



Rosslyn Chapel, Roslin, Midlothian

Edinburgh's historic Old Town

Return to the Ridings, Scottish Borders

Tantallon Castle, East Lothian

Ideas to inspire

Edinburgh, the Lothians, Stirling, the Forth Valley and the Scottish Borders

In 2017 Scotland will celebrate and showcase its rich history, heritage and archaeology. From the remains of our earliest settlements going back thousands of years, through the turbulent times of the Middle Ages and on to the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, every area of Scotland has its own tale to share with visitors.

Edinburgh has been at the heart of Scotland's history for centuries. No visit would be complete without a trip to Edinburgh Castle, standing proud atop an ancient volcanic plug overlooking the city. There's history around every corner in the Old and New Towns, both of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the story of Scotland at the National Museum of Scotland.

Many fascinating stories await visitors to the Lothians. Discover how John Muir, the visionary naturalist, was inspired to create the National Parks movement, explore the real connections with the Knights Templar at Rosslyn Chapel made famous in *The Da Vinci Code*, or hear how the Industrial Revolution affected the coal mining industry at the National Mining Museum Scotland.

In the Forth Valley you'll find historic Stirling Castle and the National Wallace Monument, built to commemorate Scotland's national hero Sir William Wallace. Falkirk's fascinating history includes the building of the Roman Antonine Wall and two of Scotland's most important canals, while Clackmannanshire's famous tower houses stand as testament to the area's popularity with members of the Royal Court at Stirling.

The 2015 reopening of the Borders Railway between Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders makes it easier than ever for visitors to explore this lovely part of Scotland. The intriguing maze and 17th century brewery at Traquair House, the magnificent ruins of the four Borders abbeys and the chance to explore Abbotsford, the home of celebrated author Sir Walter Scott are just some of the experiences that await you.

Events:

TradFest – May – As part of Edinburgh's packed programme of well-known festivals throughout the year, Tradfest celebrates Beltane and Mayday which traditionally mark the beginning of summer, bringing energy and colour to the city over 12 days through traditional music, song, storytelling, dance, and more. www.tracscotland.org/festivals

Spirit of Stirling Whisky Festival – May – May is the month when whisky is celebrated throughout Scotland and the city of Stirling holds its own festival in the Albert Halls, near the heart of the historic Old Town area. www.spiritofstirlingwhiskyfestival.co.uk

Return to the Ridings – June & July – The "Return to the Ridings" is a celebration of the riding of town boundaries on horseback which has taken place for centuries in 11 Scottish Borders towns. The festivals surrounding these ride outs are steeped in tradition and celebrate Borders history. www.returntotheridings.co.uk

Lammermuir Festival – September – The ethos of the Lammermuir Festival is beautiful music in beautiful places. The Festival allows visitors to hear enjoy some of the world's best loved classical music in some of East Lothian's most historic churches and in Lennoxlove House, seat of the Dukes of Hamilton. www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk

Linlithgow Palace Jousting – July – The ancient spectacle of a jousting tournament comes to life as chivalric knights in armour compete for glory at Linlithgow Palace, now a ruin but formerly a comfortable retreat from affairs of state for Scottish Kings. www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Edinburgh, the Lothians, Stirling, the Forth Valley and the Scottish Borders

Day 1 - Edinburgh



1
EDINBURGH CASTLE / EDINBURGH OLD TOWN – Edinburgh Castle dominates the city's skyline, overlooking the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site where history waits around every corner – in the narrow closes and cobbled streets of the medieval Old Town to the elegant streets of the Georgian New Town.



2
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND – The museum's diverse collections take you on an inspirational journey through Scotland's story from pre-history to the present day. You can also uncover how science, fashion and much more has developed in Scotland over the years in ten new galleries open in 2016.



3
PALACE OF HOLYROOD HOUSE / HOLYROOD ABBEY / HOLYROOD PARK – The Palace of Holyrood House, Her Majesty The Queen's official residence in Scotland, lies at the end of the historic Royal Mile. See the magnificent State Apartments, then explore the 12th century ruins of Holyrood Abbey. Nearby Holyrood Park has a wealth of history and archaeology.



4
GREYFRIARS KIRK – The atmospheric Greyfriars Kirk in the city's Old Town is the resting place of many influential writers, historians and statesmen. Keep your eye open for the charming statue of Greyfriars Bobby just outside the kirk's entrance. When his master died, the famous little dog guarded the grave for over 14 years.



5
THE GEORGIAN HOUSE – The Georgian House offers a glimpse into life in the 18th century, where the more affluent escaped from the overcrowded conditions of the Old Town and moved to the New Town. Dating from 1796, it's situated in Charlotte Square and has been magnificently restored to show a fine collection of period furniture, silver and porcelain.

