



Your **Gateway** to Scotland

Welcome to Scotland.

A land of inspiring landscapes, magnificent views and a friendly welcome wherever you go. Travelling by train is one of the best ways to take in the true beauty of Scotland. Did you know that there are some parts of the country that are only accessible by rail? Let us take you there.

ScotRail is the national rail operator for Scotland and we take pleasure in connecting our passengers with great experiences, unforgettable journeys and new adventures.

We would love to welcome you on board to explore this beautiful country.

Recent improvements to our network

- Extension of the Highland Explorer. With 20 additional cycle spaces and plenty of space to store other sports equipment, the UK's first active travel carriage travels along the West Highland Line from Glasgow Queen Street to Oban, Fort William and Mallaig.
- Reopening of Levenmouth Line in Fife.
- Electrification of East Kilbride Line.

Gateway to Scotland Rail Passes

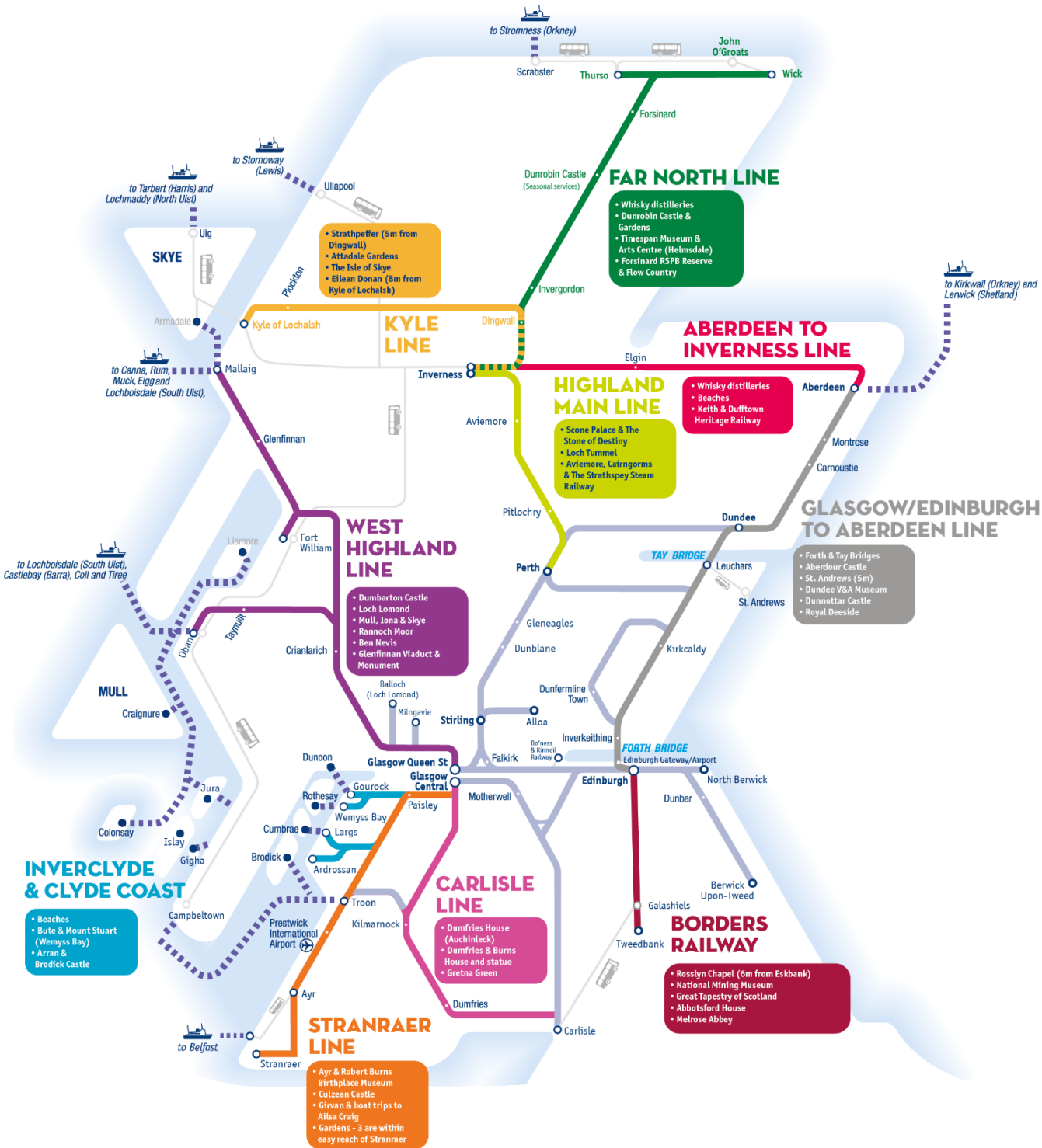
- **Spirit of Scotland - £155/£196**
4 days travel out of 8 consecutive days, or 8 days travel out of 15. Unlimited travel throughout Scotland by train and coach. Also valid on the Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Trams. Great value for money and flexibility. www.scotrail.co.uk/spirit
- **Scottish Grand Tour - £92**
4 days travel out of 8 consecutive days. Classic tour of Scotland from Edinburgh or Glasgow to Skye via the West Highland Line, coach to Kyle of Lochalsh and then back by train via Inverness on the Kyle and Highland Main Lines. Tickets for the ferry between Mallaig and Armadale (Skye) should be purchased separately from Calmac. [Scotland Grand Tour Rail Journey | ScotRail | ScotRail](#)
- **Highland Rover - £99**
4 days travel out of 8 consecutive days. Train and coach travel throughout the Highlands of Scotland. www.scotrail.co.uk/highland-rover
- **Central Scotland Rover - £57**
3 days' consecutive travel. Train and Subway travel throughout Central Scotland. www.scotrail.co.uk/central-scotland-rover
- **Rail & Sail – various prices**
Single or return tickets. Integrated train and ferry tickets, end-to-end travel. Available for journeys to Belfast, Orkney/ Shetland, the Clyde and West Coasts. Various prices. www.scotrail.co.uk/railsail



SCOTTISH RAILWAY JOURNEYS



FAR NORTH LINE
KYLE LINE
WEST HIGHLAND LINE
STRANRAER LINE
CARLISLE LINE
BORDERS RAILWAY



Inspiration: Days out from Glasgow or Edinburgh

Edinburgh (www.edinburgh.org)

Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, is a city that once visited is never forgotten. This enchanting city is famed for its festivals, world-class attractions and its castle. Wherever you look, the city buzzes with a sense of excitement all year round. Packed with medieval tenements, narrow wynds of the Old Town and the sweeping elegance of the Georgian New Town, there's no question that Edinburgh deserves its reputation as one of the most stunning and enthralling cities in the world.

When you visit the city, you won't want to miss:

- Edinburgh Castle, Gallery of Modern Art, National Museum of Scotland, Our Dynamic Earth, Scottish National Gallery, St Giles Cathedral, The Scotch Whisky Experience, Scottish Parliament, Holyrood Palace, Camera Obscura, Johnnie Walker Experience
- Shopping (Princes Street and St James Quarter)
- Royal Mile, Old Town and New Town heritage areas

Trips from Edinburgh

Popular and easily accessible trips from Edinburgh include:

Glasgow (www.visitglasgow.com)

Scotland's largest city is a lively, bustling place, distinctive and full of character, where you're sure to receive a very warm welcome indeed. The city is less than an hour away from *Edinburgh Waverley* by train.

Borders Railway

Take a ride on Scotland's newest railway line, the Borders Railway. Stop off at *Newtongrange* for the nearby National Mining Museum, alight at *Galashiels* for the Great Tapestry of Scotland and bus/taxi connections to the surrounding Borders towns, or stay onboard to the end of the line and visit Abbotsford House – home of Sir Walter Scott.

- National Mining Museum (Newtongrange), Rosslyn Chapel & Dalkeith Country Park (Eskbank), Great Tapestry of Scotland (Galashiels), Abbotsford House, Melrose Abbey, Trimontium Museum & Borders Abbey Way (Tweedbank)

Stirling (www.yourstirling.com)

50 mins by train from *Edinburgh Waverley*. This beautiful, historic city is widely known for its magnificent castle. From the castle esplanade there's a fantastic view of Stirling's other famous structure, the National Wallace Monument, built in honour of renowned patriot William Wallace (he of Braveheart fame). Don't miss the rest of the Old Town and The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum.

- Stirling Castle, The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Museum, Stirling Distillery, National Wallace Monument, The Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum, Bannockburn battlefield (c. 2m outside town)

Linlithgow

20 minutes from *Edinburgh Waverley* by train. This historic town is famed for its Palace which featured in *Outlander* and has connections with Mary Queen of Scots. The Linlithgow Canal Centre is close to the station and the Bo'ness and Kinneil heritage railway is ~4 miles outside of town.

- Linlithgow Palace, Union canal



Falkirk (www.visitfalkirk.com)

25 minutes by train from *Edinburgh Waverley* to *Falkirk High*. This town is bursting with brilliant contrasts between the old and new with outstanding attractions, including The Kelpies, The Helix and The Falkirk Wheel to name a few. The Antonine Wall, dating from the 2nd century, marked the northern frontier of the Roman Empire and you can experience Victorian life at the mansion of Callendar House.

