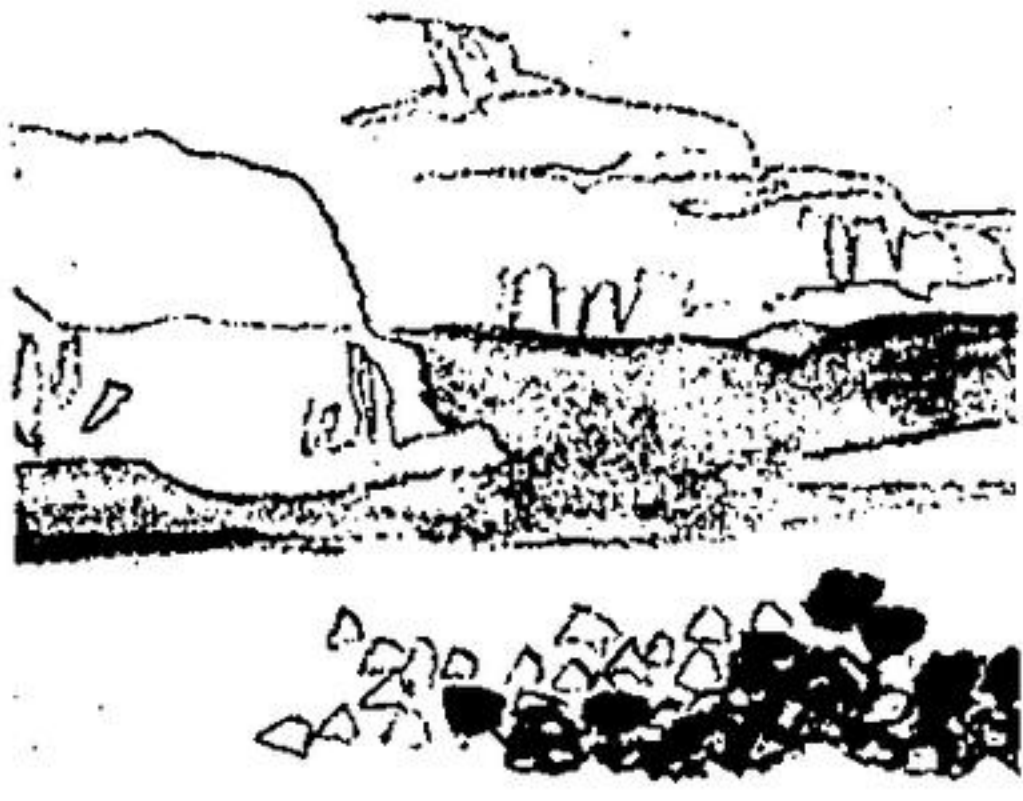


# Travel Driving thru Scotland

## CANARY ISLANDS A VACATIONERS DREAM



**SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS - IF GETTING THERE IS HALF THE FUN, THEN PLANNING YOUR TRIP HAS TO RATE WELL UP THERE ON A SCALE OF ONE TO 10 -** squirrelling away airline timetables, tourist department pamphlets and accommodation brochures is all part of the ritual of getting away for that trip of a lifetime.

But who would want to visit an island that fluctuates from 790 or 1,235 to 3,763 square miles. Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands, certainly exists, but either volcanic activity has been particularly brisk recently - or you can't trust the brochures.

They're trying to tell you the climate is superb when they say "All the climatic classifications based on the reaction of the human body to the combination of temperature, humidity and wind velocity confirm that these islands enjoy a condition of eternal springtime throughout the year." Or are they?

**SPAIN FIRST TOOK AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE CANARIES TOWARDS THE END OF THE 14TH CENTURY,** and "this endeavour, when reverted, after many vicissitudes, to the Crown of the Catholic Kings, in 1477 became enriched by the important project, based on the conversion and civilization of the inhabitants, which was embarked on by these rulers."

The foregoing means it took the best part of 100 years to conquer and convert the native Guanches.

The writers of tourist brochures fall into the trap of believing you'll read only their. Tenerife has between 358,000 and 450,000 inhabitants, depending on which you believe: an up-to-date road map or a 1976 Berlitz Travel Guide.

The spectacular now-dormant volcano Mount Teide (rhymes with lady) is either 12,000 or 12,250 feet high and the cable car ride to the top takes eight minutes by Berlitz, or 14 minutes if you carry the new brochure produced by the Ministerio de Informacion Y Turismo.