Day 2 - The Lothians



1
HOPETOON HOUSE – Hopetoun House is one of the most splendid examples of 18th century architecture in Britain. The magnificent interiors, which have remained virtually unchanged for three centuries, reflect the elegance of the Georgian era. There are also 150 acres of grounds, walks and trails to explore.



2
NATIONAL MINING MUSEUM SCOTLAND – Get a fascinating insight into how Scotland led the way in the coal mining industry at the Lady Victoria Colliery, Newtongrange. This was Scotland's first 'super pit' where you can get up close to the nation's largest steam engine and find out what life was like for the miners and their families.



3
ROSSLYN CHAPEL – As well as being featured in the bestselling novel *The Da Vinci Code*, this fascinating building is famous for its ornate stonework, magnificent carvings and stunning setting. Its story is told in the state-of-the-art visitor centre and there are guided tours to help you uncover its 15th century origins.



4
FORTH RAIL BRIDGE AND FORTH ROAD BRIDGE – The Forth Bridges are an impressive sight, linking Edinburgh to Fife across the Firth of Forth. The iconic Forth Rail Bridge, built in the late 19th Century, is celebrated as a major feat of engineering and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A third bridge – The Queensferry Crossing – opens in 2016.



5
JOHN MUIR'S BIRTHPLACE – John Muir, known as 'the father of modern conservation', inspired people all over the world to become interested in nature. Visit his birthplace in Dunbar which has been transformed into a visitor attraction exploring his work, motivation and achievements, including creation of the National Parks movement.

Day 3 - Stirling & the Forth Valley



1
STIRLING CASTLE – One of the most important historical sites in Scotland, Stirling Castle was once a favoured residence of Scotland's national hero Sir William Wallace, celebrated by the Oscar-winning movie *Braveheart*. Learn about his fight for Scotland's freedom, see his famous broadsword and admire the stunning panoramic views from the crown.



2
NATIONAL WALLACE MONUMENT – A distinctive Stirling landmark, the Monument commemorates the life and legacy of Scotland's national hero Sir William Wallace, celebrated by the Oscar-winning movie *Braveheart*. Learn about his fight for Scotland's freedom, see his famous broadsword and admire the stunning panoramic views from the crown.



3
FORTH & CLYDE CANAL – The Forth & Clyde Canal was the first canal to be built in Scotland in 1768 and played a vital part in the Industrial Revolution. Thanks to the innovation of the unique Falkirk Wheel opened in 2002, today's visitors can now take a boat trip on the canal, linking to the Union canal which was originally built to transport coal back in 1822.



4
CALLENDAR HOUSE – Situated within the 170-acre Callendar Park and dating from the 14th Century, Callendar House has been host to many important historical figures over the centuries. A fascinating exhibition covers the Falkirk area's history between the 11th and 19th centuries, including a restored 1825 kitchen producing freshly baked treats of the times.



5
CLACKMANNANSHIRE TOWER TRAIL – Clackmannanshire's distinctive tower houses are 14th and 15th century structures built by aristocrats wishing to be near the Royal Court in Stirling. Each has its own fascinating story. Castle Campbell is known as 'Castle Gloom' despite its fine setting, while Alloa Tower has some superb artworks and even its own dungeon!

Day 4 - Scottish Borders



1
ABBOTSFORD HOUSE – The former home of famed author Sir Walter Scott, Abbotsford was created 200 years ago on the banks of the River Tweed. See the objects related to his greatest poems and novels, explore the beautiful formal garden and visit Scott's View from his favourite view of the stunning surrounding countryside.



2
BORDERS RAILWAY – The Borders Railway line linking Edinburgh and Tweedbank was closed in 1969, but was reopened in 2015, offering visitors the option of a scenic journey through the Scottish Borders to visit this fascinating part of Scotland. Journeys by steam train run at certain times of the year.



3
TRAQUIAIR HOUSE – Dating back to 1107, Traquair House is the oldest inhabited house in Scotland. Trace the footsteps of Scottish kings and Catholic priests who stayed here and have fun exploring the grounds including the maze. Sample the locally produced ales at Traquair House Brewery founded in the early 1700s to serve the house and estate.



4
BORDERS ABBEYS – Each of the four remarkable Borders abbeys has its own unique history. Dryburgh is the burial place of Sir Walter Scott, Jedburgh has finds from an 8th century shrine, Melrose is said to be the last resting place of the heart of Robert the Bruce and Kelso still bears marks of cannon fire from the armies of King Henry VIII.



5
MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS' VISITOR CENTRE – Lying in the heart of Jedburgh, this 16th century tower house is dedicated to Mary, Queen of Scots and her associations with the town. There's a wonderful collection of objects associated with her and each room focuses on a different aspect or time period of her life.