From miles of canals, to deep glens once providing power to a thriving textile industry and a city steeped in history, Stirling & The Forth Valley has a rich heritage waiting to be discovered. The region's central location is within easy reach of both Edinburgh and Glasgow airports, with excellent train connections and road network.

The region includes much of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, with stunning landscapes and glistening lochs, and the city of Stirling is less than 30 minutes away by road. The city itself has witnessed some of the most dramatic events in Scottish history but today offers the perfect mix of history and modernity. Nearby Clackmannanshire is home to the history rich Tower Trail, while Falkirk is where you will find the magnificent Kelpies and an extensive canal network.

Stirling is a city where you can step back in time amongst ancient paths and experience ancient tales which are brought back to life, all within a vibrant city.

The historic city of Stirling is surrounded by spectacular scenery which can be admired from Stirling Castle’s esplanade, high above the city. Its strategic location set the scene for epic battles, such as The Battle of Bannockburn. Relive some of the action with a visit to The Battle of Bannockburn centre where 3D technology allows you to experience medieval combat like never before and even command the knights and soldiers who fought in 1314. Wander the cobbled streets of the Old Town, from the castle down to the city centre, where you will find an impressive food and drink offering, from a wee dram at a whisky bar to local produce at the farmers’ market. Nearby, savour local beers at Allanwater Brewhouse in Bridge of Allan or warming whisky at Deanston Distillery in Doune. Browse independent boutiques in The Stirling Arcade as well as Bridge of Allan for the perfect gift to take home.

Falkirk is perhaps best known as the home of The Kelpies, housed in Helix Park. These 30m high equestrian sculptures are a spectacular sight, both day and night, but there are many more reasons to visit the town of Falkirk and its surrounding area too!

Discover parts of the Antonine Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at Rough Castle Fort or in the grounds of the impressive 14th century Callendar House. The house has permanent displays of the local area including its Roman connections and is free to enter, or at Kinneil House near Bo’ness, explore 2,000 years of history from occupying Romans to the Industrial Revolution. In addition you will also find a true feat of engineering in the world’s first rotating boat lift, linking the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals. Frequent boat trips mean visitors can experience this unique experience first-hand.

Clackmannanshire is close to the City of Stirling and although it may be Scotland’s smallest county, it’s bursting with history and tales of times gone by. Join the Tower Trail and discover four medieval towers and a manor house dating from the late 14th and 15th centuries. Highlights of the trail include the stunning Alloa Tower, used to guard an important ferry crossing on the River Forth and Castle Campbell. The castle sits high above the region on the edge of the Ochil Hills and was the lowland residence of the Campbell dynasty. The hills can be seen for miles and the many paths showcase how important the hills were in the once thriving textile industry which dominated the area.

For more ideas and contacts go to www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com or email traveltrade@visitscotland.com
DAY 1 - BEYOND STIRLING

Balquhidder Church – tucked away to the north of Callander and near to Loch Voil, is the oldest parish church, built in 1583 by David Bryce. The ruins of the old parish church are in the graveyard with ancient carved stones steeped in history, including that of Rob Roy MacGregor who was laid to rest here in 1734 where he lays alongside his wife and two of their sons.

Loch Katrine – located 34 miles from Stirling, this fresh water loch is home to the Salmon Gravlax. The beauty of the loch has long inspired literary figures, including Sir Walter Scott who wrote his famed poem Lady of the Lake in 1810. Take a cruise on the water or hire a bike and explore its shore-side path.

Deanston Distillery – located just eight miles from Stirling, the distillery is a must visit. The story of the distillery is a fascinating one, from its humble beginnings to the present day. Visitors can tour the site and learn about the art of whisky making.

Doune Castle – experience this 14th century courtyard castle, built as the home of Regent Albany. ‘Scotland’s uncrowned king’. His rich tastes can be seen clearly in the architecture of the medieval castle. Only 9 miles from Stirling, it is also a popular filming location and has featured in Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Game of Thrones and most recently Outlander.

Dunblane Cathedral – located six miles from Stirling it was established in 1386 and is one of Scotland’s most notable medieval churches, dating back to the 11th century. It is largely intact and is Gothic cathedral with some early interior fixtures including examples of late 19th and early 20th century stained glass and woodwork.

Day 2 - CITY OF STIRLING

Stirling Castle – stroll through the Royal Palace of James V, restored to its Renaissance magnificence and described as the jewel in Stirling Castle’s crown. Explore the Great Hall, the largest built in Scotland and visit the Great Kitchen. The restored 1800s with dark corridors, and small cells. Day and evening tours available. Nearly, explore the Chapel of the Holy Rude where James V was crowned King of Scotland in 1567 with the ceremony being performed by John Knox.

Dryburgh Abbey – a 12th century Cistercian monastery and the site of the last resting place of Robert the Bruce. The abbey is home to the fantastic Wallace Monument, which commemorates the life and legacy of William Wallace.

Alloa Tower – dating back to the 14th century, this is the largest surviving keep in Scotland, and was home to the leader of the 1715 Jacobite Rising. Its strong medieval exterior gives way to an interior of opulent rooms filled with historical art and riches, where Mary Queen of Scots once spent part of her childhood under the care of the Erskine family.

The National Wallace Monument – tower over Stirling for over 140 years, today you can still climb the 246 steps and admire the spectacular panoramic views. Look out for the soldier who tells the story of William Wallace and the battle of Stirling Bridge. On the second floor gallery you will see Wallace’s sword proudly on display.

Battle of Bannockburn – stand shoulder to shoulder with medieval warriors and armoured knights and learn about the tactics of two opposing kings using state of the art 3D technology. Experience medieval battle like never before and learn about this crucial event in Scottish history. Book in advance online to avoid disappointment.

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