

SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS & WEST COAST

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

Attractions: 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

Attractions: 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

Attractions: Balmoral Castle, Cairngorms National Park, Clava Cairns, Culloden Battlefield & Visitor Centre, Inverness, Royal Deeside, Speyside & Whisky

DAY

4

DAY 4: THE BEAUTY OF LOCH NESS

Spend some time exploring Inverness, “The Capital of the Highlands”, and its surroundings, such as the Black Isle Peninsula and Moray Firth, where dolphins can sometimes be spotted at low tide. Drive south along the shores of the mysterious **Loch Ness**, where you can stop to visit the Loch Ness Centre and Exhibition or to try to spot the notorious monster, Nessie. You can also explore the nearby **Urquhart Castle** ruins. You could also opt to take a detour to visit the picturesque Glen Affric.

Continue south to **Fort William**, passing by Scotland’s highest mountain, **Ben Nevis**.

Spend the night in the Fort William area.

Included: Entrance to Urquhart Castle

Driving distance: 155 km / 95 miles

Attractions: Fort Augustus, Fort William, Glen Affric, Loch Ness, Urquhart Castle

DAY

5

DAY 5: EXPLORE FORT WILLIAM AT YOUR LEISURE

You have today to explore the surroundings of Fort William, or you have the option of taking a day trip to the **Isle of Skye**. For Skye we recommend an early start. Before arriving at the island, you can stop by the picturesque **Eilean Donan Castle**. On Skye, you can visit the village of **Portree** and hike to the mystical **Fairy Pools**, from where you can take in the beauty of the **Glenfinnan Viaduct**.

For a more leisurely day, we recommend staying around Fort William. You could board the “Harry Potter train”, the Jacobite Steam Train, which passes by the Glenfinnan Viaduct and is considered one of the most beautiful railway journeys in the world. Hikers will love the area and could discover the beautiful Glen Nevis where you can view the Steall Falls, Scotland’s second highest waterfall.

Spend another night in the Fort William area.

Driving distance to Skye and back: 380 km / 235 miles

Driving distance around Fort William: 85 km / 55 miles

Attractions: Ben Nevis, Eilean Donan Castle, Fairy Pools, Fort William, Glenfinnan, Portree

DAY

6

DAY 6: 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

Attractions: Isle of Mull, Oban

DAY
7**DAY 7: 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

Attractions: Isle of Iona & Iona Abbey, Isle of Mull, Isle of Staffa & Fingals Cave

DAY
8**DAY 8: 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 to the reach 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

Attractions: Inveraray & Inveraray Castle, Kilmartin Glen, Loch Lomond, Luss

DAY
9**DAY 9: 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 **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

Attractions: Doune Castle, Stirling & Stirling Castle, The Kelpies, Trossachs National Park

DAY 10: 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.

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