

Come walk in the footsteps of your ancestors



Your Detailed Itinerary

Come walk in the footsteps of your ancestors

Day 1

Walk in the footsteps of Scotland's monarchs along Edinburgh's **Royal Mile** where historic 'closes' – each with their own story – run off the main road like ribs from a backbone. Between castle and royal palace is a lifetime's exploration – so make the most of your day! Gladstone's Land, St Giles Cathedral, John Knox House are just a few of the historic sites on the way. Overnight Edinburgh.

Day 2

Take the M9 for an easy journey to **Stirling**, where the castle on a crag and the high tower of the National Wallace Monument make the skyline unmistakable. Renaissance Palace, Chapel Royal and the Great Hall are just some of the features within the castle – and there are superb views from the ramparts. Bannockburn Visitor Centre, south-east of the town, tells the story of how Scotland won almost four centuries of independence.

Day 3

The A9, the Highland Road, takes you speedily north, with a good choice of stopping places on the way, including **Blair Castle**, and Pitlochry, a popular resort in the very centre of Scotland. Overnight Inverness.

Day 4

The Highland capital city of Inverness offers plenty of shopping, pubs, nightlife and places to eat, as well as the option of visiting historic sites such as **Culloden**, with magnificent views north and west across the inner Moray Firth. **Fort George** is also within easy reach. This massive fortification is a fascinating example of military architecture. Walk around its walls and you might even see the famous Moray Firth dolphins from your high viewpoint!

Day 5

Cross the Kessock Bridge from Inverness and continue north-bound on the A9. Both Tain and Dornoch are worth exploring, as typical old-established little Scottish 'burghs' (towns with trading rights in olden times) more Lowland than

Highland in flavour. **Dunrobin Castle** is near Golspie, a little further north. The largest house in the northern Highlands, Dunrobin and the Dukes of Sutherland are associated with several episodes in the Highland Clearances, the forced emigration of the native Highland people for economic reasons. Overnight Golspie or Brora area.

Day 6

Continue north to Helmsdale, where the **Timespan** visitor centre portrays the heritage of the area, including more information on the Clearances, as well as the Strath of Kildonan gold rush of 1869. Other sources of information on life in the north include, for example, the Laidhay Croft Museum and the Dunbeath Heritage Centre, as well as the award-winning Wick Heritage Centre. Overnight Wick or Thurso area.

Day 7

Thurso is close to Scrabster, the ferry port for Orkney and a possible two day extension to this itinerary can be undertaken from here. Otherwise, this is a day to savour the ambience of the far north. The **Strathnaver**

Museum is the main heritage centre for the area. The scenic spectacle will entrance you all the way west, then south, for overnight Ullapool.

Day 8

At Braemore junction, south of Ullapool, take the coastal road for Gairloch. This section is known as 'Destitution Road' recalling the road-building programme that was started here in order to provide work and alleviate famine in the native population. For more magnificent mountain scenery, take the road through Glen Torridon to Shieldaig, then Lochcarron, from here go west for the Skye Bridge. Overnight Portree area.

Day 9

Go west to visit Dunvegan Castle, seat of the chiefs of the Clan Macleod. For a close-up view of the magnificent Cuillin Hills, turn south, then take the Glenbrittle road. Overnight Portree area.

Day 10

On the way south from Skye, note the Braes area, south of Portree. A monument by the road recalls the

so-called 'Battle of the Braes' a confrontation between tenants and police in 1882, which was eventually to lead to the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886, giving security of tenure to thecrofting inhabitants of the north and west. Re-cross the Skye Bridge and continue south and east, passing **Eilean Donan Castle**, once a Clan Macrae stronghold. Continue through Glen Shiel for the Great Glen, passing through Fort William for overnight in Ballachulish or Glencoe area.

Day 11

Explore the magnificent setting of **Glencoe**, with its visitor interpretation centre, before continuing south and east to return to Edinburgh.

The information contained in this publication is as supplied to VisitScotland and to the best of VisitScotland's knowledge is correct at the time of going to press. VisitScotland can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. Journey times and frequency are accurate at the time of going to print but may be subject to change. April 2015. VisitScotland is committed to ensuring that our natural environment and built heritage, upon which tourism is so dependent, is safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. Cover: The Lonach Highland Gathering and Games, Aberdeenshire. © P. Tomkins/VisitScotland/Scottish Viewpoint

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

For information, inspiration and more itineraries online check out: www.visitscotland.com



EUROPE & SCOTLAND
European Regional Development Fund
Investing in a Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Future



Come walk in the footsteps of your ancestors

An estimated 40 million people worldwide are of Scottish descent and the nation is especially well provided with family research facilities, with the records and information availability of a very high standard. But with or without an ancestral connection, Scotland is a great place to explore historical and heritage themes. This tour takes in some of the locations where history has been made and where events have taken place that have shaped the lives of Scots at home and abroad. For detailed information on how to research your Scottish ancestry and clan heritage visit www.ancestralscotland.com



1 THE ROYAL MILE, EDINBURGH

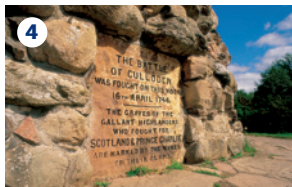
The very heart of the Old Town of Edinburgh, this route links the royal residences of Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse.



STIRLING – Once the most strategically important town in Scotland, controlling routes between Highland and Lowland, Stirling and its castle is associated with Scotland's two greatest champions, King Robert I (Robert the Bruce) and 'Braveheart' William Wallace.



BLAIR CASTLE – Home of the Dukes of Atholl, Blair Castle was also the last stronghold in Scotland ever to be besieged – during the 1745 Jacobite uprising, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie.



CULLODEN BATTLEFIELD – The National Trust for Scotland care for this atmospheric battlesite of 1746. New visitor centre features vivid re-creation of this battle for the Jacobite cause, the last fought on mainland Britain.



FORT GEORGE – Described as the finest surviving complete 18th-century military fortification in Europe, built to control the Highlands after Culloden but has never fired a shot in anger.



DUNROBIN CASTLE – Originally a 13th-century sandstone keep, gradually altered, with spectacular remodelling 1835-50 including spires and elaborate stonework. Clan Sutherland connections.



TIMESPAN MUSEUM AND ARTS CENTRE A fascinating award-winning museum with many themes relating to the heritage of Helmsdale and the Strath of Kildonan.



STRATHNAVER MUSEUM – The story of the Viking settlers, the Clan Mackay, the Clearances and much more are all told in this converted church.



EILEAN DONAN CASTLE Much photographed and very picturesque icon of Scotland, destroyed by naval guns during the 1719 Jacobite uprising, rebuilt 1930s.



GLENCOE – Breath-takingly scenic glen easily viewed from the main road. Setting for a true tale of treachery by the Clan Campbell militia who turned on their Macdonald hosts in 1692. A visitor centre tells the story.