**THE 1977-78 WINTER HOLIDAYS BROCHURE PUT OUT BY BRITISH AIRWAYS OFFERS A CHOICE OF GOLDEN AND BLACK SANDY BEACHES** - the result of recent and not so recent volcanic eruptions. But Berlitz and the Ministerio throw in gray as well.

Aside from a few isolated eruptions during this century, the Canaries' hundreds of volcanoes are dormant - but could you be sure when you read the Ministerio's advice that the capital, Santa Cruz "runs abruptly down to the harbor and spills into the nearby plazas..."

Manual Gonzalez Sosa's 1974 edition of the guide to the Eastern Canaries clarifies the geological origins of the Canary Archipelago when he tells us "we should mention, as an example of antipodal solutions, in conception and chronology, the one which takes the islands to be ostensible vestiges of the Atlantis, that fabulous submerged continent."

Sosa discards that theory in favor of the one that has lava accumulating from successive eruptions of submerged volcanoes. Presto, islands.

The original settlers were cavemen, Cromagnons, who came to the Archipelago about 5,000 years ago, probably from North Africa. Tourist brochures have the Guanches subdued and assimilated, conquered and pacified, or conquered, slaughtered and enslaved - depending on whom you believe.

Whatever the truth, modern Canarians reflect their aboriginal past in their folkdances, songs and less frequently, blonde hair and blue eyes. Perhaps assimilation was preferable to extinction because Sosa tells of their "rather advanced stage of moral evolution which did not, however, correspond to their backward technical level."

Somehow the Guanche civilization regressed. Having arrived on the archipelago 3,000 years B.C. - presumably by sea - the Guanches left no trace of boats or technology denoting the ability to navigate.

**ONE POINT ON WHICH THE BROCHURES ARE CONSISTENT IS THE FACT THAT PRICES OF GOODS IN THE CANARIES ARE LOW** - lower not only than in duty-free shops elsewhere, but also than in their country of manufacture.

The islands were declared tax and duty-exempt by Spain in an effort to stimulate trade, shipping, and now tourism.

Leave your metric conversion chart at home and take a drive through Scotland.

Travelling by car or bus is the best way to explore the country. Driving on the left-hand side of the road may feel strange at first, but by the end of your stay it will seem natural - as our driver aptly demonstrated.

The first things visitors notice about the Scottish country-side are the clean, neatly-kept towns and farming areas.

Green hills stretch for miles divided into sections by stone fences built by early farmers. In some parts of the country hedges separate the fields.

Ruined abbeys and castles stand near the road, which winds through steep hills and gentle valleys, and along the constantly-changing sea coast.

Gasoline is expensive in Scotland - about \$1.40 a gallon, but since small econ-

omical cars rule the road, motoring costs no more than other means of transportation. Some of the smaller cars get 40 miles to the gallon.

Driving through Scotland provides the freedom to branch off the main road at any time, and travel at one's own pace. (British Airways can provide information on low-cost car-hire and accommodation throughout Britain.)

Spring and fall are the best times to visit Scotland. May, June and July are the driest months, and the weather is often pleasant and warm, with temperatures reaching the upper 60s. September and October are also quite pleasant.

The Scottish landscape in spring is clothed in a fresh green much different than the green of a Canadian spring. The entire country seems to bloom at once with daffodils, lilacs and magnolia trees.

Fruit trees fill the streets with their blossoms, and the hills are covered with clumps of yellow gorse, which Scots call the whin bush. "Kissing is in season as long as the whin bush is in bloom," is an old Scottish saying.

Spring is also lambing time in Scotland, and the tiny creatures give their mothers and visitors equal delight. Sheep farming is one of the country's main industries.

Scottish roads are well cared for, and the modern motorways which criss-cross the country permit speeds of up to 70 miles an hour. From London to the Scottish border country is a six-hour drive by motorway.

Road signs are huge and easily read, with a simple map pointing the direction of places on the main road. Towns and villages off the main road are indicated in brackets.

Since the Scots are not enthusiastic about the metric

system, their signs are still in miles, and probably will be for some years to come.

To get the real flavor of Scotland, turn off the main highways and explore the countryside. Stop at roadside pubs to gather information about local places of interest, and sample traditional, inexpensive foods such as hearty Scotch broth. Children are welcome in pubs during the day.

One thing to watch for on Scottish roads are the mileage signs, which can be deceptive. It is disconcerting when one sign shows that a destination is seven miles away, and the next indicates that you're now seven and a half or even eight miles away. The last mile to any destination may stretch to two or three by the time you reach it.

