

# CLASSIC SCOTLAND & THE ORKNEY ISLANDS

## ITINERARY

DAY

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### 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: Entrances 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 & Whisky

DAY

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## 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 - Dunrobin Castle - Kirkwall - Moray Firth - Orkney Islands

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: Entrances to Skara Brae & Maeshowe*

*Driving distance: 56 km / 35 miles*

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

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## 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, gold sand beaches and beautiful mountains. 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 and whitewashed 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

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## DAY 7: ALONG THE DRAMATIC WEST COAST TO SKYE

Start the day by visiting the breathtaking mile-long **Corrieshalloch Gorge** and enjoying a walk to the Falls of

Measach. During your drive along the west coast, we recommend stopping at **Inverewe Garden**, which boasts some 2500 exotic plants and flowers, which flourish in Northern Scotland thanks to the warm currents of the Gulf Stream. Your drive will then take you through the dramatic landscape of the **Torrison Hills**. Before reaching Skye, we recommend stopping at the picturesque village of **Plockton**, on the shores of Loch Carron.

Spend the night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

*Driving distance: 265km / 165 miles*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Corrieshalloch Gorge - Inverewe Garden - Isle of Skye - Plockton - Portree - Torrison Hills

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## DAY 8: THE ISLE OF SKYE

Today take full advantage of your day on Skye, a haven for nature lovers. You can visit the village of **Portree**, with its colourful buildings and local shops before going on 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 another night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

*Driving distance: 70 km / 45 miles*

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

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## DAY 9: 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: 240 km / 150 miles*

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

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## DAY 10: TRAVEL ALONG DRAMATIC GLENS

Today's journey takes you past Scotland's most famous valley, **Glen Coe**, which offers world-famous scenery. You could stop at the **grave of Rob Roy** at Balquidder and the beautiful **Falls of Dochart** in the village of Killin. Alternatively, you could travel the longer scenic route via the seaside town of Oban onto the historical valley of **Kilmartin Glen** and past the charming village of **Inveraray**. This region is considered to have one of the most important concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains in Scotland, including cairns, standing stones, and castles.

Spend the night in the Trossachs National Park area.

*Driving distance via Glen Coe: 130 km / 80 miles*

*Driving distance via Kilmartin Glen/Inveraray: 285 km / 180 miles*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Glencoe - Inveraray & Inveraray Castle - Kilmartin Glen - Loch Lomond

DAY

11

## DAY 11: TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

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 **Doune 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: Entrances to Doune Castle and Stirling Castle*

*Driving distance: 130 km / 80 miles*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Doune Castle - Loch Lomond - Stirling & Stirling Castle - Trossachs National Park

DAY

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## DAY 12: 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.

*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.*

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