



Telephones And The UK

An Outlandish Extra PDF

OutlandishScotland.com

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

Outlandish Scotland Journey

Telephones and the UK

Learning about the many differences between US/Canadian and UK phones, and deciding what kind of phone to use while Outlandering in the UK, requires serious research. To help with this task, we've assembled a few of the best Internet resources available.

Outlandish Pronunciation Note: Mobile = "MO-bile" — *not* "mo-bull."

Yes, UK natives will know what you mean if you say "mo-bull" or "cell phone." But, *when in Rome!*

UK Tourist Information

<http://www.tourist-information-uk.com/guides/tourist-information-advice/telephones-mobile-phones/>

This webpage contains explanations and directions for several phone-related issues, such as: dialing the UK from another country, dialing another country *from* the UK, calling *within* the UK, money-saving tips, best times to make calls, **SIM** cards, and using **Skype** while in the UK.

Rick Steves' Travel Tips: Phones and Technology

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

As usual, Rick provides several webpages filled with helpful suggestions about phones and the UK. The link above leads to the directory page of his phones and technology tips. Below are previews of each article.

Please Note: Some of Steves' European suggestions don't apply in the UK. Although he usually identifies non-UK-related info, read carefully.

* Below are the most important Rick Steves phone articles.

How Can I Stay Connected in Europe?

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/stay-connected-in-europe>

"Bad-Value Options: Many car-rental companies, mobile-phone companies, and even some hotels offer the option to rent a mobile phone with a European number. This is a terrible value, as hidden fees (such as high per-minute charges) can add up."

Using Your Own Phone in Europe

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/data-roaming>

This article includes several smart tips for avoiding excessively expensive data use when traveling with your smartphone. Steves clearly explains each of the topics below.

"Tips for Using Data Roaming Smartly

- Avoid using your cellular network for bandwidth-gobbling tasks.
- Keep track of data usage.
- Limit automatic updates in your email and other apps.
- Disconnect from your cellular network altogether."

Using a European [UK] SIM Card

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/cell-phone-europe>

“While using your American phone in Europe is easy, it can get expensive. And unreliable Wi-Fi can make the reality of keeping in touch via a service like Skype more frustrating than it should be.

“If you anticipate heavy phone or data use, consider traveling with a mobile phone fitted with a [UK] SIM card. This gives you a [UK] mobile number and access to cheaper rates than you’d get through your US carrier, **even with an international plan.** ...

“If you have a smartphone, look for a SIM card that also includes data. Expect to pay about \$15-30 for a SIM that includes one month of data within the country you bought it. Be aware that many smartphones (especially iPhones) use smaller micro-SIM or nano-SIM cards. **Make sure you get the right size card for your phone.**

“Also, be sure to save your contacts’ phone numbers in the phone itself, rather than on the SIM card; otherwise, you’ll lose access to them when you switch SIMs. When storing phone numbers, include the plus (+) sign and the country code to ensure that your calls will go through, regardless of where you’re calling from.”

Staying in Touch Without a Mobile Device

[Public Phones, Hotel-Room Phones and Phone Cards]

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/sans-mobile>

“Phones in your hotel room can be great for local calls and for calls using cheap international phone cards (described [in the article]). Otherwise, they can be an almost criminal rip-off. Most hotels charge a fee for placing local and ‘toll-free’ calls as well as long-distance and international calls — always ask for the rates before you dial.

“**Since you’ll never be charged for receiving calls, it’s better to have someone from the US call you in your room,** rather than the other way around. Note that smaller, B&B-type accommodations often don’t have a landline in each room.”

Internet Calling and Messaging

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

“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.

“To use these apps for free, all you have to do is log on to a Wi-Fi network, then connect with any of your friends or family members who are also online and signed into the same service. Although it’s possible to use these apps over a cellular network, doing so when traveling can burn through your data allowance, especially if you’re making a video call.”

Smartphone Apps for Travelers

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

“Apps for smartphones and tablets can be useful both before you leave and while you’re traveling. Most devices are preloaded with apps that can come in handy on a trip (such as an

alarm clock, compass, calculator, weather, and so on). But you can greatly extend your device's usefulness by downloading additional tools, such as restaurant reviews, translators, and transportation apps.

"While it's convenient to be able to access this type of information, there is a catch: ... you can incur outrageously high data roaming fees if you try to access these apps while not logged in to a hotspot. To be sure you understand your options, see my tips on **Taking Your Own Phone to Europe**.