- The Kelpies, The Falkirk Wheel, The Antonine Wall, Union/ Forth & Clyde canals

North Berwick (www.visiteastlothian.org)

35 mins from *Edinburgh Waverley* by train. North Berwick is a lovely seaside town with a beach and bustling high street lined with independent shops, tearooms and pubs. Visit the Scottish Seabird Centre for puffins, seals and boat trips to Bass Rock. Did you know? The Battle of Prestonpans in 1745 was the first in world history to be fought on a railway line - a wagonway carrying coal from Tranent to the Forth, and the track had to be removed for the duration.

- Scottish Seabird Centre, John Muir Way
- Beach

St Andrews (www.welcometofife.com)

The Home of Golf is about an hours' travel from *Edinburgh Waverley*. Catch the train for *Dundee* or *Aberdeen* and alight at *Leuchars* station. From here there is a regular shuttle bus, or you can catch a taxi, for the last five miles or so into the town.

- St Andrews Links, British Golf Museum, Cathedral, Fife Coastal Path
- Beach
- Historic University town

Glasgow (www.visitglasgow.com)

With a reputation as one of the world's greatest cities, you can expect a very warm welcome with world-class architecture, a vibrant nightlife, breathtaking scenery and outstanding shopping. There's a lot to enjoy in Glasgow and it's worth exploring outside of the city centre too. The city's West End is full of independent shops, cafes and restaurants, and you can visit the beautiful Botanic Gardens here too.

- Glasgow Cathedral, Glasgow Science Centre, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, People's Palace & Glasgow Green, Riverside Museum, Gallery of Modern Art
- Nightlife, Shopping (Buchanan Street, Sauchiehall Street, St Enoch Centre)
- Events (SECC/ The Hydro)

Trips from Glasgow

Popular and easily accessible trips from Glasgow include:

Edinburgh (www.edinburgh.org)

Scotland's capital is less than an hour by train from *Glasgow Queen Street* to *Edinburgh Waverley*. Steeped in history, Edinburgh seamlessly blends old and new, providing the perfect destination to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of a diverse and vibrant city.



Loch Lomond (www.lochlomond-trossachs.org)

50 minutes from *Glasgow Queen Street* to *Balloch*, the gateway to Loch Lomond and one of Scotland's most beautiful and iconic places. Loch cruises, cycle and walking routes, shops and busy lochside cafes are all nearby. Ideal for the serious outdoor activist or those who want to enjoy stunning scenery.

- Gateway to Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
- Loch Lomond Shores shopping, loch cruises, West Highland Way

Ayr

50 mins from *Glasgow Central*, Ayr is a popular seaside resort and has a fantastic esplanade with a long sandy beach and fantastic play park for the kids. Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns, was born in Alloway, on the outskirts of the town and it is well worth the short trip to visit his birthplace and the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, which is owned by the National Trust.

- Burns Birthplace Museum, Racecourse
- Beach

Stirling (www.yourstirling.com)

50 mins from *Glasgow Queen Street*. This beautiful historic city is widely known for its magnificent Castle. It's also home to The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum, documenting over 200 years of the famous regiment. From the castle esplanade there's an unparalleled view of Stirling's other famous structure, the National Wallace Monument, built in honour of renowned patriot William Wallace (he of Braveheart fame).

- Stirling Castle, The Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Museum, National Wallace Monument, The Stirling Smith Art Gallery & Museum, Bannockburn battlefield (c. 2m outside town)
- Historic old town

Arran (www.visitarran.com)

50 mins from *Glasgow Central* to Ardrossan/ *Troon** and then ferry to Brodick (c.1 hr 15 mins). Affectionately known as 'Scotland in miniature', this vibrant island is considered by many to possess the great qualities of Scotland in an easily accessible format. Arran regularly astounds visitors with an incredible variety of scenery. Explore mountains, woodlands, beaches and outlying islands which offer many outdoor activity options and heritage sites.

- Brodick Castle, Arran Brewery, Arran Distillery
- Outdoor activities

*Ferries may alternate between Ardrossan and Troon ports. Please check the ferry connection before travel.

Falkirk (www.visitfalkirk.com)

30 minutes by train from *Glasgow Queen Street* to *Falkirk High*, this town is bursting with brilliant contrasts and outstanding attractions including The Kelpies, The Helix and The Falkirk Wheel to name a few. The area is alive with history. The Antonine Wall, dating from the 2nd century, marked the northern frontier of the Roman Empire and you can experience Victorian life at the mansion of Callendar House.

- The Kelpies, The Falkirk Wheel, The Antonine Wall, Union/ Forth & Clyde canals



Inspiration: Scotland's Great Rail Trips

West Highland Majesty: Fort William – Mallaig

Voted the most beautiful rail journey in the world, gaze in wonder as you pass over the Caledonian Canal and Neptune's Staircase (a remarkable series of canal locks), the Glenfinnan Viaduct (where you can stop and visit the small museum in the station or the nearby monument to Bonnie Prince Charlie), and glide past the silver sands of Morar before arriving in *Mallaig* to enjoy views across to the jagged peaks of Skye. Catch the ferry to the Small Isles or to Skye and enjoy the incredible sights of the island. (Time: 1hr 30mins)

Mountain and Glen: Inverness - Kyle of Lochalsh (Kyle Line)

Quite simply one of the most stunning rail journeys in the world. Travel coast to coast across Scotland, through mountains, glens and forests on your way to Kyle of Lochalsh. Stop off at the picturesque village of Plockton (home of TV's Hamish Macbeth), tour the mystical Isle of Skye or visit nearby Eilean Donan Castle. (Time: 2hrs 30mins)

The Grand Tour of Scotland

This classic tour of Scotland has been popular since Victorian times. Depart from Glasgow or Edinburgh and travel on some of the most beautiful and dramatic railway lines in the World - the West Highland Line, Kyle Line and Highland Main Line. From Glasgow, head north on the West Highland Line along the banks of Loch Lomond and over Rannoch Moor. From Fort William pass over the Glenfinnan Viaduct - made famous by Harry Potter – before arriving in the small fishing and ferry port of Mallaig. Take the CalMac ferry to Armadale on the southern end of the Isle of Skye and take some time to travel around the island or head straight on to Kyle of Lochalsh over the Skye Bridge (c. 20 miles). Rejoin the train and take the Kyle Line to Inverness and then south again on the Highland Main Line back to Edinburgh or Glasgow, via Perth. (Time: 2 – 3 days) [Scotland Grand Tour Rail Journey](#) | [ScotRail](#) | [ScotRail](#)

Forth Bridge & Fife: Edinburgh – St Andrews & Dundee

Departing Edinburgh, you will cross the UNESCO World Heritage Forth Bridge before skirting the scenic Fife coast along the Firth of Forth. You'll then head inland, across the rich farmlands of Fife to *Leuchars* station. The station is five miles from the ancient University town of St Andrews – the home of golf. Stay on the train to Dundee and you will also cross the Tay Bridge before arriving in the heart of the city. It's worth visiting the V&A Museum here. (Time: 1hr 20 mins)

Borders Railway & Sir Walter Scott

Take a ride on Scotland's newest railway line to the heart of Scott's country. Departing from Edinburgh Waverley, in the shadow of the Scott Monument and named after his most famous novels, follow the line all the way to Tweedbank and make the short connection on foot or by bus to Abbotsford House – his unique and unforgettable home. (Time: 60 mins)



History & Heritage: Glasgow/ Edinburgh - Stirling

The historic city of Stirling is widely known for its magnificent castle, and for being home to The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum, which documents over 200 years of the famous regiment. From the castle esplanade there's an unparalleled view of Stirling's other famous structure, the National Wallace Monument, and don't miss the nearby Bannockburn battlefield.

(Time: 30 - 50 mins)

Scotland in Miniature: Glasgow- Arran

50 mins from *Glasgow Central* to *Troon* by train and then ferry to Brodick (c.1 hr 15 mins).

This vibrant island is considered by many to possess the great qualities of Scotland in an easily accessible format. Arran regularly astounds visitors with its incredible variety of scenery. Explore the mountains, woodlands, beaches and outlying islands to fully appreciate the beauty of this island.

Product	Description	Validity	Price (adult)
Spirit of Scotland	Travel throughout Scotland by train & coach. The flexible, hassle-free gateway to Scotland.	4 days out of 8/ 8 days out of 15.	£155.00/196.00
Scottish Grand Tour	Classic Tour of Scotland. Edinburgh or Glasgow to Skye via the world-famous West Highland Line, coach to Kyle of Lochalsh and then back by train via Inverness on the Kyle and Highland main lines.	4 days out of 8	£92.00
Highland Rover	Train & coach travel throughout the Highlands.	4 days out of 8	£99.00
Central Scotland Rover	Train and Subway travel covering Glasgow, Edinburgh and surrounding areas.	3 days	£57.00
Rail & Sail	Train and ferry tickets from any rail station to popular destinations such as Brodick, Rothesay, Mull and Skye.	Single or return	Various

Prices correct as of 01.04.25



Spirit of Scotland tours

1 week – Starting in Glasgow

(4 days travel, out of 8)

Please note that any ferry travel should be purchased separately

Day 1 - 3

Departing from Glasgow, head north on the Highland Main line to Inverness. Stop off en route at the historic city of Stirling to visit the Castle or venture a few miles out of town to the Battle of Bannockburn and the site of Bruce's famous victory that secured the country's independence.

