

GRAND TOUR OF SCOTLAND

ITINERARY

DAY

1

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN EDINBURGH

Make your way into **Edinburgh** city centre where your hotel will be located. Many travellers opt to take a taxi or use public transport, but for a more direct and comfortable ride, we will be happy to organise a private airport transfer for you. For those arriving early in the day, we recommend spending the afternoon walking through the city, strolling along the **Royal Mile** and exploring the **Old Town** and **New Town**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are also plenty of museums and landmarks to visit within the city centre, including the majestic **Edinburgh Castle**.

Spend the night in Edinburgh.

Included: Entrance to Edinburgh Castle

HIGHLIGHTS: Calton Hill - Edinburgh - Edinburgh Castle - Edinburgh New Town - Edinburgh Old Town - The Grassmarket - The Royal Mile & St Giles Cathedral

DAY

2

DAY 2: SCOTLAND'S DRAMATIC EAST COAST

Today, start your road trip driving up to Fife. Your first stop will be the quaint village of **Falkland**, where you can explore its Renaissance palace. From there, drive east to the town of **St Andrews**, famous for being the home of golf and of the oldest university in Scotland. As you continue north, pass by **Dundee**, a UNESCO City of Design. You can then take the direct route to **Aberdeen**, or take the coastal scenic route, which will take you past the **St. Cyrus National Nature Reserve** and the spectacular **Dunnottar Castle**, near Stonehaven.

Spend the night in the Aberdeen area.

Included: Entrance to St Andrews Castle & St Andrews Cathedral

Driving distance: 235 km / 145 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Aberdeen - Dundee & Angus - Dunnottar Castle - Falkland - St Andrews - St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

DAY

3

DAY 3: ROYAL DEESIDE, CASTLES & WHISKY

Today will take you into the Scottish Highlands. First drive along the "**Deeside Tourist Route**", an enchanting route through the **Cairngorms National Park**. On the way, there is a plethora of castles you could visit, including 16th-century **Crathes Castle**, and of course, the Scottish residence of the Royal Family, **Balmoral Castle**, which you can visit from April to July. You will then continue to **Speyside**, which is famous for its whiskies. You may want to visit one of the many distilleries (there are over 40 to choose from!), such as Glenfiddich or Aberlour.

Spend the night in the Inverness area.

Driving distance: 240 km / 150 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Balmoral Castle - Cairngorms National Park - Royal Deeside - Speyside Distillery

DAY

4

DAY 4: JOURNEY TO ORKNEY

Today your drive will take you north, across the **Black Isle Peninsula**, all the way to the seaside village of Scrabster. We recommend making a stop on the way at the fairytale **Dunrobin Castle**. In the early afternoon, you'll catch a ferry to Stromness on **Orkney**, a beautiful 1.5-hour journey across the Pentland Firth with spectacular views of the Old Man of Hoy. Once you've reached mainland Orkney, drive to the capital, **Kirkwall**, a former Viking stronghold. Here you can explore the city centre and the magnificent 12th-century St Magnus Cathedral.

Spend the night in the Kirkwall area.

Ferry from Scrabster to Orkney: 1.5 hours

Driving distance: 205 km / 130 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Black Isle & Moray Firth - Dunrobin Castle - Kirkwall

DAY

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DAY 5: THE WONDERS OF ORKNEY

You have the whole day to explore the gems of Orkney, admire its stunning scenery and ruins dating back millennia to the Stone Ages. The highlight of Orkney's wonders is the "Heart of Neolithic Orkney", a UNESCO World Heritage Site area that comprises a group of Neolithic monuments. This includes the 5,000 year-old prehistoric village of **Skara Brae**, the mysterious **Ring of Brodgar** stone circle, the huge megaliths at the **Standing Stones of Stenness** and the chambered cairn of **Maeshowe**, where 12th-century Vikings left one of the largest collections of Norse runic inscriptions.

Spend another night in the Kirkwall area.

Included: Entrance to Skara Brae & Maeshowe

Driving distance: 56 km / 35 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Maeshowe - Orkney Islands - Ring of Brodgar - Skara Brae - Standing Stones of Stenness

DAY

6

DAY 6: THE NORTH COAST 500 ROUTE

Today you journey back to the mainland by ferry before taking on part of the famous **North Coast 500** route. Scotland's version of Route 66 stretches around the northern coast of Scotland, and is known for its incredible vistas of rocky cliffs, mountains, and gold sand beaches. We recommend stopping along the way to visit the beautiful **Smoo Cave**, the largest and most dramatic sea cave in Britain, the pristine beaches and turquoise waters of **Durness**, and the 15th-century ruins of **Ardvreck Castle** before arriving at the charming village of **Ullapool**.

