Uncover 500 miles of stunning scenery and fascinating history in the North Highlands along the iconic North Coast 500 route, which is set to become Scotland's answer to the USA's Route 66.

This 500 mile journey of a lifetime boasts some of the most magnificent scenery in Europe - wild mountains and lochs, foaming salmon rivers, rugged coastlines with mighty sea cliffs and secluded sandy bays, traditional crofts and large farms, fishing villages and bustling towns and a fine selection of visitor attractions.

On your first day, visit Wester Ross and take in the striking mountains of Torridon and the sea lochs that cut into this stunning part of the Highlands. Make the epic road journey to Applecross and, further north, visit the splendid Inverewe Garden at Poolewe. Look out for wildcats, sea eagles and pine martens at the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve Reserve, on the shores of beautiful Loch Maree.

On your second day, journey north to Cape Wrath lighthouse through breathtaking Assynt scenery. You’ll always remember the brilliant moment when you first gazed across the 3,000 million year old landscape of the North West Highlands Geopark. See the grand peaks of Suilven and Stac Pollaidh and be amazed by the rugged terrain of the far north west as you revel in this true wilderness.

Travel further east and discover the Pictish and Viking mysteries of Caithness or some archaeological gems along the Strathnaver Trail. Reach the most northerly point of the British mainland at Dunnet Head and witness the remarkable Stacks of Duncansby.

On your last day, discover beautiful Easter Ross, an area full of wonderful castles and distilleries. Follow the Highland Pictish Trail from Inverness to Dunrobin Castle. Don’t forget to stop for a refreshment at the Glenmorangie Distillery or the Black Isle Brewery.

For more ideas, contacts and suggested itineraries, go to visitscotlandtraveltrade.com or email us at traveltrade@visitscotland.com
The North Highlands

A scenic tour along the North Coast 500 route through Wester Ross, Assynt, Sutherland, Caithness and Easter Ross.

Day 1 – Wester Ross & Assynt

1. **BENNE EIGHE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE** – With a cluster of ancient pine woods, secretive crossbills and soaring golden eagles, Benne Eighe is Britain’s oldest National Nature Reserve. Situated just outside Kinlochewe, facilities include a small visitor centre, a picnic site, toilets and facilities for the disabled.

2. **HEBRIDEAN WHALE CRUISES** – Take your group on a wildlife cruise from Ullapool, a picturesque town in the Northwest Highlands. You might spot whales, dolphins, porpoises, basking sharks and other marine life.

3. **INVERECON GARDEN** – This is one of the most beautiful places in Scotland. Helped by the warm currents of the Gulf Stream, Inverewe Garden is an oasis of exotic plants bursting with vibrant colour.

4. **CORRISHALLOCH GORGE AND FALLS OF MEASACH** – Situated south east of Ullapool, this spectacular mile-long gorge is one of the finest examples in Britain of a box canyon and provides a great stop for your group. A suspension bridge a little way downstream gives you views down into the gorge.

Optional extras

- **HEBRIDEAN WHALE CRUISES**
- **CORRISHALLOCH GORGE AND FALLS OF MEASACH**

Day 2 - Assynt and the North West

1. **SUMMER QUEEN CRUISES** – Summer Queen is the only boat from Ullapool that cruises through the Assynt Isles and lands on the small island Tanera Mor for 45 minutes. Four hour morning and two hour afternoon cruises take in the beauty of Loch Broom and the Assynt Isles, with stunning scenery, geological and historical points of interest and close wildlife encounters. Vessel seats 45 persons.

2. **DUNROBIN CASTLE** – Dunrobin is the most northerly of Scotland’s great houses and one of Britain’s oldest continuously inhabited castles, dating back to the early 1300s. Dunrobin is also known for its formal gardens, where daily falconry displays involving Highland birds such as peregrine falcons and golden eagles take place.

3. **THE OLD MURRAYHEIN WHISKY MUSEUM** – This museum presents his life and work, as peregrine falcons and golden eagles take place.

4. **THE OLD Pulteney Whisky Distillery** – The Old Pulteney Distillery near Wick’s historic harbour is the most northerly on the mainland and continues to make malt whisky using traditional methods nearly two centuries after its opening. Take a group guided tour, sample a complimentary dram and enjoy some of the full range of souvenirs and products available in the shop.

Optional extras

- **DUNROBIN CASTLE**
- **THE OLD Pulteney Whisky Distillery**

Day 3 - Sutherland and Caithness

1. **STRAITHNAVER MUSEUM AND TRAIL** – Journey through Strathnaver’s mystical past, from the emergence of the Clan Mackay to the tragedy of the Highland Clearances. The museum has a wide range of fascinating exhibits. Take a stroll along the Strathnaver Trail and discover the remains of Neolithic horded chamber cairns, Bronze Age cairns, Iron Age brochs and Pictish carved stones.

2. **THE CASTLE AND GARDENS OF MEY** – Visit the Castle and Gardens of Mey, east of Thurso. The Scottish residence of the late Queen Mother, this is also the most northerly inhabited castle on the British mainland.

3. **CORRIESHALLOCH GORGE AND FALLS** – One of the finest examples in Britain of a box canyon and provides a great stop. A suspension bridge a little way downstream gives you views down into the gorge.

4. **THE GREY CAIRNS OF CAMSTER –** Visit those enormous prehistoric burial chambers which are over 4000 years old. The carins demonstrate the complexity of Neolithic architecture, with central burial chambers accessed through narrow passages from the outside. Excavated and restored by Historic Scotland in the late 20th century, they are now open to the public.

Optional extras

- **STRAITHNAVER MUSEUM AND TRAIL**
- **THE GREY CAIRNS OF CAMSTER –**

Day 4 - Sutherland and Easter Ross

1. **TIMESPAN HERITAGE CENTRE & ART GALLERY** – Visit this museum of social and natural history, contemporary art gallery, archive, gift shop, and café in a beautiful riverside location in Helmsdale. The museum provides the visitor with a wealth of information about past ways of life and some of the more turbulent events in Sutherland’s history combined with local stories and folklore from the past and present.

2. **DUNROBIN CASTLE** – Dunrobin is the most northerly of Scotland’s great houses and one of Britain’s oldest continuously inhabited castles, dating back to the early 1300s. Dunrobin is also known for its formal gardens, where daily falconry displays involving Highland birds such as peregrine falcons and golden eagles take place.

3. **ROYAL DORNCH** – Dornoch is home to an outstanding championship golf course and a magnificent 13th century cathedral. The links of the famous Royal Dornoch Golf Club stand as one of the greatest outposts of world golf and one of the finest of all golf courses. Remoteness is part of its charm and the only reason that this magnificent links remains out of the mainstream of major championship golf.

4. **GLENMORANGIE DISTILLERY** – Glenmorangie Distillery has been producing its Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky in Tain since 1843. Take a group guided tour and watch the skilled mashmen, stillmen and warehousemen as they go about their daily work. You will experience all stages of the whisky making process from mashing and fermenting to distilling and maturing – all culminating in a dram or two of your choice.

Optional extras

- **TIMESPAN HERITAGE CENTRE & ART GALLERY**
- **GLENMORANGIE DISTILLERY**

For more information on things to see and do in The Highlands go to www.visitscotland.com/highlands