When you arrive in Inverness, you'll be spoilt for choice for eating and accommodation options.

Whatever your budget, there is a lot to enjoy in the Highland Capital and we recommend you spend a couple of days exploring the city and surrounding area. Hire a bike and cycle part of the Great Glen Way, take a boat trip on Loch Ness, enjoy a bus tour of the city or head out to Culloden battlefield – the last hand-to-hand battle fought on British soil.

Day 4

Travel coast to coast through dramatic landscapes enjoying views of mountains and lochs. Leaving Inverness, the Kyle line curves around the western edge of the Beaulieu Firth to Dingwall before heading West through the valleys of Strath Bran and Glen Carron. The final few miles take you along the coastline of Loch Carron into the small port of Kyle of Lochalsh on the West Coast.

Stay over in Kyle of Lochalsh and enjoy the local hospitality or head out for a walk in this stunning landscape. Alternatively, we suggest you head on by bus over the Skye Bridge and down to Armadale where you can catch the CalMac ferry on the short crossing back to the mainland at Mallaig and catch the last train to Fort William.

The section from Mallaig to Fort William is recognised as possibly the greatest rail journey in the world, and for good reason. Frequently used as a film location, you'll pass near the silver sands of Morar (from *Local Hero*) and over the Glenfinnan Viaduct (from *Harry Potter*). As you pass over the viaduct, and depending on the time of year, look to the setting sun in the west and the poignant monument to the Jacobite Rising at the head of Loch Shiel.

Day 5

Enjoy a day in Fort William, the outdoor capital of Scotland, where there is lots to see and do. Britain's highest peak, Ben Nevis, and the Caledonian Canal's Neptune's Staircase are just two local attractions, but you can also try mountain biking, quad bike tours, wildlife safaris, gorge walking, white water rafting, canyoning or bushcraft skills, to name but a few.



Day 6 - 7

Catch the mid-morning bus to Oban and you'll arrive in this bustling port about lunchtime. However, we suggest you grab'n'go for lunch or get something to eat on the 45-minute ferry crossing to Craignure on the Isle of Mull. Catch one of the local buses (not included in your pass) on to the island's main town of Tobermory. Enjoy an afternoon here exploring this pretty little town and enjoy a meal or drink before heading back to the ferry terminal for an evening cruise back to Oban where you'll stay.

Next day make the most of your time here with a visit to the local distillery, a day trip to the nearby islands of Kerrera or Lismore, or a walk up the hill to the town's most famous landmark – McCaig's Tower. However, whatever you do, make sure to enjoy some of the world's best seafood served fresh from the sea and cooked to perfection.

Day 8

Enjoy the final morning in Oban before catching the train back to Glasgow. This section of the West Highland line takes you north to Connel Ferry before cutting inland, over the Pass of Brander and Ben Cruachan (site of the power station inside the mountain), skirting the beautiful Loch Awe which recently featured in the Disney+ series, 'Star Wars: Andor'. Passing the ruin of Kilchurn Castle, you'll start to head south towards the popular walking area of the "Arrochar Alps". You'll soon pass the iconic Loch Lomond (and you may have time for a quick cruise on the Loch) before your final few miles into Glasgow along the Firth of Clyde.

1 Week – Starting in Edinburgh

(4 days travel, out of 8)

Please note that any ferry travel should be purchased separately

Day 1

Head out of Edinburgh and travel north, crossing the Firth of Forth via the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Forth Bridge. Stop off at Leuchars and take the regular shuttle bus or grab a taxi for the five miles or so to St Andrews, the Home of Golf. However, if golf is not your thing, there is the ruined Abbey, medieval streets and plenty of shops, cafes and restaurants to keep you occupied.

Rejoining the train at Leuchars, head on to Dundee and Perth.

Day 2

After spending the night in Perth, take the Highland Main Line north towards Inverness. Stop off in the pretty Highland Perthshire village of Pitlochry for lunch on your way to Aviemore.

Day 3 - 4

You can easily spend a week or more enjoying the many outdoor experiences on offer in and around Aviemore. We recommend you enjoy a ride from the golden age of steam on the Strathspey Railway to Boat of Garten and then take in some Osprey spotting at the nearby RSPB reserve.

Alternatively take the Mountain Railway for panoramic views from the top of Cairn Gorm Mountain or visit Rothiemurchus Estate to take part in a huge range of activities, from walking and pony hacking to quad biking and tree top adventures on the TreeZone high ropes.

Families will be entertained at the Landmark Forest Adventure Park in Carrbridge or step back in time to the 1700s at the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore.



Day 5

From Aviemore take the train to Inverness and then on to Kyle of Lochalsh on one of the most beautiful railway journeys in the world. Disembark on the way at the picturesque village of Plockton and take a boat trip to see wild seals. Alternatively, visit Eilean Donan Castle, one of Scotland's most iconic sights, and easily recognised from films such as Highlander and James Bond's, The World is Not Enough.

Day 6 - 7

Using Kyle of Lochalsh as a base, spend a couple of days exploring the local area, and particularly the romantic Isle of Skye. Skye is a truly magical place, home to some of Scotland's most iconic landscapes - you will surely fall under its spell.

Day 8

For your final day, retrace your route from Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness and then south to Edinburgh – maybe stopping off to do some of the things you were unable to do on your way north?

2 Weeks – Starting in Edinburgh

(8 days travel, out of 15)

Please note that any ferry travel should be purchased separately

Day 1

Leave Edinburgh behind and travel north, crossing the Firth of Forth via the UNESCO World Heritage Site Forth Railway Bridge. Stop off at Leuchars and take the regular shuttle bus or grab a taxi for the five miles or so to St Andrews, the Home of Golf. However, if golf is not your thing, there is the ruined Abbey, medieval streets and plenty of shops, cafes and restaurants to keep you occupied. Rejoining the train at Leuchars, head on to Dundee.

Day 2

Spend the morning exploring Dundee's attractions such as the V&A Design Museum, McManus Art Gallery & Museum, Scott of the Antarctic's RRS Discovery - all within easy walking distance of the station. Take an afternoon train to Aberdeen and then catch the overnight Northlink ferry to Kirkwall on Orkney. (Please note, Northlink fares are not included in your travelpass, but you will benefit from a 20% discount).

Day 3 - 4

Enjoy a couple of days exploring Orkney, an island with a unique culture, history and identity. The largest island, and also the most populated, is known as the Mainland. On the East Mainland coast lies Kirkwall, the ancient capital of Orkney, with its Viking cathedral, fishing port and distillery. The archipelago's other main port and town, Stromness, is located in the south of West Mainland. It's a highly creative place with many crafty gift shops and art galleries amongst its old, winding streets.



Day 5

Catch the Northlink ferry from Stromness to Scrabster over the Pentland Firth. Catch the local Stagecoach bus to nearby Thurso or enjoy an excursion to John O'Groats.

Day 6

Take the train on the Far North line to Inverness and traverse some of the most beautiful, dramatic and remote landscapes in Europe. Traverse the world's first, and only, UNESCO peatland world heritage site, the Flow Country, marvel at the vast tracts of uninhabited moors and rugged coastlines skirting the many Firths, to the rolling hills and valleys. If you have time stop off at the fairytale castle of Dunrobin. For centuries the Clan Sutherland have called the castle home, and it commands superb clifftop views of both the gardens and the sea. The castle is also served by its own railway station (open March to late October) which also houses a small railway museum.

Day 7 - 8

In Inverness you'll be spoilt for choice with plenty of eating and accommodation options. Whatever your budget, there is a lot to enjoy in the Highland Capital and we recommend you spend a couple of days exploring the city and surrounding area. Hire a bike and cycle part of the Great Glen Way, take a boat trip on Loch Ness, enjoy a bus tour of the city or head out to Culloden battlefield – the last hand-to-hand battle fought on British soil.

Day 9

Catch the Citylink bus from Inverness to Fort William and enjoy the many local activities that make this town the outdoor capital of Scotland.

Day 10

Journey on the West Highland line from Fort William to Mallaig. This section of the line is recognised as possibly the greatest rail journey in the World – and for good reason. Frequently used as a film location, you'll glide over the Glenfinnan Viaduct (from *Harry Potter*) and pass by the silver sands of Morar (from *Local Hero*). There is a small museum and teashop at Glenfinnan and as you pass over the viaduct, look to the west and the poignant monument to the Jacobite Rising at the head of Loch Shiel. From Mallaig catch the CalMac ferry to Lochboisdale on South Uist.

Day 11 - 12

Spend a couple of days unwinding and getting back to nature. Arriving on these incredible islands, you really will feel like you have escaped from it all. Discover a different pace of life as you explore untouched coasts and countryside, fascinating history and unique island cultures. Take long strolls along pristine white sands and enjoy sea vistas of beautiful blue waters as far as the eye can see. Or if you're feeling a little more adventurous, explore the ever-changing landscapes on foot or by bike, or take to the water for excellent surfing and kayaking.



