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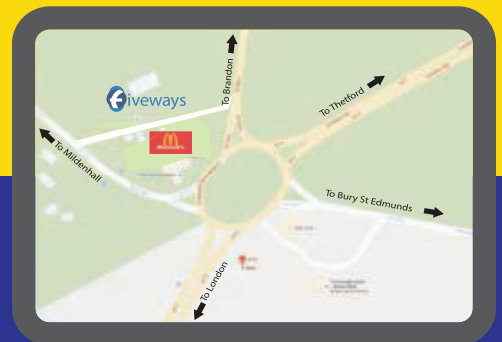
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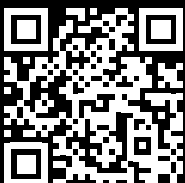
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# WELCOME TO THE U.K.



**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**  
**999 is the Emergency phone number throughout the U.K.**

## NEWCOMERS' ORIENTATION

### ▶ RAF Alconbury (423d)

When you arrive, your sponsor is required to bring you to the Military & Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) in Bldg. 671 at which point you will sign up for the Newcomers' Orientation. The orientation is held at the Community Activity Center on scheduled Thursdays. Spouses are encouraged to attend.

- RAF Alconbury 423d Newcomers' site: [rafalconbury.com/support/newcomers](http://rafalconbury.com/support/newcomers)

### ▶ RAF Croughton / RAF Welford / RAF Fairford (422d)

Before you PCS, attend the virtual Pre-Arrival Orientation offered every other month. Once you arrive, a Newcomers' Orientation is offered on Thursdays at either RAF Alconbury or RAF Croughton. Spouses and contractors are encouraged to attend.

- 422d Air Base Group Welcome Guide: [rafcroughtonfss.com/welcome-guide](http://rafcroughtonfss.com/welcome-guide)
- Pathfinder M&FRC: [rafalconbury.com/military-and-family-readiness](http://rafalconbury.com/military-and-family-readiness)

- 501 CSW Pathfinder Portal: [www.501csw.usafe.af.mil/Pathfinder-Portal](http://www.501csw.usafe.af.mil/Pathfinder-Portal)

- 423d Air Base Group Total Relocation & Community Handbook QR Code:



### ▶ RAF Lakenheath / RAF Feltwell

Each Tuesday and Wednesday there is a two-day orientation that includes a mandatory driver safety briefing and test. The orientation is held at the Eagle's Landing in Bldg. 958. Each Wednesday from 1 to 3 p.m. there is a separate Lakenheath 101—Spouse's Orientation.

- RAF Lakenheath Newcomers' Orientation Registration web form: <https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/2YAgc0aCvP>
- Registration for other RAF Lakenheath M&FRC programs and classes: [rafi-mfrc.timetap.com](http://rafi-mfrc.timetap.com)

### ▶ RAF Mildenhall:

The two-day Team Mildenhall Newcomers' Orientation is held at the Military and Family Readiness Center (M&FRC) in Bldg. 460. Spouses should attend the Newcomers Safety Orientation (which includes drivers' training) and are encouraged to attend extra spouse orientations, which are held monthly.

- RAF Mildenhall PCS & Welcome Site: [100fss.com/raf-mildenhall-pcs](http://100fss.com/raf-mildenhall-pcs)

## ELECTRONIC TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (ETA)

As of January 2025, American citizens visiting the U.K. as a tourist must get an ETA prior to travel. The ETA costs 10 pounds and provides multiple entries into the U.K. with stays of up to six months. It expires after two years.

The best way to apply is via the U.K. ETA App provided for free by the Home Office. You will need:

- A mobile device to download the app (free)
- A credit card to pay the 10-pound fee
- Contact information
- A current, valid passport to scan
- Allow the app to take your photo

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta> for details and to find links to download the app.



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## FOOD DELIVERY

Here are some food delivery apps that are commonly used off-installation across the U.K.

- **Just Eat** delivers from local restaurants who will deliver to your postcode. [www.just-eat.co.uk](http://www.just-eat.co.uk)
- **Deliveroo** will deliver both groceries and restaurant takeaway. [deliveroo.co.uk](http://deliveroo.co.uk)
- **FoodHub** was started in the U.K. and delivers from local restaurants. [foodhub.co.uk](http://foodhub.co.uk)
- **Uber Eats** is available in most places. [www.ubereats.com](http://www.ubereats.com)

## GROCERIES

Here are some common grocery stores in the U.K. Many also offer their own delivery service.

- Tesco
- Sainsbury's
- Waitrose
- ASDA
- Marks and Spencer (M & S)
- Morrisons
- Lidl
- Aldi
- Co-Op
- Iceland
- **Beelivery.com** offers same-day grocery delivery across 90 percent of the U.K.
- **Ocado.com** is an online grocery store that offers scheduled delivery.

## BUDGET OPTIONS

Need an extra pan, cups or dishes at your temporary lodging? Forget something in your household goods? Here is where to find those budget needs.

- ▶ **Swanky Seconds** on RAF Lakenheath is run by the Liberty Community Spouse Association. Located in Bldg. 960 near the Burger King. [www.raflcra.com](http://www.raflcra.com)
- ▶ **Trader Winston's Thrift Shop** is located in Bldg. 168 on RAF Mildenhall. It is run by the Mildenhall Spouses' Association. [mildenhallspousesassociation.com/msa-charity-shops](http://mildenhallspousesassociation.com/msa-charity-shops)
- ▶ **DejaNew**—This community closet on RAF Alconbury is located near the sports fields and has thrift store items in addition to a free military clothing room and food pantry. [sites.google.com/view/amspouseclub](http://sites.google.com/view/amspouseclub)
- ▶ **RAF Croughton Airman's Attic** is located in Bldg. 72 and provides free clothing, uniforms and household items to service members and families.
- ▶ **RAF Mildenhall's Airman's Attic** is in Bldg. 448 and offers free items. [facebook.com/MildenhallAirmansAttic](http://facebook.com/MildenhallAirmansAttic)

- ▶ **RAF Lakenheath's Airman's Attic** across the street from the track provides free items. [facebook.com/RAFLAirmansAttic](http://facebook.com/RAFLAirmansAttic)
- ▶ Some **M&FRC Loan Lockers** allow you to borrow common kitchen items that are issued for 30 days at a time when providing a copy of PCS orders. These are available on a walk-in basis.
  - RAF Alconbury M&FRC, Bldg. 671
  - RAF Croughton M&FRC, Bldg. 72
  - RAF Lakenheath M&FRC, Bldg. 950
  - RAF Mildenhall M&FRC, Bldg. 460

## BANKING

### POUNDS STERLING ACCOUNT

You may need to obtain a pounds sterling bank account in order to pay bills for cell phone plans, rent and off-base utilities. Opening a pounds sterling account can be accomplished at an on- or off-base bank.

#### On-base banking options

- Community Bank
- Keesler Federal Credit Union

#### Off-base banking options

- Barclays
- Halifax
- HSBC
- Lloyds
- Nationwide Building Society
- Natwest
- Santander
- Yorkshire Building Society

To open a pounds sterling account off base you may need the following. It is highly recommended to visit the bank in person, if possible.

- ▶ **Proof of identity:** U.S. passport with U.K. visa.
- ▶ **Proof of address:** Rental agreement or utility bill. Without those, a letter signed by your unit commander can serve as a reference to confirm that you are authorized to be in the U.K.

## VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT) PROGRAM

The VAT program exempts you from paying sales tax of 20 percent on non-fixed goods that are individually over £100. To utilize the VAT program for a large purchase, obtain a ration card and visit your installation's VAT office for specific details.

- The "over £100 rule" means that each item must be priced at over £100 (VAT is included in that total).
- VAT exemption does not apply to clothes, vehicles, real estate property purchases, online purchases or utilities.
- For oil heating, you are exempt from paying five percent with VAT Form.

### How to use the VAT Relief Program

1. Ask the vendor if they are willing to participate in the VAT program.
2. Have the vendor address a quote or invoice to your base's FSS.
3. Make an appointment and bring the quote to your FSS office and pay the amount listed on the quote, plus the processing fee (8–10 dollars). FSS will issue a government check in the amount of the quote and a VAT certificate.
4. Return to the vendor to pay for your items with the government check. The vendor must fill out the VAT certificate and retain the merchant copy.
5. Return a copy of the VAT certificate to your FSS office within 10 days.



## CELL PHONES

When you arrive, put your phone in airplane mode to avoid unexpected charges. Also update any two-factor authentication (2FA) contact details so you can use it after arrival.

## WI-FI COMMUNICATION

When you first arrive, it is helpful to use one of these popular texting and communication apps that are free to use over Wi-Fi.

- WhatsApp
- Facetime
- Signal
- Facebook Messenger

## GETTING CELL PHONE SERVICE

Visit [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk) to see which providers offer the best signal for 3G, 4G and calls for where you plan to live.