Spend the night in the Ullapool area.

Ferry from Orkney to Scrabster: 1.5 hours

Driving distance: 250 km / 150 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Ardvreck Castle - Durness Beach - North Coast 500 - Smoo Cave - Ullapool

DAY

7

DAY 7: GAELIC CULTURE & NEOLITHIC MEGALITHS OF LEWIS

This morning, catch the ferry from Ullapool to **Stornoway** on the **Isle of Lewis**, where the Gaelic culture and language still thrives. In Stornoway, you could visit the Stornoway Museum located within Lews Castle, which houses exhibits about the island including six of the famous Lewis Chessmen. You will want to make the detour toward the west side of the island to see the spectacular **Callanish Standing Stones**, an impressive

collection of Neolithic stone circles and megaliths. We also recommend visiting the **Black Arnol Museum** to learn about the history of the island life.

Spend the night on Lewis or Harris.

Ferry from Ullapool to Stornoway: 2.5 hours

Driving distance: 165 km / 100 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Arnol Blackhouse Museum - Butt of Lewis - Stornoway - The Callanish Standing Stones

DAY
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DAY 8: HARRIS & THE GOLDEN ROAD

Today enjoy the beauty of the **Isle of Harris**. You can explore the small village of **Tarbert** and then take in the striking scenery on a drive along “**The Golden Road**” towards Rodel. We recommend exploring the beautiful medieval **St. Clement’s Church** and going for a walk on **Luskentyre Beach**, one of the most spectacular in Scotland, boasting miles of white sands and dazzling turquoise waters. You can also visit the Harris Tweed outlets for a genuine souvenir, as this tweed is still woven by hand in the Outer Hebrides.

Spend another night on Lewis or Harris.

Driving distance: 70 km / 45 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Luskentyre Beach - St Clement’s Church - Tarbert - The Golden Road

DAY
9

DAY 9: ISLAND HOPPING TO SKYE

Today you’ll catch the ferry from Tarbert to Uig on the **Isle of Skye**. Upon your arrival on Skye, we recommend a drive around the northern part of the island via the breathtaking **Trotternish Peninsula**. There you can enjoy a walk up to “**The Old Man of Storr**” rock pinnacle and see the beautiful **Kilt Rock** waterfall. Other highlights include the **Quiraing**, the **An Corran Beach** at Staffin, where you may spot ancient dinosaur footprints, and the mystical Fairy Glen.

Spend the night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

Ferry from Tarbert to Uig: 1 hour and 40 min

Driving distance: 80 km / 50 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Fairy Glen - Kilt Rock & Mealt Falls - Old Man of Storr - Quiraing - Staffin & An Corran Beach

DAY
10

DAY 10: DUNVEGAN CASTLE & CORAL BEACH

Spend a full day taking in the magic of Skye, a paradise for nature lovers and history enthusiasts. Wander around the scenic village of **Portree**, with its colourful buildings and local shops selling handicrafts and souvenirs. Drive to the western of the island to visit the romantic **Dunvegan Castle**, home to the Chief of Clan MacLeod. We also recommend going for a walk along **Claigan Coral Beach**, one of the most beautiful beaches of Skye. You can also visit **Neist Point**, the most westerly point on Skye that offers stunning sea views.

Spend another night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

Driving distance: 130 km / 80 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Claigan Coral Beach - Dunvegan Castle - Neist Point - Portree

DAY
11

DAY 11: THE MAGIC OF SKYE

Enjoy another full day at your leisure in the mesmerizing surroundings of Skye. The island is perfect for those who love hiking as there are great areas and mountains all over, including to the **mystical Fairy Pools** and taking in the beauty of the **Cuillin Mountains**. You could also take part in a sailing tour to get a different perspective. For the whisky enthusiasts, or for those who want to taste the true flavor of Scotland, visit the **Talisker Distillery** to sample some genuine single malt Scotch whisky.

Spend another night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

Driving distance: 160 km / 100 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Fairy Pools - Isle of Skye - Loch Coruisk - Talisker Distillery

DAY

12

DAY 12: THE BEAUTY OF LOCH NESS

Today's journey will bring you back to the Scottish mainland. Make sure to stop at the picturesque **Eilean Donan Castle**, a sight you will surely recognise from many photographs, films and TV shows. Drive all the way to the shores of the mysterious **Loch Ness**, where you can visit the Loch Ness Centre and Exhibition. You might also wish to take a boat tour on Loch Ness in search of its notorious and elusive monster, or go explore the nearby **Urquhart Castle** ruins on the shores of the loch.