Day 13

Take the CalMac ferry back to Oban on the mainland and then take the train south, travelling on the scenic West Highland line to Glasgow. On this section of the line you'll skirt the beautiful Loch Awe, passing the ruins of Kilchurn Castle before heading on through the beautiful Loch Lomond area and along the Clyde Sea Lochs before arriving in the exciting city of Glasgow. Scotland's largest city is a lively, bustling place, distinctive, full of character and world-renowned for the friendliness of its citizens.

Day 14 - 15

Enjoy a couple of days in the city visiting the attractions and enjoying the shopping, nightlife and vibe. Take a day trip to nearby Loch Lomond (Balloch station) or down the Clyde coast and one of the ferry links over the Firth of Clyde to Arran, Rothesay or Dunoon.



Walking trails

Loch Lomond

Catch a train to *Balloch*, hop on a Sweeney's cruise/ water taxi across the Loch to join the West Highland Way at Balmaha or Rowardennan. Walk the Way up to Inversnaid (15 miles from Balmaha, 8 miles from Rowardennan) to catch a Cruise Loch Lomond boat back to Tarbet. Return on the train from *Arrochar & Tarbet*.

West Highland Way (96 miles)

Alight/ join the train at one of the stations near to this classic route; *Milngavie, Crianlarich, Tyndrum Lower, Bridge of Orchy, Rannoch, Corroul and Fort William*.

Crianlarich to Tyndrum (6 miles): The Way is easily accessible to the west of *Crianlarich* station. Join the Way and head north on good paths and tracks for a day of relatively easy walking in an area of outstanding mountain scenery. You can refresh in Tyndrum before rejoining the train at *Tyndrum Lower* station.

Tyndrum to Bridge of Orchy (7 miles): From *Tyndrum Lower*, good paths with moderate ascents and descents take you through stunning Highland landscapes. The Way follows the Old Military Road up Glen Orchy, with views of the Gleann and Horseshoe railway viaducts, to *Bridge of Orchy* which has a hotel and station.

Corroul: Famous for its starring role in the film *Trainspotting*, *Corroul* station is ideally placed for a day's walking on Rannoch Moor. The station hosts a good quality café (open Easter - October) while the nearby youth hostel at Loch Ossian provides accommodation in one of the most remote and stunning landscapes in Europe.

Forth & Clyde and Union towpaths (John Muir Way; c.115 miles)

Alight/ join the train at one of the numerous nearby stations, including *Bowling, Singer, Westerton, Falkirk High, Polmont, Linlithgow and Kingsknowe*.

Partick to Bowling (11 miles): Starting from *Partick* station join the Kelvin Walkway and follow it until it crosses under the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath (signposted) at the Kelvin Aqueduct. Join the towpath and follow the canal to Bowling (or you can shorten the journey as it runs past several stations).

Linlithgow to Falkirk (9 miles): From *Linlithgow* station it is a short distance to the Canal Basin where you join the towpath and head west (signposted). The route is wonderfully rural and a great place to spot a wealth of wildflowers. You will cross the impressive Avon Aqueduct, Scotland's longest and tallest aqueduct on your way to *Polmont*. You can stop here or head on to Falkirk passing through the Falkirk Tunnel, Scotland's longest canal tunnel at 630 metres long, before arriving at *Falkirk High* station.

Falkirk Wheel (4 miles): Alight at *Falkirk High* station and follow the signs to the adjacent Union Canal towpath. The Falkirk Wheel is an easy, two-mile walk through a peaceful, semi-rural habitat with great views across the Forth Valley. There is a good café and toilets at The Wheel. For the more adventurous, you can cross the Forth & Clyde Canal at The Wheel and follow the towpath to The Kelpies (4 miles). From here you can either retrace your steps or catch the bus back to *Falkirk High*.



Fife Coastal Path (117 miles)

From *North Queensferry*, *Kirkcaldy* or *Aberdour* to *Crail*, *St Andrews* and on to *Leuchars*.

North Queensferry to *Burntisland* (11.5 miles): *North Queensferry*, in the shadow of the iconic Forth Rail Bridge, is the start of this pleasant walk along the coast. From the station turn right, then left and head downhill to join the path. The route alternates between rural coastal scenery and settlements including *Aberdour* with its art galleries, harbour and sandy beach. You can stop here and catch a train or continue on to *Burntisland*.

Speyside Way

Walk the six-mile route from *Aviemore* to *Boat of Garten* and catch the *Strathspey Steam Railway* back. A fairly easy day walk through typical *Strathspey* scenery with great views of the *Cairngorm* mountains.

Borders Abbey Way (68 miles)

From *Tweedbank*, head east to *Kelso* or south to *Selkirk* or *Hawick*, and catch the bus back to *Galashiels* Transport Interchange.

Melrose to *Selkirk* (11 miles): *Tweedbank* station is part way between *Melrose* and *Selkirk*. The route runs close to the station, next to the *River Tweed*. You can head east to *Melrose* (c.1 ½ miles) or west to *Selkirk* (c.9 ½ miles). This is a varied section of the Way with open countryside, farmland and riverside. Pass *Abbotsford House* (Sir *Walter Scott*'s home) before rising up to *Cauldshiels Loch* and then across open countryside on an old drove road to *Selkirk*. Catch a bus back to *Galashiels*.

Some more Great Trails:

Southern Upland Way (212 miles): Passes near *Stranraer*, *Stow*, *Galashiels*, *Tweedbank*.

Ayrshire Coastal Path/ Mull of Galloway Trail (100 miles): Passes near *Stranraer*, *Girvan*, *Ayr*, *Troon*, *Ardrossan*, *Largs* and *Wemyss Bay*.

Three Lochs Way (31 miles): *Balloch* to *Inveruglas*. Passes by *Helensburgh Upper*, *Garelochhead*, *Arrochar* & *Tarbet* and *Ardlui*.

Great Glen Way (79 miles): *Fort William* to *Inverness*.

Further contacts/ info:

Cycling routes

<http://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/activities/cycling/national-routes>

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

Walking routes

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/where-to-go/routes-to-explore/scotlands-great-trails/>

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/where-to-go/routes-to-explore/>



Discover Scotland by Rail

Unspoilt landscapes, diverse wildlife, a colourful history and breath-taking scenes. Travel with ScotRail and explore one of the most stunning environments in the world. Your journey is part of the experience as you travel in comfort, taking in the scenery from a unique viewpoint. Whether you're enjoying the tranquility of a long summer evening, marvelling at the autumn colours, taking in the scent of the first flowers of spring, or traversing snow-capped mountains, there's something for everyone – whatever the time of year.

As a testament to the stunning landscape of Scotland, ScotRail's West Highland Line has frequently been voted 'Top Rail Journey in the World' by readers of Wanderlust magazine – beating more exotic rivals such as Peru, Australia and Canada. The Ayr to Stranraer line showcases the best of Rabbin Burns country; the Central Highlands take in the ancient city of Stirling and the haunting beauty of the Cairngorms; and the historic city of Inverness is the gateway to the awe-inspiring North Highlands.

WEST HIGHLAND LINE

Glasgow to Crianlarich

Leaving Glasgow Queen Street station, the train travels uphill towards the Kilpatrick hills, providing impressive views of the Erskine Bridge and down the Clyde Estuary towards the Firth of Clyde. After travelling through the small villages and towns on the Clyde – such as Bowling, Dumbarton (with its celebrated castle), Cardross (where Robert the Bruce lived) and Garelochhead – you will be treated to your first glimpse of the 'Arrochar Alps'.

At Garelochhead station you get stunning panoramic views of the Gare Loch, with Loch Long just starting to come into view. The jetty below is Finnart deep-water terminal where tankers used to discharge their oil to be pumped by pipeline to Grangemouth, 60 miles away to the east.

Approaching Arrochar, look to your left for a great view of the celebrated 'Arrochar Alps', including such craggy peaks as Beinn Narnain, Beinn Ime and the well-loved Cobbler. A few minutes after departing Arrochar and Tarbet station, the world-renowned bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond appear on the right, dominated by the towering presence of Ben Lomond. Across the loch is Inversnaid, an area once roamed by Rob Roy MacGregor, legendary warrior, robber and folk hero. He used to question captives in a nearby cave – and wasn't averse to dipping them in the loch to extract information!

After enjoying the magnificent scenery surrounding Loch Lomond, you will arrive in Crianlarich. Here the train line divides, with the western route turning towards Oban, and the north route continuing up to Fort William and Mallaig.

Crianlarich to Oban

Passing through Tyndrum Lower, the Oban line takes you through beautiful Glen Lochy to Dalmally; and just beyond stands the ruin of Kilchurn Castle, ancient stronghold of Clan Campbell. Around the head of Loch Awe is the Pass of Brander, which skirts the towering bulk of Ben Cruachan – the Hollow Mountain – which conceals a fascinating secret; the mountain caverns house an innovative hydro power scheme inside. And if you show your rail ticket at the entrance of the power station you'll be treated to a free tour. To the left is the River Awe, setting for Sir Walter Scott's romance 'The Highland Widow'.



Nearing Oban now and approaching Connel Ferry, you can see the Falls of Lora, a tidal race at the narrow entrance to Loch Etive. This natural occurrence, caused by a fast-moving tide, produces white rapids that can last for up to five days.

