

Heritage is Great: Britain's history and culture

1 Britain has a great heritage. It has some of the finest historic buildings in the world.  
 2 Palaces, castles and museums bursting with tradition and history... there's just so much to  
 3 see and do.  
 4 Around 30 million people visit Britain every year from overseas.  
 5 Three of the top five museums and galleries in the world can be found here.  
 6 There are 14 Roman walled cities, 8 heritage cities and hundreds of castles.  
 7 In London, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and Tower Bridge are just some of the places to  
 8 visit, but how to fit it all in? I'll show you.  
 9 Now, one way to see the sights is to hop on and hop off an open-top London bus. Now, most  
 10 buses go from A to B, but this one is special. This is a Big Bus tour bus and is a great way to  
 11 see the city.  
 12 The Houses of Parliament, one of the largest parliament buildings in the world.  
 13 This is Regent Street, which was built in the 1800s. The street itself separated Mayfair,  
 14 which was an upper-class area, with Soho, over there, which was a working-class area.  
 15 Benedict Protheroe is a tour guide.  
 16 **Richard:** So in your opinion then, what is it about London that overseas visitors just  
 17 absolutely love?  
 18 **Benedict:** Well, in London, we have over 2,000 years of fascinating history. It's a centre for  
 19 art, for culture, for music, for fashion, there's restaurants, nightlife, museums, the river.  
 20 Everything you could possibly want to see or do, you've got it here in London.  
 21 The River Thames cuts through the heart of the city. At over 200 miles long, it's the longest  
 22 river entirely in England.  
 23 The iconic London Eye sits next to the Thames. 135 metres high, the Eye was built to  
 24 celebrate the millennium and has over three and a half million visitors a year.  
 25 The city of London's financial district dominates the skyline. The buildings include 30 St  
 26 Mary Axe, otherwise known as the London Gherkin.  
 27 Historic houses look really grand, but what would it have been like to have lived hundreds of  
 28 years ago?  
 29 I've come to Warwick Castle to find out. Let's step back in time... It's still me!  
 30 This castle dates back almost eleven hundred years to William the Conqueror. Very nice!  
 31 Edward the Fourth was imprisoned here in the 1400s and Royalist soldiers attacked  
 32 Warwick during the English Civil War. Some royal visitors have been more welcome.  
 33 Elizabeth the First and Queen Victoria both spent time here, so I'm in good company.  
 34 What a beautiful view... Who turned the lights out?  
 35 Adam is the Attractions and Shows team leader.  
 36 **Richard:** Adam, what have you come dressed as?  
 37 **Adam:** Oh, well, today, Richard, I've come dressed in my finest 1620s gear, about what a  
 38 gentleman would wear about 400 years ago.  
 39 **Richard:** And I love my outfit. What have you got me dressed as?  
 40 **Adam:** Well, I've got you dressed as a man-at-arms of the 15th century, so you're not as

41 wealthy as me, but you still look quite mean and gnarly.

42 **Richard:** Cool, good man. Now, tell me about Warwick Castle.

43 **Adam:** Well, here at Warwick Castle, we have over one thousand years of incredible jaw-

44 dropping history. The oldest part of the castle goes back well over a thousand years, but

45 what you see here today, Rich, mostly dates back to about 600 years ago and it pretty much

46 remains untouched from then onwards till today.

46 **Richard:** So, what would it have been like to live here in medieval times?

47 **Adam:** Well, it would probably have been quite a smelly and dark place. The moats that you

48 see down here would have actually not been filled with water, but with sewage draining from

49 the castle.

50 **Richard:** Now, I was rather hoping someone would tell me how to use this sword. Do you

51 mind?

52 **Adam:** Sadly, I'll be honest with you, it's not really my thing. But I know two gentlemen who

53 will be able to help you out. They're just round the corner.

54 **Richard:** Over there?

55 **Adam:** Yep. Just round there. Good luck!

56 **Richard:** Great! Thank you. What a helpful chap!

57 **Richard:** Guys, guys, guys, guys! Hang on, guys, break it up, break it up! I've just been told

58 that you're the guys to see about learning to use the sword. Can you show me a move?

59 **Swordsman:** Yes, of course. Well, first of all we need to get you in your on guard stance.

60 **Richard:** OK.

61 **Swordsman:** Put your left foot forwards and your right foot back turned out to the side and

62 your sword up in front of you like this. Now what you're going to do is the attacking sword is

63 going to come in, you're going to push it down and away and step in and cut.

64 **Richard:** No problem.

65 **Swordsman:** Think you can do that?

66 **Richard:** Step aside, my man. Here we go.

67 **Swordsman:** On guard!

68 **Richard:** That's quite easy. Very nice. Thanks very much! Is he going to be alright?

69 **Swordsman:** Oh, he'll be fine, don't worry.

70 **Richard:** Are you sure?

71 Canterbury and Exeter cathedrals also boast magnificent architecture and attract visitors

72 from around the world.

73 Some historic treasure dates back even further.

74 Stonehenge... This giant circle of stones stands out as one of Britain's most famous and

75 visited historical sites. Dating back thousands of years, its origins still remain a mystery and

76 that's why it's still so popular.

77 Susan Greaney is a historian.

78 **Richard:** Susan, what is Stonehenge?

79 **Susan:** Stonehenge is a prehistoric stone monument built about four and a half thousand

80 years ago in what we call the Neolithic period. We think it was probably used as some kind

81 of temple.

## Transcript

82 **Richard:** So why is it so important?

83 **Susan:** Well, Stonehenge is unique in the world. It's an incredibly complex monument and  
84 it's amazing that it's survived from so long ago.

85 **Richard:** Now you also do research here, so what have you discovered about the site?

86 **Susan:** Stonehenge has got lots and lots of secrets and archaeology is trying to reveal them  
87 the whole time. One of the most recent things we've been doing is a laser survey of the  
88 standing stones and that's telling us lots of new detail about how the stones were carved,  
89 and how they were set up, and the kinds of carvings and graffiti that are on the stones.

90 **Richard:** Tell me one of the famous myths around the circle.

91 **Susan:** Well, there's a really interesting myth about the fact that the stones were brought  
92 here from Ireland by the wizard Merlin and that was a myth that was popular in the medieval  
93 period. Actually, we know that some of the smaller blue stones here do come from the west,

94 from Wales, so there's an element of truth underneath the myth.

95 So there you go. What a great heritage Britain has, as seen here at Stonehenge. I'm off to  
96 explore some more.

