

Essential Scotland



Your Detailed Itinerary

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Day 1/2

From Prestwick Airport, travel north to Ardrossan to take the ferry to **Arran**, a holiday-island for generations of Scots. Enjoy the gardens and the fine collections at Brodick Castle. Discover the island's story at the Arran Heritage Museum. The coastal roads right round the island will also take you to the Lochranza Distillery in the north.

Day 3/4

Returning to the mainland, go north east to Glasgow to sample its shopping and nightlife in particular. You should be able to track down an authentic **ceilidh** as well, as just one aspect of the city's great nightlife! A UNESCO City of Music, Glsagow's legendary music scene covers the whole spectrum from contemporary and classical to Celtic and country. Scotland's largest shopping choice, plus a huge range of cultural attractions, including the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the Gallery of Modern Art and the Burrell Collection, should also be on every visitor's list.

Day 5

Go north from the city, on the A81 and A821, going through the heart of the Trossachs at the Duke's Pass above Aberfoyle, now part of the **Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park**, and the very byword for Scottish Highland scenery. From the Trossachs area, go east to join the M9 and the easy journey to Edinburgh.

Day 6

Explore Edinburgh, with the **Old Town** – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – at its historic heart. An unrivalled cultural choice is offered in one of Europe's great capitals.

Day 7

Cross the Firth of Forth northbound to reach **St Andrews** in Fife, via the picturesque East Neuk of Fife fishing villages. Though St Andrews is known as the 'Home of Golf', the journey round the coast roads of Fife reveals a big choice of other classic links golf courses.

Day 8

Continue north via the Tay Road Bridge for Dundee, to reach the **Moray Firth** coast via Aberdeen. On this north-facing coast are a good number of wildlife watching places, not just for seabirds but also to spot the local dolphins, often seen from the shore, though boat trips are available from the fishing port of Macduff and many other places to the west.

Day 9/10

Continue coast-wise via Inverness, turning north to reach Scrabster and the ferry for Stromness, Orkney. These islands have an outstanding range of prehistoric sites. Just two of the 'must sees' are the extraordinary Neolithic settlement of **Skara Brae** and also Maes Howe. This prehistoric chambered cairn was already thousands of years old when plundering Vikings left their fascinating graffiti, still seen today! Both sites are easily visited from Stromness and well signposted, while the main town of

Kirkwall lies to the east by the A966.

Day 11

Return to the mainland, retracing your journey down the A9 for Dingwall, from where you can go west (A834/A835) for Garve, then Achnasheen (A832) and Kyle of Lochalsh (A890) for Skye. Running broadly parallel with the road, the rail line from Inverness, '**The Kyle Line**', to the terminus at Kyle of Lochalsh represents one of Scotland's most scenic train journeys.

Day 12/13

Take the bridge for the Isle of Skye at Kyle of Lochalsh to enjoy views of the Cuillin Hills from Sligachan. From there, the A863 goes west for the **Talisker Distillery**, as well as the little road to Glen Brittle, with superb mountain vistas. If time permits, also visit Elgol (signed from Broadford), where some rate the mountain views across Loch Scaavaig as the finest in all of Scotland.

Day 14

From Skye return to the mainland, turning south on the A87 to pass the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle** on Loch Duich. Head east to reach the Great Glen for Fort William, from where take the A82 through Glencoe and across Rannoch Moor, simply one of the most atmospheric scenic areas in Scotland. Continue via Loch Lomond to return to Glasgow.

To search over 7,000 quality assured accommodations, from bed and breakfasts to castles go to: www.visitscotland.com

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Cover: A traditional 'ceilidh' dance. Edinburgh © Paul Tomkins.

Additional photography: Glyn Satterley, Nils Schlebusch, VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint



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Essential Scotland

So many options: scenic splendour, castles, whisky, golf, ceilidhs and lots more, plus the call of the islands – all on a great Scottish menu of experiences. And look out for Highland Games in the summer – the essence of Highland traditions, taking place in many towns and villages from May to September.



1 ISLE OF ARRAN – With a good range of activities including walking, golf and ponytrekking, Arran's description as 'Scotland in Miniature' refers to the contrasts between the mountainous north and the island's gentler south end.



2 CEILIDHS IN GLASGOW – Head to the Grand Ballroom at Sloans, in the heart of Glasgow's city centre, for their famous Friday night 'ceilidhs' (Scottish music and dance).



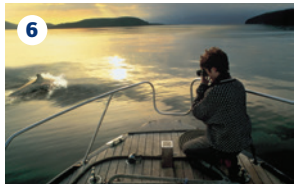
3 LOCH LOMOND AND TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK – Scotland's first national park takes in 1865 sq km and includes Scotland's largest loch by surface area. Walking choice for all abilities.



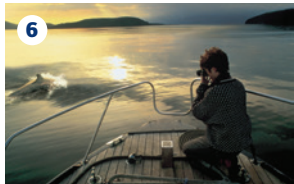
4 EDINBURGH'S OLD TOWN – Discover the legends of Edinburgh's Old Town – unbeatable for sheer atmosphere and a place of magic and mystery, where the alleys or 'closes' leading off the Royal Mile invite exploration.



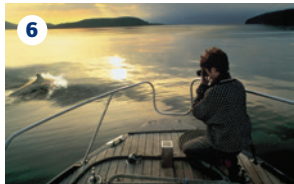
5 GOLF AT ST ANDREWS – St Andrews Links is the Home of Golf, where the game evolved. The six courses at the links are open to all, with bookable tee-times.



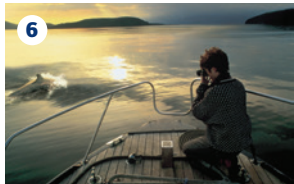
6 DOLPHINS IN THE MORAY FIRTH The bottle-nosed dolphins here are the largest of their kind in the world – thanks to the rich feeding grounds. Between Macduff and Cromarty, several operators offer boat trips.



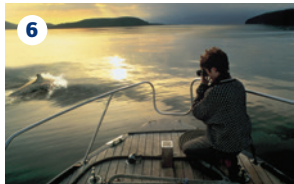
7 SKARA BRAE, ORKNEY – See Neolithic people's living spaces, complete with bed recesses and cupboards, all built in stone and surviving 5000 years, the oldest dwellings in Western Europe. Interpretive centre nearby.



8 THE KYLE LINE – Scenic railway from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh – gateway to Skye. Exciting descent from Achnashenee down Glen Carron to the west coast. Superb coastal views between Stromie Ferry and Kyle.



9 TALISKER DISTILLERY, SKYE – Tasting of the sea (some say) as well as having peaty, smoky overtones, enthusiasts class it midway between a light Highland and a heavier Islay malt in flavour. Talisker is Skye's only distillery.



10 EILEAN DONAN CASTLE – With its rugged backdrop, this restored Clan MacRae stronghold on a tiny island on Loch Duich is truly an icon of Scotland – but it also appeared in the film *Highlander!*