Crianlarich to Fort William/Mallaig

Just beyond Upper Tyndrum, the northbound fork of the West Highland Line navigates the massive sentinels of Beinn Odhar and Beinn Dorain in the unique Horseshoe Curve.

Next stop is Bridge of Orchy - well known to walkers and climbers alike as a landmark hamlet on the West Highland Way. Nearby you'll find the ruin of Achallader Castle, stronghold of the Fletchers. Passing Loch Tulla on the left, the line starts to cross the wild Rannoch Moor, a vast wilderness, where the railway 'floats' on top of the moor on a mattress of tree roots, brushwood and thousands of tons of earth and ashes. To the west you can see the Horseshoe of Munros comprising the Black Mount and away to the east is the distinct peak of Schiehallion.

Arriving at Corrour, you are now 1350 feet above sea level - the highest mainline station in the UK. The station is one of the most remote in Britain (the nearest road is 10 miles away) and is also famous for appearing in the hit film 'Trainspotting' starring Ewan McGregor.

After passing through Tulloch, and shortly before arriving in Roy Bridge, look out for the foaming waters of Monessie Gorge on the left. Once you have passed through Spean Bridge, just before the train pulls into Fort William, the massive bulk of the Nevis Range comes into full view. At just over 4,400ft, Ben Nevis is not only Britain's highest mountain but covers a huge land area with a base circumference of 24 miles.

Soon after departing Fort William, en route to Mallaig, the line crosses part of the Caledonian Canal, Britain's longest inland waterway, which links Fort William with Inverness. Looking to the right you will see Neptune's Staircase, a remarkable series of eight canal locks.

Shortly afterwards, the breath-taking curve of the 100ft-high Glenfinnan Viaduct sweeps you past the head of Loch Shiel and the monument to Bonnie Prince Charlie, marking the spot where he landed and unfurled his standard in 1745 to commence the Jacobite Rebellion. The viaduct itself, famous as the first mass concrete viaduct ever built in the world, is now more notable for appearing in several of the Harry Potter films.

After passing through the beautiful lochs and hills surrounding Lochailort and Beasdale, you arrive in Arisaig – a popular tourist spot due to its spectacular views over Loch Nan Ceall where you can see the islands of Rum and Eigg. Less than 10 minutes later you'll see the spectacular silver sands of Morar, made famous in the 1983 film 'Local Hero' starring Burt Lancaster and Peter Capaldi. You'll also cross Scotland's shortest river, which runs out of our deepest loch - Loch Morar.

As you approach Mallaig take in the breath-taking jagged peaks of Skye.



West Highland Line, by station

Arrochar & Tarbet	North Loch Lomond, cruises, Arrochar Alps, bus connection to mid-Argyll/ Inveraray
Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Bridge of Orchy	Access to West Highland Way
Rannoch	Rannoch Station Tearoom (Seasonal, opens Apr)
Corrour	Restaurant (Apr – Oct), Hostel
Spean Bridge	Old Station restaurant, Commando Monument
Fort William	“Outdoor Capital of the UK”, Ben Nevis, West Highland Way, outdoor activities, winter sports Banavie, Neptune’s Staircase (Caledonian Canal)
Glenfinnan	Museum, Harry Potter viaduct, Monument & Visitor Centre
Morar	Silver sands
Mallaig	Ferries to Skye and the Small Isles
Falls of Cruachan	Cruachan Power Station & Visitor Centre
Oban	“Seafood Capital of Scotland”, ferry to Mull & Iona, festivals & events

Did you know ...

- Corrour is Britain’s highest mainline station and has no road access (other than for 4x4 vehicles) yet has a nightly Sleeper link with London.
- Glenfinnan Viaduct was the world’s first structure to be built of mass concrete. It was built by ‘Concrete’ Bob (Robert McAlpine).
- The Pass of Brander stone signals, between [Dalmally](#) and [Taynuilt](#), are part of a warning system that advises train drivers to exercise caution in the event of a rock-fall. A screen of wires, linked to semaphore signals, was erected on the mountainside and in the event of one or more wires being broken, signals in each direction would be automatically placed at 'danger'.
- When the West Highland Line was built across Rannoch Moor, Britain’s biggest upland bog, the builders had to float the tracks on a mattress of tree roots, brushwood and thousands of tons of earth and ashes.
- Arisaig is the most westerly station in Great Britain, being further west than Penzance!
- Arisaig is also the home of the actual ‘Long John Silver’ on which Robert Louis Stevenson based his character when writing ‘Treasure island’. RLS came from a very long line of Lighthouse Civil Engineers so when his father was visiting the Lochaber area to investigate locations for Northern Lighthouse Board locations, with the young RLS in tow, RLS remembered seeing the very tall John Silver in Arisaig, who apparently stood seven feet above the ground.
- Rannoch Station on the West Highland Line is at the end of Britain’s longest ‘Station Road’, all 18 miles of it, built west from Kinloch Rannoch along the north shore of Loch Rannoch to the new station and to provide access for construction materials to the West Highland Railway when this was being built.
- The Mass Concrete Viaduct on the West Highland Line, Mallaig Extension at Loch Nan Uamh, between Lochailort and Beasdale has a Horse and Cart buried within the structure! Buried alive at the time as extraction and rescue were out of the question! X-ray photographs exist to prove the position of the Horse and Cart.



Discover...

Glasgow

Visit the beautiful Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, where you can see Dali's famous Christ of St. John of the Cross; enjoy the wonders of the Science Centre; shop in the famous Barras market or make a day of it at the Riverside Museum. Kelvingrove Park and Glasgow's Botanic Gardens are great places to enjoy a walk.

Dumbarton Castle

The 'Defender of the Realm' is a unique stronghold built between twin peaks of volcanic rock and has foiled many attacks on Scotland – from Vikings to Nazis during the second World War – during its 1,500 year history. It is also thought that William Wallace may have been held here and legends tell of Merlin visiting in the 6th century.

The Cobbler

Climb one of most popular mountains in Scotland. At 2,900 feet at its summit you'll be impressed by its spectacular panoramic views. It's also a must for rock climbers and fell runners alike.

Oban

Visit Oban Distillery and sample a local 'dram', or visit McCaig's Tower, the folly atop Battery Hill. If history is more your thing then a visit to Dunstaffnage Castle a few miles outside of town would be a great way to spend your day. There are also wonderful seafood stalls on the waterfront that really must be sampled, as well as some excellent restaurants if you fancy something more substantial.

You can also take the ferry to the Inner Hebrides (Mull, Coll, Tiree, to name but a few) or further afield to the Outer Hebrides (Barra and South Uist). Remember to keep your eyes peeled for whales, dolphins and the odd shark as you sail.

West Highland Way (96 miles)

This long-distance trail starts in Milngavie and passes through Mugdock Country Park, before skirting the shores of Loch Lomond by Ben Lomond, crossing Rannoch Moor, past Buachaille Etive Mor to the head of Glencoe. Climb the Devil's Staircase before descending to Loch Leven and finishing in Fort William. There are stations at either end of this famous trail, and the path also passes close to Crianlarich and Tyndrum stations.

Fort William

The outdoor capital of the UK has numerous activities available - try the gondola lift 2,000ft up Aonach Mor, climb Ben Nevis, visit the West Highland Museum or enjoy a dram at the Ben Nevis Whisky distillery.

Glenfinnan

Climb the tower of the Jacobite Monument for a magnificent view down Loch Shiel, visit the Station Museum or eat in style in the restored dining car.

Mallaig

Take the ferry across to Skye and the Small Isles or just enjoy the tranquility of this quiet fishing port.



CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

With convenient, frequent rail links from Glasgow and Edinburgh, and a journey time of less than an hour, you can start your day in historic Stirling.

Stirling – once the nation’s capital – is noted for its castle, the Wallace Monument, the Ochil Hills and the many battles that have littered its chequered past. Such notaries as William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, Mary Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie are all intrinsically linked to Stirling. It’s the site of so much history as well as being the gateway to the Highlands; and prehistoric carvings can still be seen in the south of the city.

Departing Stirling, you’ll cross the river Forth with Stirling Bridge on your left, where, in 1297 The Battle of Stirling Bridge with William Wallace took place. Continuing north, we pass through Bridge of Allan and Dunblane with fabulous views of the Ochil Hills on the right before going on through Gleneagles towards Perth.

HIGHLAND MAIN LINE

Situated on the banks of the River Tay, Perth, sometimes referred to as ‘The Fair City’, has been around since prehistoric times. It’s also where John Knox instigated the Reformation in the mid-16th century, and in 1651 Oliver Cromwell built a fortified citadel on the South Inch after his victory at Dunbar.