### Example Providers

EE, Three, O2, Vodafone, Sky Mobile, Virgin Mobil, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile

### Monthly Plans

- Require a service contract of 18-24 months.
- Need a pounds sterling account with a U.K. sort code and account number.
- No military clause included.

### Pay as you go / Pre-pay

- Purchase a SIM card from an online vendor to be mailed to a U.K. address, or at a retail location (like grocery stores).
- Pay to add more data via your account online or at a retail location.
- No pounds sterling account is needed to set up if you purchase and top up from retail locations. ■



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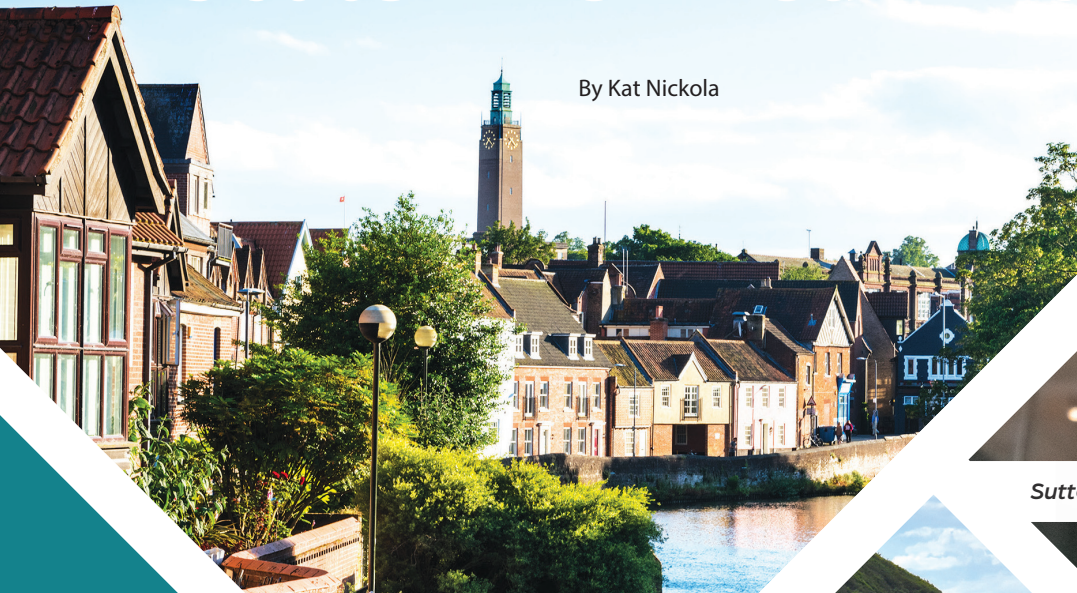
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# Get to Know Your Area

By Kat Nickola



Norwich



Sutton Hoo Helmet



Great Yarmouth Beach

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## TRI-BASE AREA

**RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall and RAF Feltwell** make up the tri-base area. These bases reside within the East of England, one of the nine official regions within England.

Historically, a large part of the area was called East Anglia named for the Angles who joined the Saxons and Jutes from Germanic Europe to settle in England after the fall of the Roman Empire. You can learn more about the Anglo-Saxons at **Sutton Hoo** where a treasure-filled ship burial from the year 625 was uncovered.

For much of its history the area was covered in fens, low wet areas that were first drained in the 17th century. Today this flat fertile area is ideal for farming. Explore the many **local**

**town markets** to find homegrown seasonal produce and farm products. Find your local market at [www.westsuffolkmarkets.co.uk](http://www.westsuffolkmarkets.co.uk).

After the Norman invasion of 1066, walled cities and castles were built throughout the country. Some developed into wealthy medieval cities like **Norwich**. Visit Norwich today to see its famous Norman castle and majestic cathedral.

In the summer, a visit to the beach at **Great Yarmouth** is popular. This resort town has miles of sandy shoreline, fun attractions, live shows and special events year-round.

## WEST OF LONDON

The bases of the 422nd Air Base Group (**RAF Croughton, RAF Fairford, RAF Welford**) lie west of London in an area of history and beauty. Prehistoric people have occupied the area since the end of the last ice age and their stone monuments are still standing today. **Stonehenge** is the most famous, but there are sites scattered all over. Visit **Avebury** for a larger stone circle, see the **Uffington White Horse** or explore the **Rollright Stones** near Chipping Norton.

The rolling hills and quaint villages that dot the **Cotswolds** make up a nearly 800 square mile area of natural beauty. Travel here is known for connecting with nature on trails and bike routes, wandering antique shops in cute



Cotswolds



Rockingham Castle Gardens



Cam River in Cambridge



Uffington White Horse

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

villages, cozying up in a traditional pub, and seeing the opulence inside one of the many stately manors.

Central to the area is the city of **Oxford**. This is the location of the world's oldest English-speaking university with its beautiful towers and turrets sprinkled throughout the city. Most of its 38 colleges are open to the public and its inspiring to walk the halls that once educated former students like C.S. Lewis, Stephen Hawking and J.R.R. Tolkien. Numerous museums offer a glimpse into the studies undertaken at Oxford University since its founding in 1096.

**RAF Alconbury, RAF Molesworth and RAF Menwith Hill** are bucolically located in a rural area known for its farming heritage. Cambridgeshire is a ceremonial county, a historic designation still used to delineate areas where an honorary lord-lieutenant resides to symbolically represent the monarch.

This region is dotted with small market towns, each with their own **market day**. Visit Huntingdon on Wednesdays and Saturdays; or try the St. Ives market on Mondays and Fridays. St. Ives was one of the busiest inland port towns in the 1100s thanks to its location on the river Ouse.

The local county seat of **Cambridge** is home to one of the world's premier universities. There are

31 colleges that make up Cambridge University, which was founded in 1209. Beyond the halls of higher learning, there are incredible pubs and scenic riverside walks along the River Cam.

Nearby, the **Newmarket Racecourse** has been a haven for horse breeding for centuries and is considered the home of racing. Heading to a race is an event and dressing up is the norm. This is where you don your fanciest hat and smartest trousers.

Following the Norman invasion of 1066, this area became a hotspot for medieval forts and castles. At **Rockingham Castle**, you can tour the interior, have a picnic on the grounds, visit the tearoom, or take part in one of the many seasonal events. ■

# TRANSPORTATION IN THE U.K.

## DRIVING & FUEL PERMIT

You must have a valid U.S. driver's license and a USAFE Form 435 (driving/fuel permit) to drive in the U.K. Within 14 days of arrival, you must attend a driver's briefing and take a driver's test to obtain your permit.

Study the official Highway Code book ahead of time at [www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code).

### FUEL

You must have your USAFE Form 435 on hand to fuel your vehicle at any on-base gas station.

- Your vehicle must be affiliated with your driving/fuel permit in order to fuel it on base.
- Visit Pass & Registration to have new vehicles added.

### OFF-BASE FUEL DISCOUNT

It is possible to get discounted fuel off base by participating in the AAFES Fuel Card program. You must have a current USAFE Form 435 and a Military Star Card account. Visit the BX for an application.

## MOTORCYCLE ENDORSEMENT

To drive a motorcycle, you must have a motorcycle endorsement on your state driver's license. Then you must take a Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) course, Experienced Rider Course (ERC), Basic Rider Course (BRC) or have proof of equivalent training less than three years old. A motorcycle endorsement will then be added to your USAFE Form 435. An EC-approved helmet is required while riding in the U.K. Check details with your Safety Office.

## BUYING A VEHICLE

You have the option to buy a new or used car from dealers and private sellers.

- Visit [gov.uk/check-mot-history](http://gov.uk/check-mot-history) to check a second-hand vehicle's Ministry of Transport (MOT) history, and to confirm the details given by the seller.
- Road tax is not transferable and must be paid before driving the vehicle.
- Vehicles cannot be driven on the road without a MOT.

## VEHICLE REGISTRATION

All vehicles must be registered with the British authorities at Pass and Registration within three working days of purchase or import arrival. Only two vehicles are authorized per military member at a time.

### Visit Pass and Registration to register your vehicle.

All shipped vehicles are permitted two trips until registered.

1. You may collect the vehicle from the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC) or drive from Europe to your residence.
2. You may drive from your residence to a pre-booked Ministry of Transport (MOT) or Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) inspection and light conversion appointment.

Shipped vehicles are exempt from the first year of road tax. You must pay the tax 12 months after initial registration at Pass and Registration.

Visit [www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax-rate-tables](http://www.gov.uk/vehicle-tax-rate-tables) for more information about Road Tax on vehicles.

### Picking up your shipped POV

Track your POV (Privately Owned Vehicle) at [pcsmypov.com](http://pcsmypov.com).

#### ► What to bring to the port of pick up

- ✓ Vehicle title or letter from lien holder authorizing you to ship the vehicle.
- ✓ Valid ID card
- ✓ PCS orders
- ✓ Vehicle Inspection Form
- ✓ Insurance certificate

The Vehicle Processing Center will stamp one copy of customs paperwork and return it to you. Keep this copy as you will need it to register your vehicle in the U.K.