Spend the night in the **Fort William** area.

Included: Entrance to Urquhart Castle

Driving distance: 260 km / 160 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Eilean Donan Castle - Fort Augustus - Fort William - Loch Ness - Urquhart Castle

DAY

13

DAY 13: FORT WILLIAM TO THE ISLE OF MULL

Start your day with a scenic ferry ride over to Craignure on the **Isle of Mull**, a place characterised by white sandy beaches, rugged mountains and thriving wildlife. Your first stop will be **Duart Castle**, standing proudly by the sea cliffs of the island. We then recommend taking the scenic route along the west coast, past the highest peak Ben More. Stop on the way at one of the most beautiful beaches in Scotland, **Calgary Bay**. Continue on to the charming village of **Tobermory**, the largest settlement of the island.

Spend the night on the Isle of Mull or in the Oban area.

Ferry from Oban to Craignure: 45 minutes

Driving distance: 180 km / 115 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Calgary Bay - Duart Castle - Isle of Mull - Oban - Tobermory

DAY

14

DAY 14: BEAUTIFUL ISLES OF IONA & STAFFA

Today you have a full day at your leisure on Mull. You have the option to head to the west coast of the island, from where you can take a ferry ride from Fionnphort over to the **Isle of Iona**, home of dazzling beaches and sacred sites such as **Iona Abbey**. From Iona you can join a boat trip to the uninhabited Isle of **Staffa**, where you can admire Fingal's Cave, a natural arched sea cave with impressive basalt columns. While on the boat tour, you might come across dolphins, porpoises and minke whales.

Spend another night on the Isle of Mull or in the Oban area.

Included: Entrance to Iona Abbey

Driving distance: 180 km / 115 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Isle of Iona & Iona Abbey - Isle of Mull - Isle of Staffa & Fingals Cave

DAY
15

DAY 15: KILMARTIN GLEN, LUSS & LOCH LOMOND

Today, take the ferry back to the mainland and continue your drive along the scenic route to the historical valley of **Kilmartin** Glen. This area is considered to have one of the most important concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains in Scotland, including standing stones and circles as well as forts and castles. On the way we recommend a stop at **Inveraray** on the shores of Loch Fyne, where you could visit Inveraray Castle. Continue on to the shores of the beautiful **Loch Lomond** and visit the charming conservation village of **Luss**.

Spend the night in the Trossachs National Park area.

Ferry from Craignure to Oban: 45 minutes

Driving distance: 245 km / 150 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Inveraray & Inveraray Castle - Kilmartin Glen - Loch Lomond - Luss

DAY
16

DAY 16: TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK TO EDINBURGH

Today's drive will bring you back to Edinburgh (you can choose to end your trip in Glasgow in the optional activities below). Drive through the **Loch Lomond** and **Trossachs National Park**, where you could stop to take a walk in nature, enjoy an optional steamship tour on **Loch Katrine**, or visit a local whisky distillery. For a fun photo opportunity, don't miss **Doone Castle**, featured in Monty Python & the Holy Grail and Outlander. If time allows, you could also stop by **Stirling Castle**, one of Scotland's top attractions, or at the **Kelpies**, two impressive horse-head sculptures.

Spend the night in Edinburgh.

Included: Entrance to Doone Castle and Stirling Castle

Driving distance: 130 km / 80 miles

HIGHLIGHTS: Doone Castle - Stirling & Stirling Castle - Trossachs National Park

DAY
17

DAY 17: DEPARTURE FROM SCOTLAND

On your day of departure, we recommend taking the Airlink bus or a taxi directly from your hotel to reach the airport. If you would like to add any additional nights to your trip or to arrange a private transfer, you can do so during the booking process. If your flight is in the afternoon, you may have time for some last-minute shopping, to visit one of Edinburgh's museums, or take one last stroll through the charming city centre.

If you wish to spend more time in Edinburgh or Glasgow before or after the tour, ask your travel consultant about adding extra nights or services, such as private airport transfers. We can also extend your trip with other destinations in the Nordic region such as Iceland or Norway. Contact us for details about customizing your itinerary.

Whatever your needs, we are here to help. If you have any questions about our packages or services, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Nordic Visitor | Tel: +354 578 20 80 | info@nordicvisitor.com | nordicvisitor.com