFi only to "Hilton HHonors Gold and Diamond Members." All others are charged £13 (\$19) per day.

Happily, the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh (*Outlandish Scotland Journey* Part Five) now offers "complementary WiFi for up to 5 devices" in each room—even when staying in their cheapest room.

After checking in and obtaining your **WiFi log-in code**, follow Rick Steves' advice:

"Ask the hotel [or B&B host] for the specific name of their network, and make sure you log on to that exact one."

Impenetrable Places

Many UK buildings are constructed with very thick stone or brick walls, especially the oldest and most Outlandishly-interesting accommodations. Unfortunately, thick walls tend to block cell phone and WiFi signals, both from without and *within* a building.

When lodging in a marvelously old and historic building, don't be surprised if you have trouble getting a WiFi signal while in your room. (If you're paying for WiFi, but can't get a signal in your room, politely ask for a refund.)

Impenetrable places can sometimes be overcome simply by opening a window—particularly for cell phone or mobile broadband signal access. To obtain a reliable WiFi signal, however, you may have to use your tablet or laptop in the building's common area, which usually is nearer to the host's WiFi router. Although this situation limits your immediate privacy, focus instead on the opportunity to meet new people that is afforded by frequenting the common area.

The Most Convenient UK Internet Access Option:

A Personal Hot Spot

DC Carson suggests:

"If it is imperative that you login securely (to check banking accounts, for example), using your smart phone's personal HotSpot, or purchasing a UK-enabled personal HotSpot may be worth your money. Keep in mind, however, that HotSpots use data. Arrange for an ample international dataplan if you'll be using a personal HotSpot frequently."

When you call your home phone service provider to discuss UK phone options, ask the rep about personal HotSpots.

<http://OutlandishScotland.com/UKphones.pdf>

Free WiFi Hot Spots

It's not just coffee shops anymore. More and more UK restaurants, cafés, pubs, and other businesses have started offering free WiFi access in order to increase customer interest. When visiting major cities such as Edinburgh and Inverness, you'll have no problem finding a free WiFi hotspot.

According to Reid Bramlett:

"Internet cafes pop up and disappear with astonishing frequency, so even the resources for tracking them down such as ~~Cyberactive.com~~, Cybercafes.com [www.cybercafes.com/], or www.world66.com/netcafeguide will not be totally up-to-date.

"You can [usually find free WiFi hotspots] clustered around train stations, neighborhoods packed with tourist hotels, backpacker hangouts, and often just off major squares. When in doubt, just ask around (your hotel, the tourist office, fellow travelers)."

http://www.reidsguides.com/t_cm/cybercafes.html

A free UK Internet WiFi finder that has served us well is:

My Hotspots

<http://www.myhotspots.co.uk/>

Insert the name of the city you'll be visiting each day, or the postal code of your lodgings each evening, and this WiFi finder will give you a list of the nearest available hotspots. The only drawback to this finder: it's not always clear which hotspots are free. Furthermore, those listed as Pay or Commercial hotspots may only charge the cost of a cuppa to gain Internet access.

Another great Internet free WiFi finder is:

Wi-Fi-FreeSpot Directory

<http://www.wififreespot.com/europe.php>

Scroll down to England, Wales or Scotland, as needed.

Alternatively, use the store locators for UK businesses *known* to offer free WiFi access—inserting the name of the city you'll be visiting each day, or the postal code of your lodgings each evening. When using the locator links below, be sure to check the **WiFi** option before clicking on the search button.

UK McDonalds Free WiFi

http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/ukhome/Restaurants/restaurant_locator.html

Located all over the UK, most McDonalds restaurants now offer free WiFi. Although you may have to register during your first visit (at no charge), once you've done that you can access the Internet as long as you want for the price of a single cup of coffee, an order of fries—whatever.

UK Starbucks Free WiFi

<http://starbucks.co.uk/store-locator>

All you'll have to pay to access the Internet at a UK Starbucks is the cost of a cuppa or a snack, in order to justify your presence in the store.

"Now all our customers can get online for free at hundreds of hotspots at Starbucks throughout the UK. You no longer need a registered Starbucks Card to log on—just click 'Connect' and enjoy one-click, high speed WiFi access on us. ... Each WiFi session lasts for 2 hours but you can have an unlimited number of sessions every day—just reconnect after 2 hours."

UK Welcome Break Motorway Service Stations Free WiFi

<https://www.welcomebreak.co.uk/facilities/free-wifi/>

<https://www.welcomebreak.co.uk/locations/>

When driving through the UK, you'll find free WiFi Internet access at any of the Welcome Break locations (rest stops) found along major Motorways. You don't have to purchase anything to use their restrooms *or* their free WiFi.