#### ► Next Steps

- Get light conversion completed.
- Arrange for a vehicle inspection, MOT or IVA, depending on the age of the vehicle.
- Register your vehicle.
- Update insurance to a U.K. policy with your new license plates. Ensure breakdown coverage is included in the policy or get this covered separately.
- Set a reminder for annual requirements: road tax, insurance and MOT.

## VEHICLE INSPECTION

The Ministry of Transport (MOT) requires all imported vehicles to be inspected before registration to obtain a MOT Certificate.

- Shipped vehicles under three years old will get an Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) test.
- Vehicles purchased in the U.K. do not need a MOT inspection until they are three years old.
- Vehicles over three years of age must have a MOT inspection yearly.



## DRIVING IN THE U.K.

### Drive on the left side of the road.

- Look right for oncoming traffic.
- On carriageways and motorways, the slow lane is furthest to the left. Passing lanes are on the right. You may not drive in the passing lanes except to overtake another vehicle.
- There is a "No Overtaking" policy within a 10-mile radius of RAF Lakenheath. Find out more details from your Safety Office.
- Be cautious on country roads. They are narrow, have ditches to the sides, rarely have hard shoulders, have hidden dips and limited sight around curves, and hills that are unmarked. In addition, there is usually no lighting at night.
- Tailgating and brake checking are illegal in the U.K.

- U.K. laws are very strict on driving over the speed limit. If caught by speed cameras or the U.K. police, large fines and points on your license will be given.
- DUI is a very serious offense that will result in a large fine and driving ban.
- It is illegal to use a handheld device while driving in the U.K. and on-installation.
- Be cautious using a GPS, radio, drinking or eating while driving. If your eyes leave the road, you are susceptible to a "driving without due care and attention."
- Failure to maintain tires may lead to large fines, points on your license or seizure of vehicle.
- It is illegal to leave your vehicle unattended while it is running. ■

### Check out our European Road Guide

This useful guide is loaded with detailed information about driving laws throughout Europe. It includes rules of the road, road signs, accident procedures and how to register vehicles. Bonus content includes key phrases in other languages and a chart of European road signs to make sure you're ready to hit the road.



# AMERICANS TELL OUR STORY BETTER

**D** Daniel Stanley  
2 reviews · 1 photo

★★★★★ a year ago

Car was in good working order original rental was for one week only needed the car for 3 days so the rental was prorated which was nice. Friendly staff. Thanks



**S** Sydney Williams  
4 reviews

★★★★★ 6 months ago

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**P** Patrick Helton  
5 reviews

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# HOUSING IN THE U.K.



Your first stop for finding housing in the U.K. will be the Military Housing Office (MHO). They will assist you in finding a home, whether on-base housing is available or whether you need to search the local area.

- ▶ **RAF Alconbury (RAF Molesworth)**  
Bldg. 572 | 0148-084-3518
- ▶ **RAF Croughton (RAF Fairford, RAF Welford)**  
Bldg. 62 | 0128-070-8951
- ▶ **RAF Menwith Hill**  
Bldg. 416 | 0142-377-7886
- ▶ **Tri-Base Area (RAF Feltwell, RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall)**  
Bldg. 429 | 44-1638-52-2101

## BASE HOUSING

### MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING (MFH)

Family housing is available on select installations. You can pre-register your interest in MFH before you arrive by visiting [homes.mil/heat](http://homes.mil/heat). Once you've arrived at your new duty station, you will be added to the waitlist. When living in MFH, the government will cover your rent and utilities, so you do not receive Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA).

Installation housing is available at the following locations.

- RAF Alconbury
- RAF Bicester / Caversfield
- RAF Croughton
- RAF Feltwell
- RAF Lakenheath
- RAF Mildenhall

### UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING

Dorms are available for single airmen of grades of senior airmen and below. Your sponsor should secure you a dorm room prior to arrival. Configurations vary from installation to installation but will include a bed, chest of drawers, desk and chair. Dorms also provide newcomers bedding like a pillow, pillowcase, sheets and blankets.

## OFF-BASE HOUSING

With limited on-base housing options, many people find homes in their local area.

### FINDING A HOME

Your Housing Office may have listings for local homes. In addition, the following websites are good sources for finding a home.

- [www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)
- [www.homes.mil](http://www.homes.mil)
- [www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)
- [spotrental.co.uk](http://spotrental.co.uk)

### VIEWING A HOME

Contact the landlord or realtor in the home's listing to set up a time to view a home you are interested in. Be sure to verify the availability date, to ensure it is not beyond your permitted 30 days of TLA.

If you would like to rent a property, the landlord or realtor may ask for a holding fee equivalent to one week's worth of rent. Ensure you get a written description of what the holding fee entails.

### LEASE SIGNING

Once you find a home, contact your Housing Office to verify the property has been inspected and meets adequacy standards. Do not sign the lease until the Housing Office has reviewed it.

- ▶ It is best to use the standard lease provided by the Housing Office; however, if the landlord or realtor offers a different lease, ensure the military clause is included allowing for a 30 day notice of termination due to military reasons.
- ▶ Security deposits are capped at five week's rent. This is an additional cost to your payment of the first month's rent. The security deposit is used to cover any repairs necessary after you vacate the home. It is deposited in a government-secured account, and you should ask for the reference number within two weeks of moving in.

- ▶ It is your responsibility to conduct a condition inspection when you move in. It is highly recommended that you take photos of the home's condition and provide them to your landlord as a record to avoid discrepancy when you vacate.
- ▶ Confirm your landlord's preferred communication method (text, email, phone) and get an agreement in writing.
- ▶ If you are required to sign a "Right to Rent" letter, keep a copy of it with your lease. Failure to prove your right to rent in the U.K. can result in a £50,000 fine.

## ALLOWANCES

When living off-installation, you are entitled to allowances that help offset the additional costs.

Visit [www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances](http://www.travel.dod.mil/Allowances) to calculate the amounts of your compensation based on location, rank and family situation.

### OVERSEAS HOUSING ALLOWANCE (OHA)

#### Rental Allowance

OHA is approved up to a certain amount but will only be paid out to match the rental cost on your lease agreement. If your rent is higher than your permitted OHA, you will need to cover the additional cost.

- In the U.K., landlords may change rental rates at the end of each one-year term. Keep a potential rise in rent in mind when searching for homes.
- Complete and submit the council tax exemption form to avoid paying local council taxes or fines.

#### Utility Allowance

A utility allowance helps to offset your costs for electricity, heating and water. You will receive an established rate.

- An Energy Performance Certificate should be provided for your rental property to give you an idea of energy efficiency and utility costs. An A-rated home is most efficient, and E-rated home is the least you may accept, while a G-rated home is the least efficient.

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[www.balmforth.co.uk](http://www.balmforth.co.uk)

[www.balmforth-usaf.com](http://www.balmforth-usaf.com)

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StripesEurope.com

## CONTRIBUTING WRITERS!

Your stories could be published on [StripesEurope.com](http://StripesEurope.com)

We are looking for articles that help service members and their families connect with their local communities through high-quality travel stories, relevant military history articles, information about military life in Europe, kids' content and fun lifestyle stories that bring extra excitement to an overseas assignment.

Read our writing guidelines and submission process at [europe.stripes.com/lifestyle/submissions](http://europe.stripes.com/lifestyle/submissions)



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Saturday, August 15 2026 @ 4:00pm  
Sunday, August 16 2026 @ 11:00am & 5:00pm

#### Location

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Trafal Baden Betriebs AG  
Brown Boveri Platz 1  
CH-5400 Baden, Switzerland

#### Contact

fcevents.europe@fc001jc.com  
+44 (0) 208 135 6009  
[www.truthofgod.com](http://www.truthofgod.com)



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## Move-In Housing Allowance (MIHA)

MIHA is a one-time payment to help defray additional costs like buying transformers and wardrobes, one-time fees, security-related enhancements, window screens or safety upgrades.

## Advanced Overseas Housing Allowance (AOHA)

The Finance Office offers AOHA as an optional interest-free loan to help you pay initial expenses like security deposits and first month's rent.

## LOANER FURNITURE

While waiting for your furniture to arrive, temporary items are available for you to use (whether you live on or off base) through your installation's Furnishings Management Office (FMO). Available temporary furniture items might include beds, dressers, sofa and dining set. You can also contact your local M&FRC for loan locker items.

Items available to off-base residents for the duration of their tour.

- Dryer
- Refrigerator
- Transformers
- Wardrobes
- Washer

Note: You will need a form, available at FMO, signed by your landlord stating that they will not hold FMO property as collateral if you fail to pay rent.

## UTILITIES

### INTERNET

Ask about internet speeds before moving on base or deciding on a house off installation. Depending on the location of your home, providers may not be able to guarantee fast connection speeds.

