

NORTH COAST 500 ESCAPE & THE ISLE OF SKYE

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.

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

DAY

2

DAY 2: INTO THE HIGHLANDS

Start your road trip driving up into the majestic Highlands. You'll have many notable highlights to see and visit along the way. Stop by the quaint village of **Dunkeld** and take a walk through the Hermitage Forest to view the romantic Black Linn Falls and Ossian's Hall of Mirrors. Continue to **Pitlochry** where you'll find plenty of pubs and cafés for a delicious break.

You'll then be travelling north into the Cairngorms National Park. If time allows you could stop at Scotland's highest whisky distillery, Dalwhinnie, or to visit the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore.

Spend the night in the Inverness area.

Driving distance: 251 km/156 miles

Attractions: Cairngorms National Park, Dunkeld, Forth Railway Bridge, Highland Folk Museum, Inverness, Pitlochry, The Hermitage

DAY

3

DAY 3: EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF THE INVERNESS AREA

Inverness and its surroundings mark the true start of the **North Coast 500**. Today, take the time to explore the area and its fantastic highlights. Visit the famous **Battlefield of Culloden Moor** and roam the Bronze-age cemetery **Clava Cairns**. Pass by Cawdor Castle for some history or walk along a golden sand beach.

Or drive south to marvel at the famous **Loch Ness** and look out for Nessie. You might wish to take a boat tour to admire the views of the loch or visit the nearby **Urquhart Castle** ruins.

Spend another night in the Inverness area.

Included: Entrance to Urquhart Castle

Driving distance: 66 km/41 miles

Attractions: Clava Cairns, Culloden Battlefield & Visitor Centre, Inverness, Loch Ness, North Coast 500, Urquhart Castle

DAY
4

DAY 4: JOURNEY TO THE FAR NORTH

Today your drive will take you into the northern Highlands, all the way to the most northerly point of mainland Scotland and Britain, Dunnet Point. We recommend making pitstops to the fairytale **Dunrobin Castle** and at Whaligoe, descending its 330 stone steps to the sea.

Then continue north to John O'Groats. If there is time, take a walk along the nearby sea cliffs and admire the Duncansby Stacks. Near Dunnet Point, you could visit Castle of Mey, once owned by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

Spend the night in the Thurso area.

Driving distance: 225 km/ 140 miles

Attractions: Black Isle, Dunrobin Castle, Moray Firth

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DAY 5: DISCOVER THE TRUE NORTH COAST

Continue along the northern coast of Scotland's mainland. Today's journey is not particularly long so you have plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the incredible views of rocky cliffs and gold sand beaches. A must-see is the beautiful **Smoo Cave**, the largest and most dramatic sea cave in Britain. Make sure to also stop by the pristine beaches and turquoise waters of **Durness**. If you want a taste of history and stunning views, visit Castle Varrich near the village of Tongue.

Spend the night in the Tongue/Durness area.

Driving distance: 114 km/ 71 miles

Attractions: Durness, Smoo Cave

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DAY 6: COASTAL ADVENTURES AND SCENERY

Start your day exploring the "Drumbeg Loop," one of the most scenic circuits of the northwest Highlands. Visit the Stoerhead Lighthouse, built by a close relation of author Robert Louis Stevenson. A short walk will take you by the water to marvel at the Old Man of Stoer sea stack.

You can also stop at some of Scotland's most beautiful beaches including Achmelvich and the lesser-known Clachtoll Beach. Later, stop by the 15th-century ruins of **Ardreck Castle** before arriving at the charming and whitewashed village of **Ullapool**.

Spend the night in the Ullapool area.

Driving distance: 183 km/ 114 miles

Attractions: Ardreck Castle, Ullapool

DAY

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DAY 7: DAY AT LEISURE IN THE ULLAPOOL AREA

You have the option of enjoying some activities in Ullapool itself or you can travel a little further afield. For example, you could enjoy a walk at the breathtaking **Corrieshalloch Gorge**. Explore this national nature reserve, cross the suspension bridge and marvel at the plummeting Falls of Measach.

Spend another night in the Ullapool area.

Driving distance: 21 km/13 miles

Attractions: Corrieshalloch Gorge, Ullapool

DAY

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DAY 8: STUNNING COASTLINE TO RUGGED HILLS

Start your day by following the scenic road along the west coast towards Gairloch. On the way, visit the town of Poolewe where you can explore the **Inverewe Garden**. It boasts some 2,500 exotic plants and flowers, which flourish here thanks to the warm currents of the Gulf Stream.

Then, continue south to the **Torridon Hills**, a spectacular mountain range. We recommend stopping by the Beinn Eighe Nature Reserve Visitor Centre for a short nature walk.

Spend the night in the Torridon area.

Driving distance: 138 km/86 miles

Attractions: Inverewe Garden, Torridon Hills

DAY

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DAY 9: EXPERIENCE THE THRILLING BEALACH NA BÀ

Today you have the option to take one of Scotland's most incredible roads – the historic mountain pass known as the **Bealach na Bà**, or “Pass of the Cattle”. With tight hairpin bends, this single-track road climbs high above sea level. En route, you could stop by the quaint village of **Applecross** to enjoy some delicious seafood.

After your scenic driving adventure, you could take a detour to the charming village of **Plockton**, on the shores of Loch Carron. Then take photos at the picturesque **Eilean Donan Castle** before crossing the bridge to reach the Isle of Skye.

Spend the night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

Driving distance: 167 km/104 miles

Attractions: Applecross, Baelach Na Bà, Eilean Donan Castle, Fort William, Isle of Skye, Plockton

DAY
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DAY 10: 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

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

DAY
11

DAY 11: SLEAT PENINSULA & GLENFINNAN

Head south to the Sleat Peninsula, admiring the beautiful beaches, lochs, and glens of the region. You may wish to stop on the way to enjoy a walk to the crystal-clear **Fairy Pools** at the foot of the Black Cuillin Hills or to sample single malt whisky at the Talisker Distillery.

In the afternoon, catch a ferry from Armadale to Mallaig on the mainland. You'll then journey to Fort William. Along the way, stop at Camusdarach Beach and Glenfinnan, to visit the Glenfinnan Monument and admire the **Glenfinnan Viaduct**, featured in *Harry Potter*.

Spend the night in the Fort William area.

Ferry duration: 30 minutes

Driving distance: 135km / 85 miles

Attractions: Fairy Pools, Fort William, Glenfinnan, Glenfinnan Viaduct, Talisker Distillery

DAY
12

DAY 12: TRAVEL ALONG DRAMATIC GLENS

Today's drive through the **Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park** will take you to Scotland's largest city, **Glasgow** (you can choose to end your trip in Edinburgh in the optional activities). You'll then journey past the magnificent **Glen Coe**, Scotland's most famous and scenic valley. For a fun photo opportunity, don't miss the **Doune Castle**, featured in *Monty Python & the Holy Grail* and *Outlander*. If time allows, you could also visit **Stirling Castle**, one of Scotland's top attractions.

This evening, round off your amazing NC500 trip in one of Glasgow's many fantastic restaurants.

Spend the night in Glasgow.

Included: Entrances to Doune Castle & Stirling Castle

Driving distance: 251 km / 156 miles

Attractions: Doune Castle, Glasgow, Glen Coe, Glenfinnan, Glenfinnan Viaduct, Loch Lomond, Stirling & Stirling Castle, Trossachs National Park

DAY 13: DEPARTURE FROM SCOTLAND

On your day of departure, make your way back to 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 on Buchanan Street, a visit to one of Glasgow's museums, or one last stroll through the charming West End.

Attractions: Glasgow

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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