Free WiFi at UK ASDA Stores

<http://your.asda.com/news-and-blogs/get-free-WiFi-in-all-asda-stores>

"To use our free in-store WiFi, just pop down to your local store and follow these simple steps:

1. Select Asda Free WiFi from your network list on your phone
2. Enter your mobile number
3. Receive a text message with your access code
4. Enter the access code into the log in screen
5. Enter your details and click go

Once registered you will be able to access Asda WiFi automatically in any of our stores [for free]."

Use the link below to find an ASDA in the city you'll be visiting each day, or the ASDA nearest to each of your evening's lodgings.

<http://storelocator.asda.com/#!/>

If you'll be driving to an ASDA store immediately after picking up your UK rental car, consider registering while you're there.

Free WiFi at UK Tesco Stores

<http://home.bt.com/news/bt-life/bt-WiFi-available-in-tesco-stores-11363944815149>

"Tesco customers can now access the Internet while they shop, thanks to a new partnership between the supermarket and BT WiFi. To enjoy the new service, shoppers can select 'Tesco WiFi' or 'BT*' on their smartphones or tablets. It's available at 806 Tesco Extra and Superstores in the UK and 113 stores in the Republic of Ireland."

[It is unclear whether you must "register" in order to access Tesco's free WiFi. If you *do* have to register, we anticipate that the registration will be free.]

Use the link below to find a free-WiFi-offering Tesco in the city you'll be visiting each day, or the free-WiFi-offering Tesco nearest to each of your evening's lodgings.

<http://www.tesco.com/store-locator/uk/>

If you'll be driving to a Tesco Super Store immediately after picking up your UK rental car, consider registering while you're there.

Internet Blogging

In our **Packing Pointers PDF** we discuss the value of purchasing and packing a **Travel Journal Book**, in which you can write your daily thoughts and observances—preserving your travel experiences on paper.

<http://OutlandishScotland.com/PackingPointers.pdf>

These days, travel journal books are rapidly being replaced with Internet travel blogs.

Outlanderites who already have a Facebook or Twitter account could use these social media platforms to document and share each day's adventures. Unfortunately, posting pretty pix on Twitter or public Facebook accounts while on holiday **notifies thieves that you are not home!**

"Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter can be a risk if people know you are away and your home is empty," police officers have warned residents.

"Just because you are on holiday, does not mean burglars are taking time off too, and if it looks like you are away, then your home could become a target."

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/science-technology/625716/Facebook-Warning-Social-Media-Never-Share-Christmas-Danger>

If you'll be Outlandering in the UK with a laptop, you can record a daily account of your adventures on that. Additionally, consider creating a private Internet Blogsite dedicated to your Outlandish Scotland Journey—especially if you'll have free Internet access at your lodgings.

Be sure to setup your **Outlandish Journey Blogsite** *before* leaving home. That way, you can share its address in the Itinerary you provide to family and friends, and it will be ready to use when you arrive in the UK.

Below are three Internet resources helpful to picking the best Blogging Platform ("web host") for your Travel Blog needs. Should you wish to learn more before committing to one of these Blog Hosts, simply search, "**Best Internet Travel Blog Hosts.**"

How to Choose the Best Platform for Your Blog

By Ginny Soskey; Content Creation April 27, 2016

<https://blog.shareaholic.com/best-blogging-platform/>

"Picking the right platform for your content is essential to you establishing yourself as a blogger. While it's fine to make a transfer one time, you shouldn't really be jumping around from platform to platform like I did. You'll end up having a very fragmented web presence, which will be hard to overcome with even the best SEO efforts." ...

The Best Places to Start a Blog (Updated 2016 Edition)

<http://www.dearblogger.org/blogger-or-wordpress-better>

“Blogging. The thing your friend does that you could do better. The hobby of the century. Your key to boss-less freedom and your cat’s one shot at fame. So do your homework with this list and start a blog the whole world, and your mom, will love.”

How to Start A Travel Blog: A Step-By-Step Guide

<http://expertvagabond.com/how-to-start-travel-blog/>

“Starting your very first travel blog is actually pretty easy. If you follow my guide, you can have your own blog up and running today. Now keep in mind the following advice is for those who are prepared to take travel blogging seriously, as some of these steps require spending money. If you aren’t quite ready for that yet, you can always start a simple travel blog for family & friends on WordPress.com. It’s totally free!”

In Summary

Connecting with family and friends via the Internet while Outlandering in the UK is a rewarding way of sharing your experiences with those you love, as well as an important means of preserving your memories of this phenomenal journey.