- ▶ To check what provider works best in your area and has the best deal, it is helpful to visit a price comparison website.

- [www.gocompare.com](http://www.gocompare.com)
- [www.moneysupermarket.com](http://www.moneysupermarket.com)
- [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com)

- ▶ Commonly used providers

- British Telecom (BT)
- Javelin
- Sky
- Three

- ▶ Unlimited Data SIM option

As an alternative to broadband, you may choose to use an Unlimited Data SIM card paired with a router in your home. You will need to purchase a SIM Wi-Fi router and a SIM card with unlimited data to use in the router.

## HOME PHONE

Many people opt to use their cell phones as their primary phone, thus eliminating the need for a landline. If you choose to set up a landline, many companies (such as those listed) offer bundle packages. A landline might be required for internet service in your home.

Do not use baby monitors or house phones that use Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications (DECT 6). They operate on a frequency not permitted in the U.K. or Europe and are illegal with fines of £5,000.

## TELEVISION LICENSE

You will need to obtain a television license if you plan to watch live TV, live stream video on any device (TV, cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) or watch BBC programs on iPlayer. For more info go to [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk).

AFN Now is available as a streaming service and offers U.S. programming. Visit [afn-now.myafn.mil](http://afn-now.myafn.mil) to sign up.

## TRASH AND RECYCLING

Recycling is a requirement in England. Each local district council has its own regulations. Check with your landlord or neighbors for pick up schedules. Your installation will also have specific recycling and waste disposal regulations.

Visit [www.gov.uk/recycling-collections](http://www.gov.uk/recycling-collections) to search by postcode for specific rules in your council. ■

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# HEALTHCARE IN THE U.K.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

**999** is the emergency line in the U.K.

**112** is the emergency line in the rest of Europe.

While traveling, all TRICARE beneficiaries can call **+44-20-8762-8133** for support.

## LOCAL EMERGENCY ROOM (ER) AND ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY (A&E) DEPARTMENTS

- ▶ RAF Alconbury: Use the A&E at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.
- ▶ RAF Croughton: Use the A&E at Horton General Hospital.
- ▶ RAF Fairford: Use the A&E at Great Western Hospital.
- ▶ RAF Lakenheath Hospital has an ER to service the Tri-Base Region.
- ▶ RAF Menwith Hill: Use the A&E at Harrogate District Hospital.
- ▶ RAF Molesworth: Use the A&E at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.



## MEDICAL FACILITIES

Active-duty service members and their dependents are typically assigned to a primary care team on their installation.

For appointments, referrals and prescription refills, use the MHS Genesis Portal at [patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil](http://patientportal.mhsgenesis.health.mil).

### 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line

- Call: 0800-028-3263
- Chat or Video Chat: [www.mhsnurseadvice.com/home](http://www.mhsnurseadvice.com/home)
- ▶ RAF Alconbury, RAF Molesworth  
423rd Medical Squadron  
[rafalconbury.tricare.mil](http://rafalconbury.tricare.mil)  
TRICARE Regional Call Center:  
+44-20-8762-8384  
Appointment Line: 0148-84-2273
- ▶ RAF Croughton  
422nd Medical Squadron  
[rafcroughton.tricare.mil](http://rafcroughton.tricare.mil)  
TRICARE Regional Call Center:  
+44-20-8762-8384  
Appointment Line: 0128-070-8737
- ▶ Tri-Base Region (RAF Feltwell, RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall)  
48th Medical Group  
[rafakenheath.tricare.mil](http://rafakenheath.tricare.mil)  
TRICARE Customer Service  
Room 101, Bldg. 922 | 0163-852-8716  
Appointment Line: 0163-852-8010

## GIVING BIRTH

During your pregnancy, you can receive prenatal care at your installation's medical center or clinic.

### Delivery at RAF Lakenheath Hospital

If you are stationed outside the Tri-Base region, you can enroll in the Stork Nesting program by contacting your primary healthcare provider. You will be transitioned to RAF Lakenheath for delivery. The program includes lodging and transportation as needed.

### Delivery at a British birthing center or hospital

For details and to find locations near you with birthing options, visit the NHS website [www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth](http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/labour-and-birth).

### Delivery in the U.S.

At your own expense, and without a TRICARE referral, you may travel to the U.S. to deliver your baby. If you choose to do this, you will need to remain in the U.S. until the new baby's identification documents are established.

## DENTAL CARE

Dental clinics on base prioritize active-duty service members for care. Dependents may occasionally be seen during seasons of limited access or on a space-available basis with priority being given for dental emergencies.

With TRICARE dental insurance, via United Concordia, patients not seen on installation can establish quality, affordable care at dentists in the local British community. [tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental/TDP](http://tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental/TDP)

Dependents are advised to establish a regular dentist off-installation. Visit your local TRICARE office for a list of recommended providers.

## MENTAL HEALTH

### ▶ Chaplains

The chapel is a good place to start if you don't know where to go; they will help you find the resource that fits your needs. Chaplains offer counseling for all personnel regardless of religious preference. Discussions with chaplains are 100 percent confidential.

- RAF Alconbury: 01480-84-3343
- RAF Croughton: 01280-70-8700
- RAF Fairford: 01280-70-8700
- RAF Lakenheath: 0163-852-3711
- RAF Mildenhall: 01638-54-2822
- RAF Molesworth: 01480-84-1533

### ▶ Military & Family Life Counselors (MFLCs)

MFLCs offer free non-medical anonymous sessions with specialists for adults, adolescents, children and families. Connections can be made through your local Military & Family Readiness Center (M&FRC), or by calling the MFLC directly using the numbers below.

- RAF Alconbury: 07880-64-0139
- RAF Croughton: 07908-74-5352

- RAF Lakenheath & RAF Feltwell: 07826-28-6432 and 07828-29-5949
- RAF Mildenhall: 07826-28-5039 and 07826-29-5201
- RAF Molesworth: 07342-87-0880
- For youth, there are MFLC resources available at DoWEA schools and youth centers.

### ▶ Mental/Behavioral Health Office at your Medical Facility

The mental/behavioral health office at your local facility is available for active-duty service members, with some services also available for dependents. Contact your local office for details on their programs.

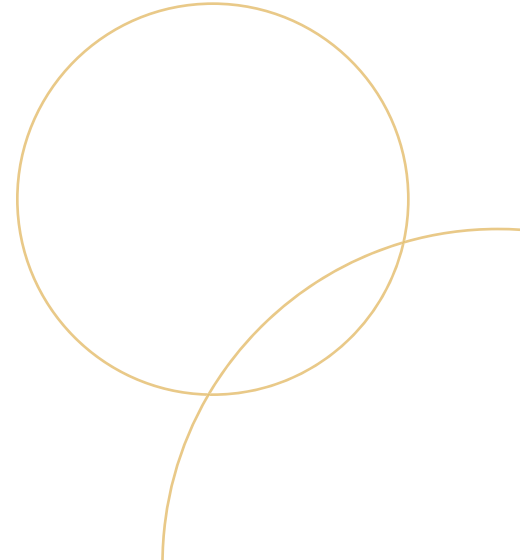
- RAF Alconbury: 01480-84-4503
- RAF Croughton: 07718-51-2740
- RAF Lakenheath: 01638-52-8603

### ▶ Military OneSource

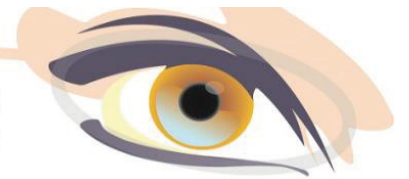
Confidential, short term non-medical counseling is offered for free via Military OneSource for active-duty members and their dependents. Visit the website to access options via phone, chat or video. [www.militaryonesource.mil/non-medical-counseling](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/non-medical-counseling)

### ▶ The Veterans Crisis Line (VCL) and Military Crisis Line (MCL) are available 24/7 for free confidential mental health support.

- Call: 844-702-5495
- DSN: 988
- Text: 838255
- Online chat: [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net) ■



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**Dispensing Optician:** Mr Tim Briscoe FBDO

**36 High Street, Lakenheath,  
Brandon, Suffolk. IP27 9JS**

**Email:** [lakenheathopticians@btconnect.com](mailto:lakenheathopticians@btconnect.com)

**Website:** [www.lakenheathopticians.co.uk](http://www.lakenheathopticians.co.uk)

**Tel:** 01842 861999



# SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS



## AFN

The American Forces Network (AFN) broadcasts online via two free downloadable apps:

- For radio, use the AFN Go app available at [afngo.net/anfeurope](http://afngo.net/anfeurope).
- For TV, use the AFN Now app available at [afn-now.myafn.mil](http://afn-now.myafn.mil).

## FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRONS



▶ **RAF Alconbury, RAF Molesworth**  
[www.rafalconbury.com](http://www.rafalconbury.com)



▶ **RAF Croughton, RAF Fairford, RAF Welford**  
[www.rafcroughtonfss.com](http://www.rafcroughtonfss.com)



▶ **RAF Lakenheath and RAF Feltwell**  
[www.lakenheathfss.com](http://www.lakenheathfss.com)



▶ **RAF Mildenhall**  
[www.100fss.com](http://www.100fss.com)

## POST OFFICES

Military postal facilities use gateways in the United States to connect your mail with the United States Postal Service (USPS). Shipping costs and procedures are roughly the same as those in the United States. All mail must have the following to be sent or received.

- First and last names of both sender and receiver.
- Recipient or sender names must match those affiliated with the military postal box.
- A customs form to ensure the contents abide by local area restrictions.

Visit [www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm](http://www.usps.com/international/customs-forms.htm) to fill and print a customs form. Post Office personnel can help you complete a customs form at the facility; however, this can be time-consuming. Click-N-Ship services are also available at many military postal facilities.

- RAF Alconbury Post Office | Bldg. 502  
01480-84-3539
- RAF Fairford Post Office | Bldg. 66  
01285-71-4136
- RAF Lakenheath Post Office | Bldg. 1025  
01683-52-3548

- RAF Mildenhall Post Office | Bldg. 172  
01638-54-7678
- RAF Molesworth Post Office | Bldg. 346  
01480-84-2992
- RAF Croughton Post Office | Bldg. 29  
01280-70-8092

Services are very limited. Stamps and shipping labels cannot be purchased at the post office and military members are encouraged to use USPS Click and Ship to create prepaid labels.

## VOTING OVERSEAS

To find out about registering to vote while overseas, visit [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). You will need to select your state of residency to get details about absentee ballot options. ■



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# RESOURCES

## FOR KIDS



Children may think of moving to England as an exciting new adventure. They may also struggle with the big change. Luckily, every installation has resources available to help your kids settle into their new home.

### CHILDCARE

- ▶ **Child Development Center (CDC)**—These centers offer weekday childcare for children ages 6-weeks to 5 years. Visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) to register for care.
- ▶ **School-Age Care (SAC) or the School-Age Program (SAP)** is available for students in first through fifth grade. The programs offer before and after school care with homework help, clubs and structured activities. Visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) to register.
- ▶ **Family Child Care (FCC)** providers are certified and regulated by the DOD to care for children in their homes. Some offer extended hours. Visit your local FSS or visit [www.militarychildcare.com](http://www.militarychildcare.com) to get details.

### YOUTH AND TEEN PROGRAMS

Youth Programs and Teen Centers provide a place for older kids to meet up, hang out, get homework help or learn something new. Take part in a movie night, have fun during open recreation, take a class, join a club or sports team, and so much more. Most teen centers are part of both Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the 4-H Clubs which provide unique and fun programs.

- ▶ **RAF Alconbury**  
[rafalconbury.com/youth-programs](http://rafalconbury.com/youth-programs)
- ▶ **RAF Croughton**  
[rafcroughtonfss.com/youth-programs](http://rafcroughtonfss.com/youth-programs)
- ▶ **RAF Lakenheath**  
[www.facebook.com/LakenheathYouthPrograms](http://www.facebook.com/LakenheathYouthPrograms)
- ▶ **RAF Mildenhall**  
[www.facebook.com/RAFMYM](http://www.facebook.com/RAFMYM) ■



Read our free kids' magazine, "Dandelions" featuring fun educational, activity and coloring pages.

# SCHOOL OPTIONS

Your installation's School Liaisons are a good first resource for any questions regarding school options while stationed in England. While many students attend a Department of War Education Activity (DoWEA) school, not all installations offer DoWEA schools. Both homeschooling and British schools are available.

## SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM OFFICES

### ► RAF Alconbury School Liaison

Bldg. 671 | Phone: (+44) 01480-843232  
[Schoolliaison.alconbury@us.af.mil](mailto:Schoolliaison.alconbury@us.af.mil)

### ► RAF Croughton School Liaison

Bldg. 72 | Phone: (+44) 1280-707498  
[422abg.slochoolliaisoncroughton@us.af.mil](mailto:422abg.slochoolliaisoncroughton@us.af.mil)

### ► Tri-base Region:

#### RAF Lakenheath School Liaison

Bldg. 950 (M&FRC) | Phone: (+44) 1638-525077  
[48fss.ccl.slo@us.af.mil](mailto:48fss.ccl.slo@us.af.mil)  
[facebook.com/RafLakenheathMildenhallSLO](https://www.facebook.com/RafLakenheathMildenhallSLO)

## DOWEA EUROPE

DoWEA schools are located on base in the Tri-base region and at Alconbury. They accept enrollments throughout the year to accommodate military families.

Enroll at: [www.dodea.edu/registration](http://www.dodea.edu/registration).

### ► RAF Alconbury

- Alconbury Elementary School: [alconburyes.dodea.edu](http://alconburyes.dodea.edu)
- Alconbury Middle High School: [alconburymhs.dodea.edu](http://alconburymhs.dodea.edu)

### ► RAF Croughton, RAF Fairford, RAF Welford

There are no DoWEA schools on the 422d Air Base Group installations. Visit the base School Liaison to for details and explore local schools. Children in these locations have a few Non-DOW Schools Program (NDSP) options.

- Visit [www.DoWEA.edu/non-dod-schools](http://www.DoWEA.edu/non-dod-schools) to see funding options.
- Register at [registration.dodea.edu/ndsp](http://registration.dodea.edu/ndsp).

**Private Schools.** The NDSP can provide your family with funding for your children to attend local British private or international schools. These may be far from your home and require boarding.

**Local British public schools** are another option. Though the British system is different, public schools may be your child's closest option. The NDSP can help offset costs like books and public transportation that are typically included in American public schooling.

**Online or homeschooling programs** may also be an option, funded by the NDSP.

### ► Tri-base Region (RAF Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, RAF Feltwell)

- Feltwell Elementary School (grades Pre-K to 5th): [feltwelles.dodea.edu](http://feltwelles.dodea.edu)
- Lakenheath Elementary School (grades Pre-K to 3rd): [lakenheathes.dodea.edu](http://lakenheathes.dodea.edu)
- Liberty Intermediate School (grades 4th to 5th, on RAF Lakenheath): [libertyis.dodea.edu](http://libertyis.dodea.edu)
- Lakenheath Middle School (grades 6th to 8th): [lakenheathms.dodea.edu](http://lakenheathms.dodea.edu)
- Lakenheath High School (grades 9th to 12th): [lakenheathhs.dodea.edu](http://lakenheathhs.dodea.edu)



## BRITISH SCHOOLS

If your child attends a British school, there are a few things to keep in mind.

- The British school calendar will not include U.S. holidays and USAFE Family Days.
- Repeated absences even for mild sickness or medical appointments have serious consequences and fines up to £1,000.
- The school year runs from early September to late July.
- School-sponsored transportation is not typical. Most students take public buses.
- Report cards are infrequent and letter grades are typically not given.
- Uniforms are required.

## HOMESCHOOLING

While in the U.K., families fall under the U.S. federal regulations that allow for home schooling, not the rules of any particular U.S. state. You are not required to register with the installation or any state agency. It is highly recommended to use an accredited online school or purchase a robust homeschooling program to ensure the transferability of credits. Your children may be eligible for auxiliary services offered by DoWEA-Europe. Contact the School Liaison for more information and to connect with homeschool groups. ■

# HOLIDAYS

## IN THE U.K.



### Dec. 31–Jan. 1 | New Year's

To ring in the New Year, many folks will head out to parties with friends at local pubs, go to fireworks celebrations in large cities or participate in a local fire festival. The biggest celebration is Hogmanay in Edinburgh, with a massive party, torchlight parade and fireworks. Some folks will ensure that the first guest across their threshold brings luck as a first footing.

### March 17 | Saint Patrick's Day

Irish communities across the country host events on this day, and many folks choose to have a Guinness at the local Irish pub. The largest celebration in England is the Birmingham parade. Across the Irish Sea, celebrations are held at sites affiliated with the saint in Armagh and Downpatrick. Over the border in Ireland, Dublin hosts a three-day festival.

### March 26–29, 2027 | Easter Holidays

A local family holiday, the long Easter weekend is a religious observance for some and a spring celebration for others. Egg hunts for all ages and a special Sunday roast are popular. Expect closures on Friday and Monday.

### May 1, 2026, May 3, 2027 | May Day

One of the oldest holidays in the U.K., May Day marks the beginning of summer and has its roots in the pre-Christian Beltane celebration. Towns may erect a May pole and host spring festivals with folk dancers. Expect businesses to be closed.

### May 25, 2026, May 31, 2027

#### Late May Bank Holiday

This national day off originated as a Christian holy day. Many people use the long weekend for outdoor adventures or weekend city breaks. Expect business closures.