For fans of old castles, Stirling Castle, north of Perth, is well worth seeing. It is similar to Edinburgh castle, perched on a cliff, but the

guide in his green tartan pants and cap will assure you that "this castle was not made in Japan".

Stirling Castle was once considered the strongest fortress in Scotland. To test its strength, the invading Edward I ordered the lead stripped from roofs of abbeys and cathedrals, to increase the throwing power of his catapults.

Near Stirling Castle is Scone Palace, the home of the Earl of Mansfield. The palace contains ornate furnishings, and the spacious gardens surrounding it are filled with rare trees and peacocks.

But those are just a few of the many attractions of a motoring holiday in Scotland.

Entering Edinburgh from the east gives one a stunning view of the castle, rising above the city. The dark cliff on which it stands was an active volcano millions of years ago.

Edinburgh is the city of the three B's: breweries, banks and bibles, the delightful Miss Drew of the Scottish Tourist Board informed us. The city is surrounded by brewerries, which draw water from artesian wells - the secret of their success. Banks are plentiful in the financial district of St. Andrew's Square - the richest square in the world - where the Scots earned their reputation for thrift. Bibles are a symbol of the city's long-established printing industry.

Many famous people lived in Edinburgh, besides kings and queens. Alexander Graham Bell was born near Charlotte Square, in the west end of the city.

A tour of Edinburgh is not complete without a stop on Princes Street, the City's main shopping area. Modern shops fill one side of the street, where Canadians will find Scottish woollens selling for half the price they'd pay at home.

The crowded shops contrast sharply with the museums across the street - the Royal Scottish Academy, with its concert halls, and the national gallery - a miniature Louvre.

Due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control we were unable to have the Cunard presentation on September 14th. Watch our ads for future presentation date.

We regret any inconvenience this may have caused.

Jean & Ed Cochrane

## Rent-a-car the right way!

BY JAMES TENNANT

**SYNDICATED TRAVEL NEWS** - Before you rent a car, for whatever reason, there are some things that you should know. All car rental companies are not equal, and some offer better deals than others. So whether you're travelling for business or pleasure, do try and follow these rules set out below - you won't only save money, you may even save your life.

- If you're travelling at peak periods, always reserve ahead.

- Don't necessarily rent from companies located within the airport itself; aside from anything else, they have to pay between 10 and 16% of their gross sales to the government, and their rates are not always the cheapest.

- If your flight has been a long one, it's a good idea to avoid driving as soon as you land. You'll probably be tired and disoriented, and not in the best shape to learn new traffic conditions, new road signs and a new make of car.

- If you can't rent from downtown, and need to drive immediately, try one of the off-airport companies. These are usually within ten minutes of the airport itself, and offer a free taxi service from the airport to

their location. Which is often better than staggering across miles of airport parking space to the car that you think has been reserved for you.

- If you have rented in advance from a downtown or off-airport company, make sure to confirm the car model and the rental terms when you call to tell them you've arrived. This can save an awful lot of aggravation later.

- Shop around if you can. Make sure that the rental company knows exactly what you want the car for - and for how long - and that they've quoted you all their terms.

There are often different mileage packages available, and you want to make sure that you get the best one.

- When you take delivery of the car, give it a short test run - without the family inside. Pay particular attention to steering and brakes - and make sure that all the lights work. Any problem at all - insist on another model. You can't assume that the rental company has caught every defect, no matter how reputable that company is.

- Make sure you understand the insurance cov-

erage - and that it's the one you want. Make sure that public liability and general damage coverage is for at least a million dollars. It's not a good idea to accept responsibility for the first \$250 or \$500 worth of damage. You're driving a new car, in new surroundings - and the single most common argument between rental companies and customers is whether a car was damaged in the customer's possession or not. Pay the extra three dollars a day, and be safe!

- If you don't intend to return the car yourself, make sure about drop charges. These can be high, and you don't want any unpleasant surprises to spoil your holiday.

- Don't automatically assume the car will be air-conditioned - if you want this feature, ask for it.

- If the car rental company has contracted with you in advance to supply a certain model which then isn't available - you don't have to pay the same rate for a less expensive model. It sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people do just that.

Above all, drive carefully - more so than you would at home. So many people

think that they can care-free in everything they do when on holiday, and they can't - especially driving.

James Tennant is the Vice-President of Holiday Rent-A-Car, a Canadian owned operation with 150 outlets across North America.



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