

## TRAVEL ADVICE June 17, 2008

### Do It Yourself?

- **Air Transportation** – Adult fares vary from \$25 to \$1500 per person with \$1000 the average. Some people have frequent flyer miles (\$25). There are discount airlines with the rates depending on how early you make the non-refundable booking and many other factors. The number of people traveling to Scotland has increased dramatically in the last few years and airlines are increasing the number of planes and points of origin (e.g., Delta, Continental, US Airways). Now with the gas prices soaring who knows what will happen. Those who already have their tickets are lucky as long as their airline stays in business (ouch) The difference in cost is based on dates, origin, destination, number of stops, and discounts. Senior discounts are a thing of the past and even children usually pay full fare if they take a seat. The traditional airlines have the most flights and flexibility but you usually pay a higher price for these advantages. Unless you are visiting London or south England, you should try to avoid Heathrow airport because it is very large with long distances between gates, longer lines at passport/customs, added stress and confusion, and increased chance of having problems with luggage. Here is some “do it yourself” information for flights from US and Canada.

**Traditional airlines: Go to [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com) or [www.farechase.yahoo.com](http://www.farechase.yahoo.com) or [www.hotwire.com](http://www.hotwire.com)**

Put in your starting airport, dates, GLA (Glasgow) or EDI (Edinburgh) and follow instructions. Check the box “show nearby airports”. Click SEARCH and within seconds you will find every possible choice from up to 140 airlines and other search engines starting with the least expensive. It shows details like where, and if, there is a transfer stop, total flight time and many other details.

### Some discount airlines with direct flights to Glasgow or Edinburgh

[www.flyzoom.com](http://www.flyzoom.com) (Calgary, Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver)

[www.airtransat.com](http://www.airtransat.com) (Toronto, other Canadian cities)

[www.icelandicair.com](http://www.icelandicair.com) (Halifax, Boston, New York, Baltimore, Orlando, Minneapolis)

[www.flyglobespan.com](http://www.flyglobespan.com) (Boston, Orlando, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary)

### Professional Assistance

You can get professional help from a local travel agent but they know less about lodgings in Taynuilt and Oban than I do.. They will probably surf the web just like you can.

## TAKING THE TRAIN TO TAYNUILT/CONNEL/OBAN

### “How do we get to Taynuilt/Oban from the Glasgow or Edinburgh airports?”

. There are presently 3 trains per day from Glasgow to Oban. The train stops at Dalmally, Loch Awe, Taynuilt, and Connel before it arrives in Oban. It takes 3 hours from Glasgow to Oban.. There are no senior or children rates unless you are a UK resident

There are a number of advantages to going by train. You can see out both sides of the train, avoid traffic jams and use the rest room without waiting for the bus to stop. You can also socialize with fellow attendees who are likely to be on the same train. Upon arrival you can take a bus or taxi to your accommodations. If we have your accommodation location and arrival information, it will help us make sure there will be local transportation is available.

From the US, call: 011.44.84.57.55.00.33

I have recommended that you take the train to MacIntyre Country for the reasons noted above.

## TRAIN RESERVATIONS

Here is the information taken directly from the above web site.

## SEAT RESERVATIONS

Reservations are free when you buy a ticket to travel on First ScotRail. It's always wise to try to book your seat. Reservations are available on many of our trains, particularly on longer routes, including routes in this timetable.

## **THE ONLY WAY TO PURCHASE A TICKET IN ADVANCE DIRECTLY FROM FIRST SCOTS RAIL IS:**

1. Call the "tele-ticket" number 011.44.84.57.55.00.33 if you are in the United States or however you dial Great Britain from elsewhere. You need to call during their working hours of 8 am – 5 pm. They are 5 hours ahead of Eastern Time in the United States.

### Ignore information about on-line ticket bookings or purchases

2. Press " 1 " when requested

3. Press "1" again when requested. When the agent answers, say that you want First Scots Rail

If you don't press "1" just wait until all the options are completed. Patiently wait through the silence and the system will transfer you to a booking agent.

### HAVE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

1. NAME OF TRAIN STATION – GLASGOW OR EDINBURGH

2. DATE OF TRAVEL (e.g. 15<sup>th</sup> of July)

3. TIME OF TRAVEL: (Assume at least 2 hours to get off the airplane, go through passport and customs, pick up your luggage and get from the airport to the train station and pick up your pre-paid train ticket.