"I've recommended some of my favorite mobile apps below [in the article]. All of these are available on Apple's iOS devices through their app store, and many of them are also available for Android, Windows Phone, and BlackBerry platforms. I've noted whether they're free or must be paid for, and whether they're self-contained (Internet connection not necessary after the initial download) or require ongoing Internet access.

"While it's possible to download these apps over any Wi-Fi network, plan ahead and try to grab the ones you want while you're still at home.

"This is by no means a comprehensive list. New apps are hitting the market every day. To find the latest, browse the iTunes App Store or the Android Market (look under 'Travel'), or search for tips on travel blogs and websites."

TripSavvy.com's Understanding Telephones in London Series

Below is a link to a well-written and frequently updated series of 8 articles. We suggest that you work your way through all 8 of them—unless you already know what kind of phone you'll be using. In that case, you can use the list of links found on each of the 8 articles' webpage to skip around.

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/understanding-telephones-in-london-1583401>

Extra Outlandish Tips

Know Your Time Zones—Whether Calling *To* or *From* the UK

The primary time standard by which the entire world regulates clocks and time is based on **Greenwich Mean Time** (GMT), which is the mean solar time at the **Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London**—now known as **Coordinated Universal Time** and abbreviated as UTC.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenwich_Mean_Time

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coordinated_Universal_Time

The UK operates on GMT/UTC Time between mid-autumn and the beginning of spring. In all other months, the UK operates on its version of **Daylight Savings Time** (DST): **British Summer Time** (BST).



To avoid calling someone when they might be sleeping, go to the **World Time Zone** website and learn the time differences between your home and the UK before placing a call to the UK.

<https://www.worldtimezone.com/>

Be sure to also include Time Zone information in the **How to Contact Me** portion of the **Itinerary Info** that you provide to family and friends—especially if they live in different time zones from you. We address the Itinerary and Contact Info needed by family and friends in our **Pre-Trip Prep PDF**.

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

To Call a Number in the UK from a Phone in the US or Canada

- Dial **011** (the international access code for the US or Canada)
- Dial **44** (the country code for the UK)
- Dial the **UK number**—*skipping the first zero (0)*!

For Instance: To reach the Scottish Clans and Castles' Outlander Tour at **01450 371719** when calling from the US or Canada, dial **011 – 44 – 145 – 037 – 1719**. Do not dial the “0” before the 145.

To Call a Number in the US or Canada from a Phone in the UK

- Dial **00** (the international access code for the UK or Europe)—or a **+** as described by Rick Steves in the quote on page 2.
- Dial **1** (the country code for the US or Canada)
- Dial the US/Canadian **3-digit area code** and **7-digit phone number**.

For Instance: **(402) 489 – 6124** would be dialed **00 – 1 – 402 – 489 – 6124**.

Instructions for Calling between Other Countries and the UK Can be Found at:

<https://www.countrycallingcodes.com/> or <https://www.howtocallabroad.com/>

Emergency Numbers in the UK

999 is the UK equivalent of **911** in the US or Canada.

If you encounter a criminal, medical, or accident-related emergency while in the UK, **dial 999**.

There's only One Exception to this Rule.

When calling for emergency help **while on a UK motorway**, it's best to use one of the **Emergency Call Boxes**: orange telephones with "SOS" printed on them, found at one-mile intervals. (There are white and blue poles placed every 100 yards that point in the direction of the nearest call box.)

By using an Emergency Call Box, motorway center personnel will immediately know your location. You'll not have to try to identify *where-in-the-UK* you are!

Below are a few edited excerpts from the following link—a page you should visit and read if you'll be driving in the UK.

<http://www.trafficsignsandmeanings.co.uk/using-emergency-telephone-motorway.html>

- You should always use the UK motorway Emergency Call Box telephone rather than a mobile phone as you will go through to the correct people sooner—meaning that you will be located and helped earlier than if you used your mobile to get assistance.
- The emergency telephone is free of charge and connects directly to the Highways Agency or the police.
- Face the traffic when you speak on the phone as you should always be aware of what is happening on the motorway even though you are standing on the hard shoulder.
- Let the control centre know if you are traveling alone, and they will try and prioritize your call.
- When you are finished with the call, return to the vicinity of where your vehicle is. You should wait away from the carriageway and put some distance between you and your vehicle. A live carriageway is a very dangerous place.
- When waiting on assistance make sure that you have wrapped up warm as you don't know how long help will take to get to you.

Assistance Numbers in the UK

Dial 100 to reach a Telephone Operator.