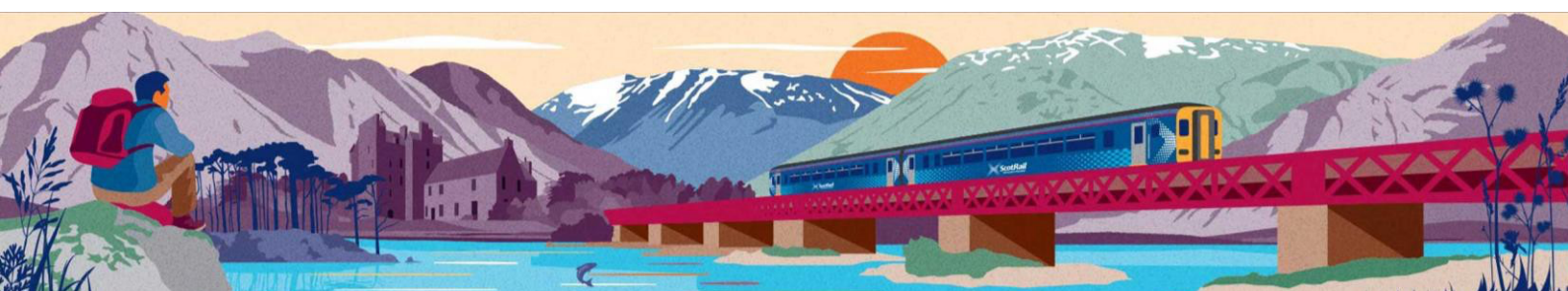
Leaving Perth and heading north to Pitlochry, this pretty town owes its success as a tourist resort to Queen Victoria who visited the area in 1842. The town is the home of two whisky distilleries; Edradour, which is the smallest distillery in Scotland, and Blair Athol Distillery, which dates back to 1798. Also, watch out on the left for the Soldier’s Leap at the Pass of Killiecrankie and at Blair Atholl itself for the Castle which is the home of Britain’s only private army, the Atholl Highlanders.

Travelling further north now, we come to Aviemore which is situated within the Cairngorm National Park. It’s surrounded by beautiful lochs and stunning wildlife and has great views of the Cairngorm Mountain range. It’s also a major ski resort with plenty of outdoor activities on offer.

Heading out of Aviemore, through Carrbridge you’ll shortly arrive in Inverness – the capital of the Highlands.

Highland Main Line, by station (from Perth)

Perth	Perth Museum, Black Watch Museum, Scone Palace
Pitlochry	Festival theatre, Enchanted Forest (Oct/Nov), outdoor activities
Blair Atholl	Blair Castle
Newtonmore	Highland Folk Museum
Kingussie	Highland Wildlife Park
Aviemore	Gateway to Cairngorms, Strathspey Steam Railway, outdoor activities, winter sports
Carrbridge	Landmark Forest Park
Inverness	“Highland Capital”, Inverness Castle (opening 2025), Caledonian Canal, Culloden battlefield and Clava Cairns (c.7miles), Loch Ness (c.7 miles), Fort George (c.12 miles)



Discover...

Stirling Castle

Perched on a rocky outcrop, Stirling Castle and its beautiful gardens are well worth visiting. Dating back to the 12th century, it has been a major player in the Scottish Wars of Independence, which saw the castle seized many times by the English and was the stage for famous battles such as Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn.

The Wallace Monument

Another world-famous landmark in the historic city of Stirling is The National Wallace Monument. Erected in 1869, the monument offers excellent views of the area and is home to the sword of William Wallace.

The Church of the Holy Rude

Founded in 1129 it's reputed to be the only surviving church in the United Kingdom, apart from Westminster Abbey, to have held a coronation. On 29 July 1567 the infant King James VI of Scotland was crowned here and musket shot marks that may have come from Cromwell's troops during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms are still clearly visible on the tower and apse.

The Stone of Destiny

Originally located at Scone just outside Perth, the Stone was used for centuries in the coronation of Scottish kings. The Stone's history is imbued with folklore and legend, the most noteworthy being its 'capture' and removal to Westminster Abbey; being 'blown up' by explosives in 1914; being stolen by Scottish students on Christmas Day 1950 and returned to Scotland; its subsequent return to London and then back again to Edinburgh Castle – all shrouded in so much mystery that the authenticity of the stone is still in question today. You decide for yourself!

The Loch Tummel Fish Ladder, Pitlochry

The hydro-electric dam on Loch Tummel is also well known for its 310-metre salmon ladder. Over 5,000 salmon pass through here annually and can be viewed swimming from weir to weir within the ladder from the underwater viewing station or from the visitor centre.

Aviemore

From this tranquil highland village, you can try skiing, snowboarding, canoeing, ice climbing, mountain biking, gorge-walking ... to name but a few. This is the place to be if you're a thrill-seeker or a lover of the great outdoors.

Or if you aren't feeling quite so adventurous, you can take the CairnGorm funicular railway up to the peak of the mountain for great views across Aviemore and Strathspey.

Inverness

In the heart of the Scottish Highlands, the city of Inverness is a perfect base to experience culture, heritage and stunning natural beauty; home to museums, cutting-edge dining and the Loch Ness monster! Outlander (and history) aficionados will be keen to visit the nearby Culloden battlefield and the 4,000 year-old Clava Cairns. Fort George (c. 12 miles) is also worth a visit and the new Inverness Castle Experience will be opening later in 2025.



NORTH HIGHLANDS

Inverness to Dingwall

Inverness is the most northerly of Britain's cities and lies in the Great Glen. As you leave the city, you'll cross the Caledonian Canal and skirt the Beauly Firth heading towards Muir of Ord on the Black Isle peninsula.

Leaving Muir of Ord travelling toward Dingwall, the massive ridge of Ben Wyvis looms on the left. From its summit, 3428 feet up, you can enjoy magnificent views of seven counties, as well as the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

Far North Line

At Dingwall the line forks, with the Kyle Line bearing left towards mountainous Wester Ross, while the Far North Line continues to Wick & Thurso.

Travelling along the shores of the Cromarty Firth, passing Foulis Castle on the left, the train sweeps on past Teaninich and Dalmore distilleries, and through Alness towards Invergordon, the site of the 1931 Royal Navy mutiny. As you leave Invergordon there's another distillery - this is whisky country after all - and on the right, Nigg Bay.

Passing through Fearn, you're now in Tain, a Royal Burgh on the banks of the Dornoch Firth. Across the Firth is another Royal Burgh – Dornoch, with its cathedral dating back to 1224 and its highly-rated golf course. A mile further north of Tain, the Glenmorangie Distillery is on the left, then Balbair Distillery. On the right, you'll see Skibo Castle, former home of the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

Running alongside the Kyle of Sutherland, look out for the magnificent Carbisdale Castle on the left. The train heads inland now for a spell towards Culrain, Invershin and Lairg but soon enough travels back out towards the sea again through Rogart and Golspie. See if you can spot the 100ft Mannie – the first Duke of Sutherland - atop Ben Bhraggie on the left.

On the right the North Sea spreads out, then, straight out of a fairytale, appears Dunrobin Castle (remember to keep your rail ticket handy for discounted admission to the castle). For centuries the Clan Sutherland have called the castle home, and it commands superb clifftop views of both the gardens and the sea. The castle is also served by its own railway station, which also houses a small railway museum.

Moving north via Brora and Helmsdale (this part of the coast is where Scotland's last wolf was killed in 1745), you will now be approaching Kildonan – referred to as Scotland's Klondike as it was the scene of the Scottish gold rush in 1868. Prospectors came from far and wide to pan for gold in the Kildonan and Suigill streams. People to this day still try their luck at panning for gold here.

After travelling through Forsinard, where the station also doubles as an RSPB reserve, then Altnabreac, one of the most remote stations in Britain, the Highland landscape is slowly transformed into the more lowland Caithness – famous for its stone and decorative glass and crystal. At Georgemas Junction the line



divides: first north for Thurso and the nearby port of Scrabster; then back east for the county town and former herring port of Wick.

Far North Line, by station

Inverness	“Highland Capital”, Inverness Castle (opening 2025), Caledonian Canal, Culloden battlefield and Clava Cairns (c.7miles), Loch Ness (c.7 miles), Fort George (c.12 miles)
Invergordon	Cruise terminal
Dunrobin Castle	Dunrobin Castle
Helmsdale	Timespan Heritage Centre
Forsinard	RSPB Reserve, Flow Country
Thurso	Ferry (Scrabster) to Orkney

Did you know? ...

- Culrain and Invershin are Britain's closest adjoining stations. (Carstairs-Lockerbie is the longest).
- The Duke of Sutherland personally paid for the building of the line between Dunrobin and Helmsdale (c. 14 ½ miles). The Duke’s own engine and two carriages were used for personal journeys to Inverness with the carriages being attached there to southbound trains for more southerly destinations. This right to run their own train was retained by the Sutherland family until railway nationalisation in 1948.

Kyle Line

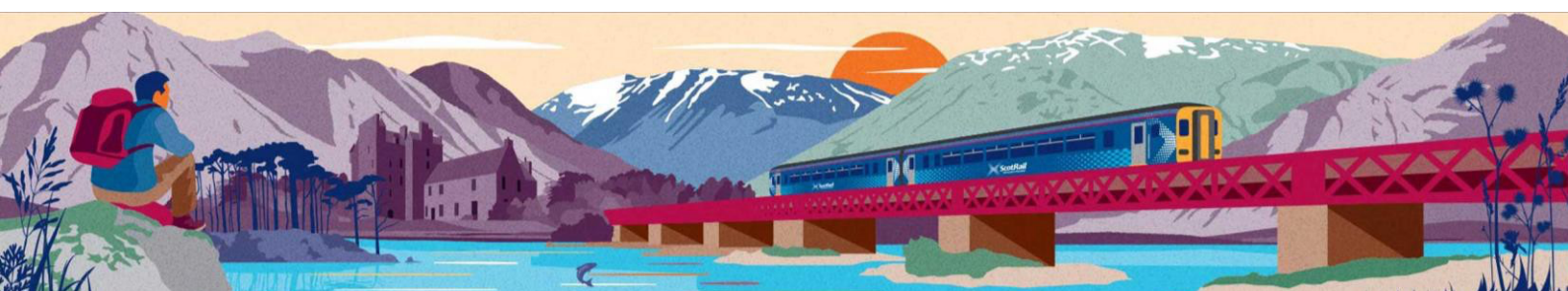
From Dingwall, the line to Wick and Thurso continues north, while the Kyle Line turns west through gentle countryside towards the west coast. On the left, just four miles outside Dingwall, lies Strathpeffer village, which was once a fashionable spa and today is still a picturesque tourist attraction.