### June 21 | Summer Solstice

While not an official holiday, this longest day of the year is prime time for midsummer festivals. Many pre-Christian sites like Stonehenge and Avebury see large gatherings.

### Summer | Festival Time

The summer months are full of events across the U.K. The largest include the five-day Glastonbury Festival of performance art and Edinburgh's three-week Festival Fringe arts fest. You could also celebrate electronica at Creamfields, rock at the Reading & Leeds Festival, hip-hop at London's Wireless Festival, or a little something for everyone at Latitude.

### Aug. 31, 2026, Aug. 30, 2027

#### August Bank Holiday

In Scotland, this day off is held on the first Monday in August, while the rest of the U.K. gets the final Monday of the month to create a long weekend. Expect closures.

### Nov. 5 | Bonfire night

In 1605, Guy Fawkes was caught trying to blow up the Houses of Parliament and King James I. He and his co-conspirators were executed and the country still celebrates that the traitors were brought to justice. Expect festivities over the weekends around Nov. 5 with bonfires, effigies of Fawkes being burned, festival foods and fireworks.

### Nov. 11 | Remembrance Day

This memorial day commemorates British servicemembers from the world wars and conflicts since that time. While not a day off of work, a two-minute moment of silence is held across the country at 11 o'clock. Most memorial services and wreath laying ceremonies are held on the affiliated Remembrance Sunday (the second Sunday of November). At this time, you will see many people wearing red poppies.

### Dec. 25–26 | Christmas Holidays

During the Christmas season in the UK, entertainment becomes a staple of the dark wintry days. Pantomimes (pantos) are popular comedic performances, as are ghost stories and spooky TV shows. Markets will spring up in cities, and many castles and manor houses host light displays. Greenery and Christmas trees are used for decoration both inside and out. Christmas day is a family event with gift-giving, turkey dinners, wearing crowns and telling jokes from crackers. Many will stop to watch the King's Christmas Speech. Boxing day, on Dec. 26, tends to be a day to visit extended family or close friends. ■



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# British Pub Grub

By Kat Nickola



**BANGERS & MASH**

A 'banger' is typically a pork sausage, while the 'mash' is short for mashed potatoes. For this dish, a couple of bangers are often perched atop a pile of mash before the whole thing is doused in gravy. Perhaps there will also be peas.

*Curb your hunger with these quintessentially British pub foods.*



**FISH & CHIPS**

Likely the most well-known pub fare, fish and chips are a fried and salty tasty treat perfect for pairing with pub beverages. The fish may be cod, plaice or haddock and is at its best when spritzed with salt and vinegar. On the side, you will find tartar sauce and a pile of mushy peas.



**PIE & CHIPS**

Savory pies make a hearty meal and are usually served with a side of peas and chips. Pies are baked with a shortcrust pastry and are filled with a combination of delicious chunky meat and veggies. For something traditional, try a steak and kidney or ham and leek pie.



**SUNDAY ROAST**

Typical Sunday fare, a roast may be made with beef or lamb. A roast usually comes with potatoes of any variety: mashed, roasted or fried. You can also expect a nice robust gravy, and, possibly, a side of vegetables.



**SHEPHERD'S PIE  
or COTTAGE PIE**

Neither of these special pies has a pastry crust. Instead, a minced meat and vegetable filling is placed in a small stoneware dish, topped with mashed potatoes and baked to perfection. The difference? Shepherd's pie has mince of lamb, while cottage pie has a mince of beef. ■

# MARKET DAYS

Story and Photos by Kat Nickola

*Being stationed in England means living in an agriculturally rich region, giving your family access to delicious local produce.*

To find out what was in season one sunny Friday morning in May, I wandered around the Mildenhall town square. It was market day and a large stall was full of red beets, carrots and plenty of leafy greens. There were also freshly baked breads, jams and local honey.

Like many places across England, Mildenhall is a market town that still has an open-air market tradition that began in the Middle Ages. In the 1100s, as walled towns with castles expanded, officially chartered markets provided a boost for growing urban economies while also giving local farm families and artisans a consistent income source. Traveling peddlers and merchants would show up, as would interesting buskers and bards sharing the breaking news of the day. The weekly market was also a great place to meet with friends and catch up on the town gossip.

Today, small town markets like the one in Mildenhall offer a handful of stalls. You can expect fresh, local produce, so it is a great way to stock your kitchen for the week. But there is so much more: local jams or honey, plants for your own garden, hot food vendors, tools, crafts, flea-market wares and even repair services are on offer.

Sizeable towns like Bury St. Edmunds near RAF Lakenheath or St Ives near RAF Alconbury have large weekly markets with many produce, fish, meat, dairy and bakery stalls, plus a wide variety of other vendors and artisans. There are also larger monthly craft or farmers markets. Not far from RAF Croughton and RAF Fairford, the Moreton-in-Marsh weekly market is the largest in the Cotswolds.

Big cities have daily markets where you can shop for produce, food, local wares, used items and more. Cambridge, Norwich and Oxford have great daily markets. ■



**To find local markets, it's best to search the local county, district or city council websites.**

- West Suffolk markets (Tri-base area): [www.westsuffolkmarkets.co.uk](http://www.westsuffolkmarkets.co.uk)
- Suffolk special markets: [suffolkmarketevents.co.uk](http://suffolkmarketevents.co.uk)
- Huntingdonshire markets (near RAF Alconbury): [huntingdonshire.gov.uk/streets-parking/markets](http://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/streets-parking/markets)
- Cambridge city markets: [cambridge.gov.uk/markets](http://cambridge.gov.uk/markets)
- Oxfordshire markets (near RAF Croughton): [oxfordclarion.uk/oxfordshire-market-directory](http://oxfordclarion.uk/oxfordshire-market-directory)
- Wiltshire markets (near RAF Fairford): [visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on/markets](http://visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on/markets)

# PET INFORMATION



If you've brought your furry friend to England, you must register them at the RAF Feltwell Veterinary Treatment Clinic within two weeks of arrival.

While the installation vet can see pets for routine care, appointment availability is often low. It is highly recommended that you establish a local British veterinarian for your pet's basic care in addition to emergency and specialty needs.

## PET TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE

When PCSing overseas or outside the continental United States, service members may be authorized a reimbursement for the transportation costs of one pet (cat or dog). The reimbursement cap is \$2,000 and it cannot be shared to cover multiple pets.

## PET ARRIVAL

To bring your pet to the U.K., and avoid costly quarantining, there are a number of steps required. For details, visit [www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain](http://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-great-britain).

1. Ensure your pet has a 15-digit ISO microchip.
2. Pets must have all current vaccinations at least 21 days prior to arrival.
3. Dogs must have a tapeworm treatment documented within five days, but not less than 24 hours of arrival.
4. Have a U.K. health certificate signed by a USDA or military veterinarian prior to departure.

If you travel on a commercial airline you must fly into Heathrow, Gatwick or Manchester so your pet can pass through an approved U.K. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) office and clear customs. If you come into Heathrow, the recommendation is to hire a pet transport company to assist in the process.

## REGISTRATION

**RAF Feltwell Veterinary Treatment Clinic**  
Bldg. 80 | 01638-52-7097  
[usaf.lakenheath.48-mdg.mbx.vet-clinic@health.mil](mailto:usaf.lakenheath.48-mdg.mbx.vet-clinic@health.mil)

### Documents needed to register your pet

- DD Form 2343
- Veterinary Health Record
- Copy of PCS orders
- ID card
- Copy of the pet's vaccination and medical records

## REQUIRED VACCINATIONS

- Rabies
- Distemper
- Hepatitis
- Parvovirus
- Leptospirosis
- Cat Flu
- Enteritis
- Feline Leukemia
- Worming, flea and tick—ensure pet is on these preventive medicines year-round

## PET REGULATIONS & LAWS

- You must provide your pets with a suitable environment, diet and housing, plus offer the freedom to exhibit normal behaviors and protect them from pain, suffering, injury or disease.
- Cats have a 'right to roam' in the U.K. and are not required to wear a collar.
- Dogs must have a collar and ID tag on at all times when in public. The tag should include their name, your phone number and your address.
- You must be able to control your dog and not let them be dangerously out of control or chase or attack livestock.
- There are large fines for not picking up your dog's poop in public places.
- Many public places have local ordinance requiring dogs to be on leashes.
- Tail docking, ear cropping and declawing are illegal in England.
- In order to travel to the EU with your pet, they must at least have a microchip, rabies vaccination, and U.K. animal health certificate. The U.K. no longer issues pet passports. ■





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# PERSONAL ENRICHMENT

There is plenty to do during your tour in the U.K.! From on-installation employment or education to volunteer work and travel, your time in England has a lot to offer.

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Visit your local base M&FRC for one-on-one support, and to update your resume or research job and volunteer opportunities.