You may or may not be charged for this call, depending on what kind of phone you're using.

Directory Enquiries (aka Directory Assistance).

The number you dial while in the UK to obtain assistance for finding a phone number *within* the UK varies according to the service provider of the phone you're using, and is rarely a free call. The number will start with **118**, followed by another three digits. Ask your UK service provider for the second three digits and information about the cost of calling.

Don't forget that you can use the **Internet** to find a UK telephone number—if you have a free Wi-Fi connection there's no charge. Bookmark the links below in all of the web-accessing devices you'll be traveling with.

<https://www.192.com/>

<https://www.thephonebook.bt.com/>

Dial 155 to reach International Operator Assistance.

This number is free if calling from a payphone, but charges may apply when using other phones.

*** Program Your UK Phone's Address Book with All of Your Country's UK Embassy and Consulate Telephone Numbers *and* Location Information**

No matter what kind of phone you end up using, be sure to program its address book with your country's UK Embassy and Consulate information. Additionally, bookmark the **Internet addresses** for your Embassies and Consulates in every web-accessing device that you travel with.

Include your country's UK Embassy and Consulate information info in the **How to Contact Me** portion of the **Itinerary Info** that you provide to family and friends.

US Outlanderites

The US Embassy in London is located at 33 Nine Elms Lane, London, SW11 7US.

<https://uk.usembassy.gov/>

Entry is **by appointment only**, on Monday through Friday mornings.

Closed on weekends, weekday major holidays (US and UK) and UK Bank Holidays.

Be sure to read the Appointment Guide. In addition to providing directions, there are items that cannot be brought into the building.

<https://uk.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/ACS-preparingforyourappointmentJuly.pdf>

Business and 24-Hour Emergency Telephone: 020-7499-9000

From within the UK, dial the numbers above.

From the US, dial **011-44-207-499-9000**

The US Consulate in Edinburgh, Scotland is located at #3 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BW.

<https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/edinburgh/>

The Edinburgh US Consulate provides only **non-emergency** passport and other consular services for US citizens visiting Scotland. Entry is **by appointment only**, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Be sure to read the Visitor Information page. In addition to providing directions, there are items that cannot be brought into the building.

<https://uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/edinburgh/visiting-consulate-general-edinburgh/>

Business Telephone: 0131-556-8315

From within the UK, dial the numbers above.

From the US, dial 011-44-131-556-8315.

There is no 24-Hour Emergency phone number for the Edinburgh US Consulate.

In an emergency, call the **London US Embassy's 24-Hour Emergency Telephone**, above.

Canadian Outlanderites

Visit the links below to obtain phone numbers, addresses, and operating hours info for the **Canadian Embassies in London and Edinburgh.**

<http://canada.embassyhomepage.com/>

<https://www.embassypages.com/missions/embassy23740/>

Outlanderites from Other Countries

Consult your government's website to find the phone numbers and addresses for your Embassies and Consulates in the UK. Alternatively, visit the websites below.

<https://www.embassypages.com/uk>

<https://www.visitscotland.com/about/practical-information/embassies-consulates/>

Payphones in the UK

US and Canadian visitors may find UK payphones slightly confusing.

For instance, you can't just plunk in the equivalent of a couple quarters and expect to enjoy a local call that lasts as long as you'd like. Whether calling locally, long-distance, or internationally from a pay phone, you are **charged per minute** for each call you make—*after* paying a **connection fee** that varies depending on the payphone's service provider.

Also, although UK payphones usually will return unused small denomination coins, they **may not give change** if you inserted large denomination coins.

If you have credit remaining at the end of any UK payphone call and another call to make, **do not hang up**. Push the "**follow-on call**" button and then dial your next call. The credit from the previous call will be forwarded to your next call.

We strongly suggest that you read TripSavvy.com's Understanding Telephones in London article. You can skip to "**2 Payphones in London**" section.

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/understanding-telephones-in-london-1583401>

Please Note: As of October, 2019, the link to "**Find out the costs to use a BT payphone**" redirects to a BT payphone products page. Instead, use this link:

https://www.bt.com/pricing/current/Call_Charges_boo/3545_d0e5.htm#3545-d0e5

In Summary

As we said before, learning about the many differences between US/Canadian and UK phones, and deciding what kind of phone to use while Outlandering in the UK, requires serious research. Be sure to perform all possible phone-related research long *before* your UK holiday so that you have plenty of time to activate or obtain the phone you decide on using prior to embarking on your trip.