

South of Scotland - Castles, Big Houses and Gardens



Q Caerlaverock Castle, near Dumfries



Q Culzean Castle, Ayrshire



Q Dawyck Botanic Garden, near Peebles



Q Traquair Medieval Fayre, Innerleithen

Ideas to Inspire

With rich histories and lush, fertile soil, this part of the country has some incredible places to visit. Spend days wandering through majestic corridors and rooms of stately homes, exploring former clan strongholds and admiring the fragrant blossoms of beautifully manicured gardens.

From Edinburgh, follow the coastline to Eyemouth to discover a smuggler's palace which is full of secrets, before heading inland where an array of historic properties awaits.

The old days of Border warfare and conflict are reflected by a legacy of castles and fortresses. Some of these, in turn, developed into the stately homes and mansions you see today. These grand buildings were designed with attention to detail, and the ornate features and overwhelming elegance of these properties will no doubt impress.

Your trip could include a visit to the beautiful home of renowned writer Sir Walter Scott, or a tour of Traquair, the oldest inhabited house in Scotland which even has its own brewery. For castles that are set in stunning surroundings, visit Floors or Thirlestane, or venture to other awe-inspiring properties in the Scottish Borders.

In Dumfries & Galloway, prepare yourself for some historical gems, including the towering ruins of the moated Caerlaverock Castle, with its rare triangular shape. The journey to Threave Castle will no doubt leave a lasting impression - it's only reachable by a short boat crossing across the River Dee.

As you venture further into Galloway, you will soon be struck by the choice of gardens to visit, where the mild winds from the Gulf Stream encourage adventurous gardening where exotic plant life thrives. Your trip could conclude with a visit to a grand castle and country park on Scotland's west coast. Located in Ayrshire and built by Robert Adam, Culzean is an impressive clifftop spectacle with a wonderful history.

Events

MAY - Traquair Medieval Fayre, Traquair House
History comes alive at this event with its awesome displays of jousting, archery and falconry along with medieval tournaments, early music, jesters and more.
www.traquair.co.uk

JUNE - Festival of Motoring, Thirlestane Castle
Brought to you by the Borders Vintage Automobile Club (BVAC), this event has over 1,000 vintage vehicles and classic cars on display. From cute Minis to sleek retro Italian sports cars, find your favourite motor in the castle grounds.
www.thirlestanecastle.co.uk

JULY - Music at Paxton, Paxton House
Be delighted by the sound of chamber music at this annual festival, set against a majestic backdrop. Listen to talented musicians perform works spanning from the Baroque to the present day.
www.musicatpaxton.co.uk

JULY - Spectacular Jousting, Caerlaverock Castle
At this family-friendly event, watch in awe as chivalric knights ride noble steeds in a nail-biting tournament which will transport you back to medieval times.
www.historicenvironment.scot

AUGUST - Massed pipe bands, Floors Castle
Set against the stunning castle backdrop, see the incredible spectacle of dozens of pipe bands from the Scottish Borders and the Lothians as they perform on mass.
www.floorscastle.com

AUGUST - Galloway Country Fair, Drumlanrig Castle
Experience a taste of rural life. Try country pursuits and enjoy great entertainment, including dog events, falconry displays, field sports and off-road driving taster sessions, or browse stalls for crafts, food & drink, country attire and more.
www.gallowaycountryfair.co.uk

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Day one - Scottish Borders



Guns Green House – located in the fishing town of Eyemouth, the striking house was designed by John Adam and holds a few smuggler's secrets. Group tours require pre-booking and can be offered on any day of the week.

T: 01890 752062
E: info@gunsgreenhouse.org
www.gunsgreenhouse.org



Paxton House – this beautiful property in Berwick-upon-Tweed boasts a significant collection of Chippendale and Trotter furniture and masterpieces from the National Galleries of Scotland. Specialised tours for groups are an option.

T: 01289 386291
E: info@paxtonhouse.com
www.paxtonhouse.co.uk



Thirlestane Castle – dating from the 16th century, Thirlestane in Lauder is the home of the Maitland family and Bonnie Prince Charlie was known to have stayed the night here. Bespoke tours and catering arrangements offered to groups.

T: 01578 722430
E: enquiries@thirlestanecastle.co.uk
www.thirlestanecastle.co.uk



Mellerstain House & Gardens – this Georgian mansion has an art collection and period furniture, along with extensively landscaped grounds and terraced gardens offering an open vista to a parkland lake. Discounted group entry is available for parties of 20+.

T: 01573 410225
E: enquiries@mellerstain.com
www.mellerstain.com



Floors Castle – Scotland's largest inhabited castle is the home of the Duke of Roxburghe. This large and sumptuous property holds extensive collections of art, tapestries and porcelain, and has Victorian kitchen gardens and a spectacular walled garden.