- ▶ **Federal Positions (NAF and GS):** Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) positions are offered with MWR and FSS and other on-installation organizations. Hours range from full-time to flexible part-time with varying employment benefits. General Schedule (GS) positions are offered through government organizations on installations and can be part or full-time. Search for NAF and GS positions at [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov).
- ▶ **DoWEA-Europe:** On-installation schools offer full and part-time employment as support staff, substitute teachers and administrative employees. Find certified teaching positions at: [www.dodea.edu/offices/human-resources](https://www.dodea.edu/offices/human-resources). Find local support positions at [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov).
- ▶ **Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES):** For positions at AAFES facilities like the Exchange and food courts, visit [aafes.com/Applymyexchange](https://aafes.com/Applymyexchange).
- ▶ **Defense Commissary Agency (DECA):** Jobs at [usajobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov).
- ▶ **Defense Contractors:** Job opportunities in technology, management, accounting and administration are available with contracting firms. Your installation's contracting office and M&FRC may have information about vacancies.

### ▶ Local British Jobs

The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) allows command-sponsored dependents of military or civilian government employees to obtain jobs on the local British economy without needing a work permit. You will need to have the following.

- A U.K. visa/vignette in your passport.
- You must apply for a National Insurance Number (NIN). Visit [gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number](https://gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number) for detailed instructions.
- Proof of your current U.K. address, such as a utility statement.
- A pounds sterling bank account for payment.

Search for local positions at [findajob.dwp.gov.uk](https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk).

When working on the local British economy you will be subject to U.K. income tax by the Inland Revenue Office, and you will still need to file for U.S. income tax. Visit your installation's Legal Office for more details.

## EDUCATION

You can further your college education while stationed in England. Visit the M&FRC to find out about programs and assistance.

- ▶ **University of Maryland Global Campus:** [europe.umgc.edu](https://europe.umgc.edu)  
Undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs via online coursework.
- ▶ **Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University:** [worldwide.erau.edu/locations](https://worldwide.erau.edu/locations)  
Certifications, undergraduate and graduate degrees. Offers online and in-person courses.

### ▶ Other schools with online coursework:

[www.military.com/education](https://www.military.com/education) or [www.militaryonesource.mil](https://www.militaryonesource.mil)

Many U.S.-based colleges and universities offer online courses and discounts for military-affiliated students.

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a wonderful way to get involved in your community. Start by making connections.

- Visit your installation's M&FRC, Post Office, the American Red Cross and the USO.
- A Key Support Liaison (KSL) is a volunteer within a squadron selected by the Commander to be a link between spouses and the unit. KSLs help newcomers by reaching out before they arrive to help answer questions they may have before moving, and they provide newcomers with the resources available for adjusting to a new base. KSLs are there to support and help newcomers in their transition and throughout their tour in the U.K.
- Find local spouses clubs, interest groups or sports organizations to join.
- Do you enjoy writing? Submit travel or lifestyle stories to [EuropeSubmissions@stripes.com](mailto:EuropeSubmissions@stripes.com) for publication at [www.StripesEurope.com](https://www.StripesEurope.com). ■





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# Finding Cambridge, One Bookshop at a Time

Story and Photos by Kat Nickola

It was the moody, dark look of The Haunted Bookshop in Cambridge that got me hooked. On a ghost tour with Terrible Tours (highly recommended), my group stood just beyond the overgrown shrubs and gravestones of St. Edwards's churchyard listening to stories of mysterious spirits in the tiny bookstore.

I returned the next day to find a note in the window that read, "I am here. Please knock using the knocker. Only knock if you really want to be admitted. Knocking on the door and scuttling off is VERY BAD MANNERS. Give me a minute or so."

I knocked and so began my tour of Cambridge Book Shops. There are eight in the old town, many of which are independent sellers and used book dealers. Each has their own energy and ambiance; from dusty and creepy to modern and fresh. Taking a day to visit them all is a fun way to experience the intellectual atmosphere of this university town.



1

## Heffers Bookshop

Across from the famous Trinity College gate and Newton's tree, this shop was founded in 1876 and run as an independent book and stationary store until 1999. It is now owned by a larger company, but retains an individual and local vibe, especially with its unique children's wing down an alley at the back.



2

## Waterstones

A U.K. chain bookstore staple, the Waterstones in Cambridge is a big, modern shop with new books displayed across multiple floors.



3

## Oxfam Bookshop

Quite near the Waterstones, and in stark contrast, the Oxfam charity bookshop is small and stocked with gently used books of all kinds. I found a great old paperback on hidden sights to see in the region.



4

## Market Book Stall

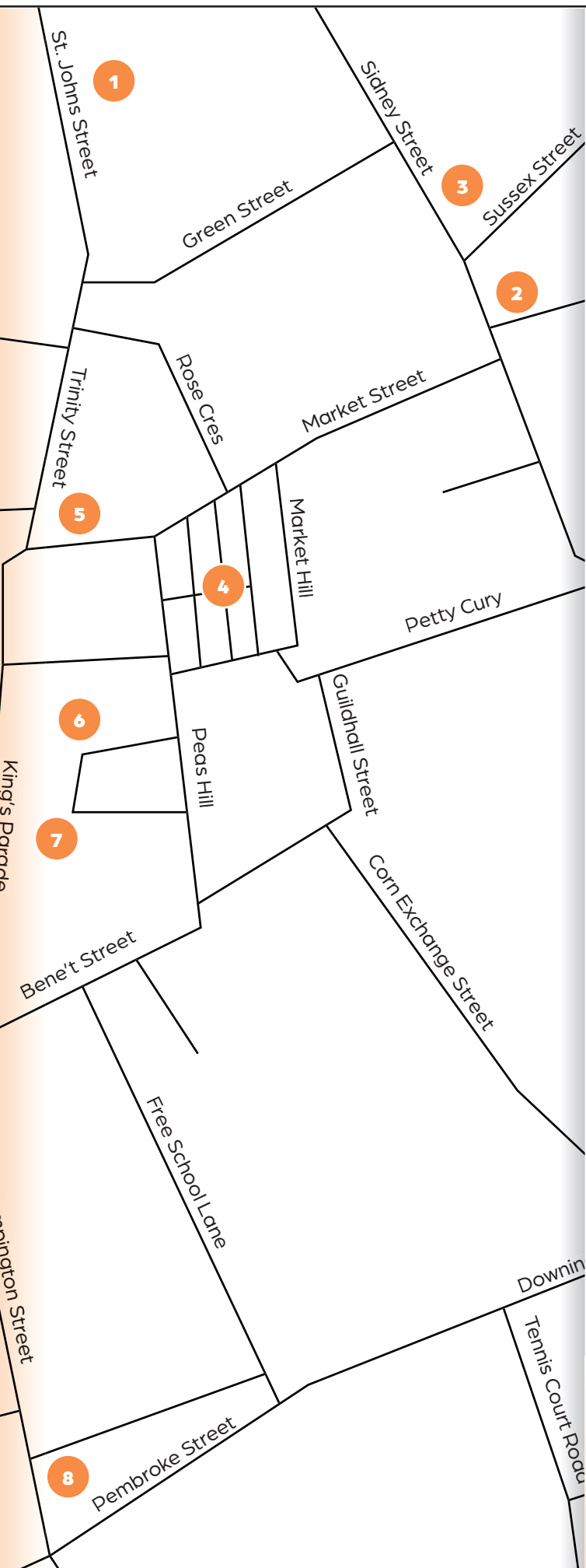
The name says it all. With a unique selection of used books, it's absolutely worthwhile to visit this stall at the Cambridge market which is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. My finds included two gifts: a Jules Verne hardcover for my daughter and an early 1900s collection of Robert Burns' poetry for my dad.

Trinity Lane

Senate House Passage

King's Lane

Trumpington



## Cambridge University Press Bookshop

This is the oldest publishing house in the world. Founded with its first press across the street in 1534, Cambridge University Press (CUP) primarily prints books for the academic community. The current shop location was an independent bookseller beginning in 1581 and was taken over by CUP in the 1990s. Though the store primarily sells academic books, it is worth a visit to see the nearly 500-year-old exposed wooden beam architecture.



## G. David Bookseller

My favorite shop of the bunch, this is where I (gently) dug through piles of antique books, prints and maps. With its musty smell and floor-to-ceiling shelves, and potential for finding a treasure, it took a lot of self-control for me to only leave with a few sketches from an 1800s travelogue.



## The Haunted Bookshop

Tiny, and across the churchyard from G. David, this place is pleasantly tatty, and the two cramped floors are overflowing with precariously stacked primarily secondhand children's and illustrated books. It had been a pub in the 1800s, so maybe the ghosts are looking for a drink.



