

Interesting Facts about Guernsey

1 Guernsey is not part of the UK

It is a self-governing British Crown dependency with its own parliament, its own government (called the States of Guernsey), and its own laws.

2 Politeness is a way of life

Especially on the roads. At some junctions on the island, you will see a road sign reading “filter in turn”. It indicates that all vehicles, whichever direction they are travelling, have equal priority, and that drivers should enter the junction in alternate turn with those from other directions.

3 It's warmer in Guernsey than on mainland UK

Springtime arrives roughly four weeks earlier in Guernsey than on the mainland UK, and with more than 2,000 hours of sunshine each year, the Channel Islands are the sunniest place in the British Isles.

4 You can buy your fresh fruit and vegetables from “Hedge Veg” stalls

Dotted along the roadsides you will find miniature roadside shops called “hedge veg” stalls, each selling a different selection of local fresh produce. Just simply pop your money in an honesty box.

5 Guernsey has its own black car licence plates

Vehicle registration plates have numbers only – and may have up to six figures. A “007” number plate sold for £240,000 in 2015. Registration number 1 is reserved for the Bailiff of Guernsey. Most plates feature the figures in silver on a black background, but some have black figures on a white or yellow background, as in the UK. Only the Lieutenant Governor’s private cars’ plates – G1 and G2 – have letters; his official car has no number plate at all.

6 The speed limit is 35mph

Dropping to 25mph in and around the town. These are maximum speeds, not recommended speeds – however, there is a recommended speed of 15mph on Rouettes Tranquilles – narrow, winding lanes where pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders have priority.

7 It has the highest tides in Europe

At 33ft, Guernsey’s tidal range is one of the world’s largest. This measure of the difference, in water depth, between high and low tide, is due to Guernsey’s location in the Bay of St Malo, which has the highest tides in Europe.

8 All its postboxes are painted blue

Except one. You will find that one in Union Street, St Peter Port; it is red, dates from 1853 and is the Britain’s oldest postbox still in use. Britain’s first postboxes were introduced, as an experiment, in 1852. The postal collection system had been running in France for almost 100 years, and it was famous novelist Anthony Trollope, then a Post Office surveyor, who, having seen postboxes in France, proposed their introduction in Britain.

9 Guernsey issues its own stamps...

The first were printed in 1941, during the German Occupation, when there were no more British stamps to be had on the island. Today, Guernsey Post’s Philatelic Bureau issues sets illustrating the island’s flora and fauna, or marking special events or anniversaries.

10 ...and still uses £1 notes

The island prints its own banknotes, including the £1 note, but theirs is not a separate currency, just a local issue of Sterling, with the same value as mainland money – which can also be used in Guernsey.