T: 01573 223 333
E: enquiries@floorscastle.com
www.floorscastle.com

Day two - Scottish Borders



Monteviot House & Gardens – special shrubs and trees and imaginative water features can be found across the vast array of gardens at Monteviot, near Jedburgh. The house is open in July with coach parties by arrangement only

T: 01835 830380
E: enquiries@monteviot.com
www.monteviot.com



Abbotsford – situated near Melrose, the home of 19th century writer Sir Walter Scott is one of the most famous houses in the country and surrounded by beautiful scenery. Free entry and complimentary refreshments are available to driver and tour director for groups of 10+.

T: 01896 752043
E: enquiries@scottsassbotsford.co.uk
www.scottsassbotsford.com



Bowhill House & Country Estate – fine art, furnishing and tapestries are some of the indoor highlights of Bowhill, located by Selkirk, whilst outdoors, there are pleasant country walks and opportunities to spot wildlife. Tours of house and gardens and other outdoor activities available to groups – pre-booking required.

T: 01750 22204
E: bht@buccleuch.com
www.bowhillhouse.co.uk



Traquair House – Traquair is Scotland's oldest inhabited house and once played host to Mary Queen of Scots. As well as the house to explore, there's a maze within the grounds and a brewery. Personal guided tours by the owner, Catherine Maxwell Stuart, can be arranged in advance.

T: 01896 830323
E: enquiries@traquair.co.uk
www.traquair.co.uk



Dawyck Botanic Garden – near Peebles lies Dawyck Botanic Garden, where some of Britain's oldest and tallest trees can be discovered along with stunning seasonal floral displays of both exotic and native plants. The garden has an award-winning visitor centre. Coach parking available by arrangement.

T: 01721 760 254
E: dawyck@rbge.org.uk
www.rbge.org.uk/the-gardens/dawyck

Day three - Dumfries & Galloway



Gilnockie Tower – home of the Clan Armstrong Centre, Gilnockie is a fine example of a Borderlands pele tower. It overlooks the River Esk and can be found near Langholm. Visit to uncover the fascinating history of the Borders Reivers.

T: 013873 71373
E: gilnockietower@gmail.com
www.gilnockietower.com



Caerlaverock Castle – not far from Dumfries lies the majestic ruin of Caerlaverock Castle, unusual in its triangular shape and moat. The castle has a turbulent history, given its proximity to the border with England. Historic Scotland have an online group sales booking system with a variety of benefits.

T: 0131 668 8831
E: trade@hes.scot
www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/travel-trade



Drumlanrig Castle – impressive Drumlanrig was used as a filming location on the second series of TV show *Outlander* and sits in a beautiful 90,000 acre estate where outdoor activities can be enjoyed. Group visits available all year by request.

T: 01848 331 555
E: info@drumlanrigcastle.co.uk
www.drumlanrigcastle.co.uk



Threave Castle – dating from 1369, this formidable ruined tower house was once an island stronghold for the powerful Black Douglases and is now in the care of Historic Scotland. Getting there is a special experience - it requires crossing the River Dee by a small boat.

T: 0131 668 8831
E: trade@hes.scot
www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/travel-trade



Threave Garden & Estate – within easy reach of Castle Douglas is Threave Garden, a garden for all seasons which is owned by the National Trust for Scotland. There's a secret garden to find as well as an osprey-viewing platform and a bat reserve – it's a place where nature thrives.

T: 0131 458 0204
E: traveltrade@nts
www.nts.org.uk/travel-trade

Day four - Dumfries & Galloway and Ayrshire



Broughton House & Garden – located in Kirkcudbright, known as Scotland's Artists' Town, Broughton House is the Edwardian home of Scottish painter E.A. Hornel and now owned by the National Trust for Scotland. See his paintings in the house, browse the huge library and admire the colours of the splendid Japanese-style garden.

T: 0131 458 0204
E: traveltrade@nts
www.nts.org.uk/travel-trade



Glenwhan Garden & Arboretum – once barren moorland, Glenwhan is home to an astonishing abundance of plant life including flora native to the Southern Hemisphere. Take in the lovely sea views across to the Isle of Man, Luce Bay, and the Mull of Galloway.

T: 01581 400222
E: tess@glenwhan.co.uk
www.glenwhangardens.co.uk



Logan Botanic Garden – this lush garden is noted for its tropical collections of Australasian tree-ferns, cabbage palms and other tender species and is often considered to be Scotland's most exotic garden.

T: 01776 860231
E: logan@rbge.org.uk
www.rbge.org.uk/the-gardens/logan



Castle Kennedy Gardens – these grand gardens have history, having been laid out by the 2nd Earl of Stair in the 1730s. See the collections of brightly coloured rare and hybrid species of rhododendrons and the twisted branches of champion trees.

T: 01776 702 024
E: marketing@castlekennedygardens.com
www.castlekennedygardens.com



Culzean Castle – owned by the National Trust for Scotland, this breathtaking clifftop castle was designed by Robert Adam and has links with President Eisenhower. Inside, admire the oval staircase and outside, wander through the formal gardens and the fruit-filled glasshouses.

T: 0131 458 0204
E: traveltrade@nts
www.nts.org.uk/travel-trade

Please note some attractions have seasonal opening hours. Please check opening times with the attraction.

For more ideas and contacts go to www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com or email traveltrade@visitscotland.com