## Bodies in the Bookshop

After the cave-like feel of the Cambridge passages, it was a reprieve to walk along the expansive main drag past photogenic spires at King's College on the way down to this final shop. With a focus on crime fiction, this bookstore stocks both used and new volumes on shelves in tiny rooms and up creaky stairs. The shop also carries a sizeable selection of titles from Cambridge, so I left with a murder mystery novel set in a medieval version of Trinity College. ■

# A DAY TRIP TO NORWICH

By Stacy Roman



**A**s you settle in, it's time to think about heading out the door for new adventures. Ease your way into the U.K. with a day trip to Norwich. Situated near the coast, approximately one hour east of RAF Lakenheath and 90 minutes from RAF Alconbury and Molesworth, this fantastic city is a great starting point.

As the county seat of Norfolk, the history of Norwich is on full display. Famously known as one of the most complete medieval cities in the U.K., much of the architecture dates back to the 11th century. The **Norwich Cathedral** has seen more than 1,000 years of turmoil, war and pandemics. Dramatic arches, towering spires and ornate vaulted ceilings contribute to this beautiful house of worship. Pass through the St. Ethelbert or Erpingham Gates, the two surviving gates to the cathedral dating back to the Middle Ages.

Near the cathedral, visitors can step back in time as they walk along the cobblestone streets of **Elm Hill**. Colorful half-timbered houses precariously line the narrow sidewalks much as they have done since the Middle Ages.

The stout square fortress of the **Norwich Castle** houses an eclectic array of historical dioramas and a gallery of wildlife exhibits. One of the many fortifications ordered by William the Conqueror after his invasion of 1066, it is a great example of a Norman castle.

Grab a takeaway picnic from a local pub (there are plenty to choose from) and drink in the sights along the River Wensum. A multi-use trail runs alongside the waterway through town.

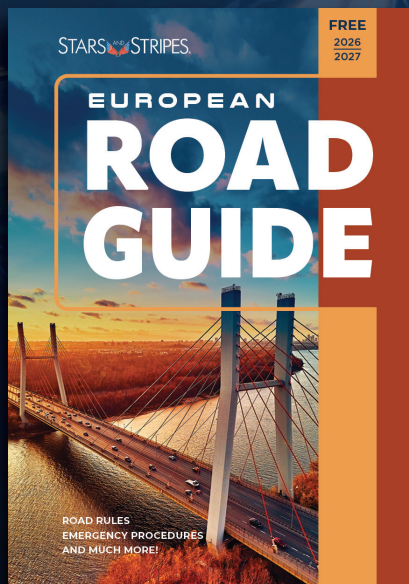
Marvel movie fans will want to stop by the **Sainsbury Centre** at the University of East Anglia, which doubled as the Avengers' headquarters. It is actually an art museum.

With so much to see and experience, you'll want to put Norwich on your U.K. day trip bucket list. ■

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# JOIN AN ARCHAEOLOGY DIG

Story and Photos by Kat Nickola



**M**y trowel scrapes across something smooth. Excitedly, and very carefully, I continue to clear the dirt from the top and sides. It's a bone! I'm stoked and when the professionals deliberate, they decide that it's probably from a pig. While I painstakingly dig out the food scrap, another volunteer beside me finds a piece of medieval glass—one so old that it is delaminating into layers so that it looks almost like the mineral mica. It is finally some evidence that this truly was part of an 800-year-old abbey.

I'm at the Strata Florida Archaeology Field School in Wales for a week of camping out, learning about medieval Welsh Christianity, enjoying the delicious catered meals, and, of course, spending my days digging in a trench. During the day, we bus to the site and work in shifts, with ample breaks for snacks, water, lunch, teatime and to take some tours of the former abbey site. The team is made of a variety of folks, from older

adults with an interest in history to younger students who will use the experience toward their professional training. We tend to walk back to camp at the end of the workday in the pretty summer sun through fields of sheep, and after a shower, a few of us wander down the road to the pub. In the evening, I tuck into my tent and the sheep's bleating lull me sleep. It's work, but it's fun.

You can also plan a unique holiday at an archaeology dig while in the U.K., but don't expect catered food at most sites. Digs can be single-day experience events, week-long camping adventures or full-month courses. Archaeological work is a rewarding hands-on activity that gives you the chance to learn about history, contribute to real research and spend time outdoors.

Participation in heritage activities like archaeology have been shown to contribute positively to mental health, especially for military members. In fact, the Breaking Ground Heritage Organization ([breakinggroundheritage.org.uk](http://breakinggroundheritage.org.uk)) researches and organizes archaeological participation as a

support mechanism for military veterans dealing with traumatic experiences or physical injuries. This includes at digs like the one I attended at Strata Florida, where interested people of all abilities are welcome.

Whether archaeology interests you as an outdoor activity, a step toward wellbeing or a way to learn about the past, going on an excavation can be really fun. Most archaeological experiences include the supplies needed to help with a real excavation and instructions about what to do. Sure, you'll be on the ground digging with a trowel, but there is so much more. Excavation archaeologists train volunteers in many different tasks. There are jobs using specialized measuring equipment or drawing detailed plans of the trenches outside at the dig site and jobs indoors sorting or clean artefacts.

For multi-day experiences, expect to camp out and enjoy the camaraderie of the experience. On some digs, like at Strata Florida, food is included with a simple, catered breakfast and dinner plus a packed lunch brought out to the dig site.



*“Whether archaeology interests you as an outdoor activity, a step toward wellbeing or a way to learn about the past, going on an excavation can be really fun.”*



Here are some resources for finding digs across the U.K. that enlist untrained participants. Most digs occur in the summer with signups beginning around the new year.

- At **Strata Florida Archaeology Field School**, you will be helping to uncover a medieval monastery complex in Wales. This school is known for being the most inclusive dig in the U.K. and welcomes people with differing abilities. Plus, the food is amazing! They offer single “Digger Days” and one to four-week courses. [www.strataflorida.org.uk](http://www.strataflorida.org.uk)
- **DigVentures** is a large archaeological organization that offers adult and family DigCamps and teen DigClubs all over England, and online, from spring to fall. [digventures.com](http://digventures.com)
- The **Vindolanda** excavation near Hadrian’s wall is uncovering the Roman history of the area. They have various one and two-week participation options throughout the year.
- **Mercian Archaeological Services** has single day or weeklong adventures in the spring, and longer courses in the summer, in and around Mercia but especially in the Sherwood Forest. [www.mercian-as.co.uk](http://www.mercian-as.co.uk)
- **Rampart Scotland** offers dig experiences for both archaeology students and the public at both prehistoric and Roman sites in Scotland. [www.rampartscotland.co.uk](http://www.rampartscotland.co.uk)
- **York Archaeology** offers weeklong training digs in the York area that are usually focused on Viking or medieval sites. [yorkarchaeology.co.uk](http://yorkarchaeology.co.uk)

Involvement in archaeology isn’t limited to academics or professionals. Many longer field schools will also welcome untrained excavators who are interested in both learning techniques and participating in a research dig. ■

# DISCOVER VIKING HISTORY IN YORK

By Stacy Roman

**There is one English city in particular that draws a huge link to the country's Viking past—the beautiful city of York.**

Known for its ancient, fortified walls lining the banks of the River Ouse and the imposing towers of York Minster, York has been conquered and settled many times over the past millennia. During the Roman occupation, York was a military stronghold. When the Northumbrians took over, the city was in decline and disrepair. They transformed York into a prosperous trading city, which drew attention from the Vikings across the North Sea.

In 866, Danish Vikings invaded the quiet East Anglian coastline (not far from RAF Lakenheath). They plundered and pillaged their way north, eventually clobbering their way to victory in York led by Ivar the Boneless. When the dust settled, the city was renamed Jorvik—from which the name “York” is derived.

Those who chose to stay were farmers, merchants and tradesmen who brought more prosperity to the region. At one point, it was the second-most populous region behind London, and the capital of the Viking territory in Great Britain. Unfortunately, the peace wouldn't last. In 954, the Anglo-Saxons mounted an offensive and drove the Vikings from York. There were attempts in the 11th century for the Vikings to once again ascend to the throne; however, they were futile at best.

## Jorvik Viking Centre

Located right in the city center is the Jorvik Viking Centre. Filled with life-sized dioramas, exhibits feature a day in the life of the average Viking settler. Visitors are whisked through the various rooms and get a literal feel of how things were—smells, temperatures and visuals. Once the ride is done, you can wander through the museum which boasts hundreds of artifacts on display and plenty of interactive displays to discover. During opening hours, the museum tends to get a little busy and there may be a wait. You can avoid the line and purchase tickets ahead of time online. [www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk](http://www.jorvikvikingcentre.co.uk)

## Jorvik Viking Festival

Once a Viking, always a Viking! Every year during the second week of February, York pulls out all the stops and celebrates its Viking heritage with gusto. The Jorvik Viking Festival has seen more than 20 million visitors in its 35-year history. Complete with living history encampments, combat demonstrations, sword making, mythology lessons and even a candlelit feast for the voyagers, the festival truly has something for everyone of all ages. Although most events are free of charge, a few special ones charge a nominal fee. ■



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