Here are the train times I think are reasonable if your plane arrives before 10 AM for Glasgow or 9 AM for Edinburgh.

**GLASGOW:** The first train is at 8:21 but you'll have to get up early, quickly eat your breakfast and stay some place close to the train station and already have your tickets. You will arrive in Oban at 11:27 12.21 PM (Don't forget you need time to pick up your pre-paid ticket at the ticket office where there could be a line. You don't want to rush and forget something).

#### 4. TYPE OF TICKET:

**STANDARD OPEN RETURN.** £30.20 from Glasgow and £31.40 from Edinburgh is the best price option.

5. **PAYMENT:** They accept all major credit cards such as, American Express, Visa and Master Card.

After you have paid, they will ask for your e-mail address and they send you a code number. When you get to the station go to a ticket kiosk, put in your credit card and enter your code number when requested. Your ticket and your seat reservation will come out of the machine! That's what they tell me.

There are other ways to purchase tickets via [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)

#### **SHUTTLE BUS PASSES FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T DRIVING**

For those without cars or who don't want to drive, buses have been hired for the exclusive use of Gathering attendees from July 15<sup>th</sup> to through the 20<sup>th</sup>. This will be referred to as the shuttle bus service (SBS) and will take you to and from the various events. Using the bus at the Gathering is thrifty and less stressful than driving, but there are no free bus passes, except for children age 15 or under.

The price for a 5-day MacIntyre shuttle bus pass is \$50 for adults. The total cost to have our own buses is no more than having a pass for the public bus system plus it includes bus service for the evening and weekend events that the public bus service doesn't have. The SBS starts on Wednesday with one or two 53 seat bus and then two or three buses on Thursday through Sunday. The number of buses depends on the number who sign up for the SBS. There will be a general route and schedule from Oban to Dalmally but our bus drivers will be in communication with a dispatcher who can send them where we want and when we want.

**The SBS pass doesn't cover the MacIntyre Tour, the Eilean Munde/Glencoe side trip, transportation up Ben Cruachan to the Stone or the transportation to Glen Noe on Sunday.** The good news is that I've been able to keep the fees for these activities at the estimated prices, which are inclusive of entrance fees, and appropriate donations to Ardchattan Priory, St. Conan's Kirk and

**Dalmally Kirk. The Eilean Munde fee includes the cost of the boat trip to the island.**

**For those who have a car and don't need a bus pass but still want to use the bus on occasion, it will be on a space available basis at \$4 (£2) per ride, which will be collected on the bus using the MacIntyre honor box.**

**The shuttle bus may not meet everyone's needs all of the time. You will still have the option of using the public buses if they come first and are going where you want. The SBS pass doesn't cover fares on the public bus. There will also be the hospitality of clanspersons who have room in their cars and are going to the same place at the same time as you.**

## **CAR RENTAL IN OBAN**

There is only one car rental company in Oban and it isn't connected with any national rental company. If you rent a car at the Glasgow or Edinburgh airports you can't drop it off in Oban. If you are coming to Oban by train but still want a car during the Gathering then Hazelbank Motors car hire is your only option [www.obancarhire.co.uk](http://www.obancarhire.co.uk) or [enquiries@obancarhire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@obancarhire.co.uk). If we have a sizable number of rentals, I'll ask for a group discount.

### Car Hire

Hazelbank Motors have a large selection of cars and vans available for hire. Charges include VAT, Insurance and CDW.

	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekend</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
<b>Panda</b>	£40	£80	£225
<b>Punto</b>	£45	£90	£255
<b>Stilo/Doblo</b>	£50	£100	£285
<b>Doblo 7 Seater</b>	£60	£120	£345
<b>Punto Van</b>	£35	£70	£195
<b>Doblo Van</b>	£45	£90	£255
<b>Scudo Van</b>	£50	£100	£285
<b>Ducato Van</b>	£55	£110	£315

**LOOK OUT FOR FUTURE INFORMATION**

**Travel Insurance**

**Baggage restrictions and weight restrictions**

**Communication – cell phones etc.**

**Send me your questions**