Now you’re climbing steeply towards Garve and less gentle country. On the right is Little Wyvis, with Ben Wyvis looming behind. After passing through Garve station the line climbs up to Lochluichart, with its hydro-electric power station and wind farm, and tiny Achanalt. Numerous herds of deer can often be spotted in this area from the train.

Further on, wild mountain scenery accompanies you to Achnashellach (Gaelic for fields of the willows). To the west, you briefly see the Torridon Peaks, which provide superb walks for hikers, birdwatchers, climbers and botanists. The mountains close in then it’s past Loch Gowan and up to Luib Summit, which marks the Drumbain watershed (where the streams and rivers flow west, not east).

Then you’re into the deer-haunted Achnashellach Forest, thick with spruce, willow, birch, oak and holly. In contrast to this beautiful forest, the wide-open space of picturesque Loch Carron shortly opens up before us.

Now the railway reaches the most spectacular section of the journey, hugging the shore beside the towering rock face, twisting and turning past Attadale, where, in past times, Vikings held sporting events and fought ferocious duels.



Presently, Strome Castle can be seen across the water, before winding on, round the rocky shore to Stromeferry, the original terminus of the Skye Railway. Arriving in Plockton, a pretty palm tree lined village with many yachts anchored in the bay, we enjoy one of the most picturesque bays in Scotland, which was also the location for the BBC's 90's drama series 'Hamish Macbeth'.

Then we travel through Drumbuie's crofting area to Duirinish, where the Cuillins of Skye provide a stunning backdrop for the last leg of the journey to Kyle of Lochalsh.

Here you'll see spectacular views over the Inner Sound to the Isles of Raasay, Scalpay, Longay, Pabay, the Crowlin Islands – and, of course, Skye – where it's not unusual to see herds of seals undulating in and out of the glistening water. Then it's past Erbusaig Bay and within minutes you're in Kyle of Lochalsh.

Kyle Line, by station

Inverness	"Highland Capital", Inverness Castle (opening 2025), Caledonian Canal, Culloden battlefield and Clava Cairns (c.7miles), Loch Ness (c.7 miles), Fort George (c.12 miles)
Garve	Walking, Ben Wyvis
Attadale	Attadale House & Gardens
Plockton	Hamish Macbeth, picturesque village, outdoor/ marine activities
Kyle of Lochalsh	Onward connections to Isle of Skye, Eilean Donan Castle

Did you know? ...

- Strathpeffer is the only town in Scotland to be deliberately avoided during the construction of a new railway line. This was to address the intransigence and opposition to the railway by the local landowner resulting in a new station called Achterneed on the Dingwall and Skye Railway (Kyle Line), being constructed some two miles away from the town centre. The local laird was called MacKenzie, whose son, took a completely opposite view and promoted the construction of a direct railway into the town after his Dad passed away.
- Brahan Seer, who was alleged to be able to predict the future, foretold in 1675 that "*The day will come when long strings of carriages without horses shall run between Dingwall and Inverness, and more wonderful still, between Dingwall and the Isle of Skye.*"
- The route of the railway in 1870 was sparsely populated and in fact there were only half a dozen houses in Kyle with its little ferry across Kyle Akin to Skye. The founders raised £350,000 on the purpose of the railway ... "*to promote tourism and convey fish and livestock to markets distant more quickly.*"



Discover...

Inverness

In the heart of the Scottish Highlands, the city of Inverness is a perfect base to experience culture, heritage and stunning natural beauty; home to museums, cutting-edge dining and the Loch Ness monster! Outlander (and history) aficionados will be keen to visit the nearby Culloden battlefield and the 4,000 year-old Clava Cairns. Fort George (c. 12 miles) is also worth a visit and the new Inverness Castle experience will be opening later in 2025.

Whisky

Take the time to visit any one of the quality distilleries in the Cromarty Firth area.

Dunrobin Castle

Take a tour of this fairytale chateau, visit the museum, take in the spectacular gardens or enjoy the falconry demonstrations.

Dunnet Head

Just over 12 miles east of Thurso is Dunnet Head lighthouse – the most northerly point on the British mainland.

Strathpeffer

Less than 5 miles from Dingwall, relax in the tranquil setting of this Victorian spa village, watch the local pipe band and Highland dancers who perform every Saturday during the summer months, or visit the famous Eagle Stone dating back to the 7th century and be beguiled by its shared history with the legend of the Brahan Seer.

Attadale Gardens

Created by Baron Schroder in the late 19th century, these artists' gardens are designed to show off the surrounding natural beauty to its best. Waterfalls, bridges, sculptures, ancient paths past rare trees, water and kitchen gardens are all part of this hidden gem.

The Isle of Skye

Whether you climb the jagged Cuillins, lie on white sand beaches, explore the 500 million years of history or sample some of the best food the Highlands has to offer – Skye has it all. You can also take a ferry to the Outer Hebrides.

Eilean Donan

Just eight miles east of Kyle of Lochalsh is one of Scotland's most famous castles – Eilean Donan. With its land bridge, amazing views up Loch Duich, Loch Alsh and Skye, colourful historical displays, and fully- furnished rooms that really set the scene; it has more to offer than just an interesting past.



ABERDEEN – INVERNESS

Linking Scotland's two northern cities, the Aberdeen-Inverness Line takes us through a landscape of whisky-distilling as it traverses over a hundred miles of lush countryside offering magnificent views and stunning skylines.

Aberdeen – the Oil Capital of Europe – has many things to see and do. Take a leisurely stroll along its long, sandy coastline, visit the Art Gallery and Museum that boasts acquisitions from such illustrious artists as Renoir, Monet and Pissarro, discover the fascinating history of Provost Skene's House, or take the kids to the nearby whimsical 'The Den and the Glen'.

Leaving Aberdeen, we now follow the route of a former canal along the valley of the River Don, one of Scotland's premier salmon rivers before reaching Inverurie, noted for three major battles over the centuries as well as its neolithic stone circles.

Approaching Insch, the distinctive multi-peaked ridge of Bennachie is to the south, and after Insch on the north, you are overlooked by the ruin of Dunnideer Castle. Passing the Ardmore Distillery we see the Tap o'Noth hilltop fort before pausing at the country town of Huntly.

Crossing the River Deveron, we encounter further evidence of distilling with piles of barrels laid out just before Keith (and where the preserved Keith & Dufftown Railway has its own private station). We then pass the Glen Tauchers Distillery before crossing the Spey, Scotland's fastest-flowing river, heading for Elgin. Steeped in history, this Royal Burgh, among other notable events, has had its cathedral sacked by the Wolf of Badenoch, greatly impressed the visiting author Daniel Defoe and, nearby, Macbeth killed Duncan I in 1040.

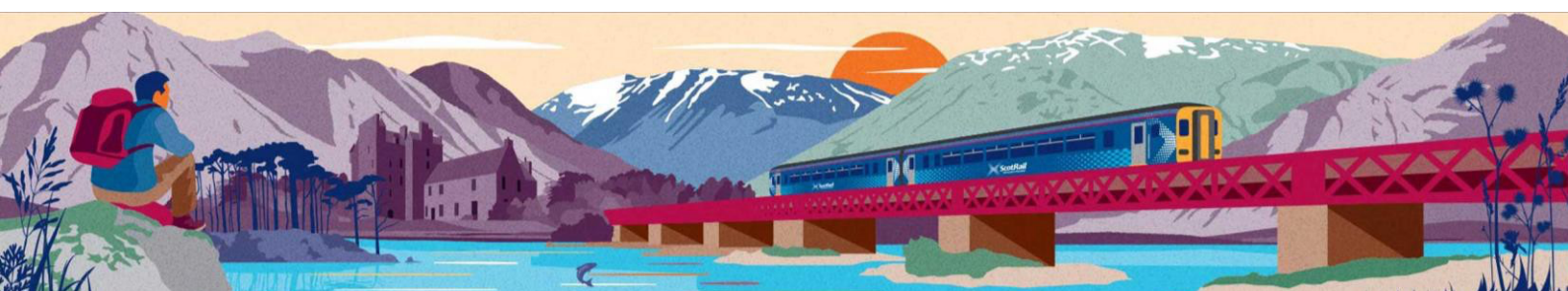
Leaving Elgin, we're now in the wide, dry lands of the Laich o'Moray which grows the barley for distilling. The River Findhorn is crossed just after Forres - famous for its floral sculptures – then we pass through rich, teeming forest to reach the seaside resort of Nairn – an ancient fishing port (the harbour was built by the noted Thomas Telford who also built the Caledonian Canal) and famous golfing destination.

As we depart Nairn, we begin the last leg of the journey, passing the renowned golf course at Castle Stuart to enter the Highland capital of Inverness.

We'll also pass by the new railway station at Inverness Airport. This opened in February 2023 and provides an easy link from the airport into the city.

Aberdeen – Inverness, by station

Aberdeen	Art Gallery and Museum, Provost Skene's House, Maritime Museum
Dyce	Aberdeen Airport
Keith	Keith & Dufftown Heritage Railway
Elgin	Cathedral
Nairn	Sandy beach
Inverness Airport	Inverness Airport
Inverness	"Highland Capital", Inverness Castle (opening 2025), Caledonian Canal, Culloden battlefield and Clava Cairns (c.7miles), Loch Ness (c.7 miles), Fort George (c.12 miles)



Discover...

The Easter Aquhorthies

Visit the ancient recumbent stone circle near Inverurie and steep yourself in the past.

The Den and The Glen

Formerly known as Storybook Glen, this whimsical place has lots for kids to enjoy with an indoor soft play (The Den) and 28-acres of outdoor fantasyland featuring nursery rhyme characters (The Glen). The Glen is also home to magnificent trees and plants, and secret waterfalls.

The House of Mulben

If you're feeling adventurous, you can take up one of the many activities on offer here. Just six miles outside Keith, the House of Mulben offers archery, clay pigeon shooting, trout fishing and quad-biking – among many other pursuits.

Sueno's Stone

Visit this ancient Pictish stele just outside Forres. Over 20ft high, it was erected in the 9th century to commemorate victory against invading Norsemen. Legend has it that this is the site of the crossroads where Macbeth met the three witches.

Nairn

Nairn is host to many cultural events including an International Jazz Festival, annual Book & Arts Festival and stages one of the biggest Highland Games in the north.

Just outside Nairn, is Cawdor Castle – linked to Shakespeare's play Macbeth.



EDINBURGH TO ABERDEEN

Starting in Edinburgh, little is needed by way of an introduction to this amazing city. There is so much on offer from fantastic attractions and historical sights to numerous shops, bars and restaurants. From the cobbled streets of the Old Town to the beautiful Georgian avenues of the New Town, there are so many treasures waiting to be explored. The Royal Mile, winding all the way from Holyrood Palace up to the Castle, is steeped in history; the Edinburgh Festival attracts many visitors from all over the world and the annual Edinburgh Military Tattoo makes the city a huge attraction in the summer months. And of course, the New Year celebrations really are second to none. Edinburgh offers something for everyone, whatever the weather, and whatever the time of year.

Leaving the vibrancy of Edinburgh behind, you'll cross the Forth Railway Bridge – ranked as one of the greatest engineering feats of the Victorian era – as you head north towards Aberdeen.

Following the coast, you'll pass many small stations including Burntisland – a town well known locally for its sandy Blue Flag beach, the 15th century Rossend Castle, and its traditional Summer Fair and Highland Games Day. To the north, a hill called The Binn is a landmark of the Fife coastline; a volcanic plug that rises 632ft above sea level. Continuing on, we arrive at Leuchars - the closest railway station to the golfing paradise and University town of St Andrews. Regular bus services connect Leuchars with St Andrews just over five miles away.

Crossing the Tay Bridge you'll arrive in Dundee, the home of Dennis the Menace and The Broom (look out for many of the Beano and Dandy characters 'running' round the city centre). The city lies on the north bank of the Firth of Tay, which feeds into the North Sea. Today, Dundee is promoted as 'One City, Many Discoveries', in honour of Dundee's history of scientific activities and of the RRS Discovery, which was built in Dundee and is now berthed in the city harbour.

Continuing close to the water's edge, we pass Carnoustie, famed for its golf course and is cited to be where the game was first played in the 16th century; Arbroath, famous for its 'Smokies', a speciality smoked haddock; Montrose with its stunning tidal basin and nature reserve; and Stonehaven, with Dunnottar Castle nearby; before arriving in Aberdeen.

The Royal Burgh of Aberdeen has many nicknames including the Granite City and the Silver City with the Golden Sands. The city has a long, sandy coastline and has long been famous for its outstanding parks and gardens. The city-wide floral displays, which include two million roses, eleven million daffodils and three million crocuses have won the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom 'Best City' award ten times.

Did you know ...

The Tay Bridge is the longest railway bridge in the Commonwealth.



Discover...

Edinburgh

Climb the well-trodden paths up the extinct volcano that is Arthur's Seat for wonderful panoramic views across the city, the Firth of Forth and the Pentland Hills. It has also been linked to King Arthur and a hill fort once occupied the summit. Well worth the effort to get to the top! For a more leisurely stroll, Calton Hill offers fantastic views over the city and surrounding areas.

A must visit in the city is the castle. Built atop the volcanic Castle Rock it dominates the skyline of the city. Habitation of the site dates as far back as the 9th century BC and the first castle proper was built in the 1100s. Within the castle is St Margaret's Chapel, the oldest surviving building in Edinburgh, which dates from the early 12th century. The castle also houses the Scottish National War Memorial and the National War Museum of Scotland. The Tattoo is held here each year and the 'One O'Clock Gun' is fired every day, except on a Sunday.

You can also pay a visit to one of the numerous art galleries or museums, take a tour of the old buried 'closes' after dark, stroll through the Royal Botanic Gardens, enjoy the views from the Camera Obscura on the Royal Mile, or see the 15th century home of John Knox.

Aberdour

This little-known gem on the shores of the Forth sports spectacular views up and down the river. Visit Aberdour Castle or the nearby St Fillan's well-preserved 12th century medieval church or, if the weather's good, relax on the Silver Sands beach.

Dundee

This vibrant city has undergone a transformation in recent years, with the waterfront now looking fantastic. Take time to visit the V&A Design Museum and RRS Discovery, both of which are situated just a two-minute walk from the station.

Dunnottar Castle

Steeped in history, visit the ruins of this vast keep perched atop spectacular cliffs overlooking the North Sea. During the Scottish Wars of Independence, the Scottish Crown Jewels were hidden there. In 1296, King Edward I of England took the castle only for William Wallace to reclaim it a year later. In 1650, Oliver Cromwell sacked the castle to find the Crown Jewels (having destroyed the English Crown Jewels) following an eight-month siege. However, just before the castle fell, the Jewels were smuggled out. The Jewels – known as the Honours of Scotland – are the oldest royal regalia in Britain and are currently on display at Edinburgh Castle.

Aberdeen

For plant-lovers a visit to Duthie Park Winter Gardens – the city's most visited tourist attraction – is a must; there are 600 different species of cacti on display alone! Or treat yourself to a dram in Ma Cameron's, the oldest pub in Aberdeen dating back to 1789. Over the years the pub has witnessed witch trials and burnings as well as meetings between Jacobite sympathisers. Art and architect lovers should really see the 16th century Provost Skene's House with its unusual series of religious paintings, carved plaster ceilings and original furniture – not to mention its incredible history.



BORDERS RAILWAY

Scotland's newest scenic railway opened in September 2015 and is the longest new domestic line to be built in the UK in over a century.

Worldwide interest in Sir Walter Scott is a huge draw, as visitors can follow in the footsteps of the renowned writer, starting in Edinburgh with The Scott Monument and The Writers' Museum, before taking the Borders Railway through the landscapes that inspired his writing. At the end of the journey, there's Abbotsford House, where an award-winning visitor centre tells Scott's remarkable story, from his birth in Edinburgh in 1771 to the cultural legacy he left Scotland and the world.

Departing from Edinburgh Waverley, the Borders Railway opens up a region of Scotland you've only seen on the big screen. The Da Vinci Code brought to life the wonder and mystery of Rosslyn Chapel in Midlothian. The film revealed this breathtaking attraction to the world and the Chapel is just a short taxi ride or cycle from Eskbank station.

From Eskbank you will cross Newbattle Viaduct as you approach Newtongrange and the home of the award-winning National Mining Museum Scotland. Just a short walk from the station, visitors can see the largest steam engine in the country and hear anecdotes from former miners on a guided tour of the pithead.

Beyond Gorebridge you will pass Borthwick Castle and, as the line sweeps into the Scottish Borders, few could fail to be impressed by the breathtaking untouched landscapes as rolling hills, babbling rivers and villages grace each side of the carriage.

Falahill is the highest section of the railway at 275m before dropping down through Stow, passing the historic Old Bridge - built so that parishioners on the other side of the Gala Water would have no excuse for missing church!

On now through the 200m long Bowshank Tunnel, completed in 1848, and into Galashiels where the Transport Interchange allows for a seamless connection with local bus services covering the whole of the Borders region.

Visitors can easily reach Abbotsford House, just minutes from Tweedbank station. A jewel in the crown of Scottish architecture, this luxurious mansion was once home to Sir Walter Scott. Guests can explore the elegant rooms where he hosted literary glitterati such as Oscar Wilde and Charlotte Brontë before discovering his life and legacy in the visitor centre.

Also near Tweedbank, rail passengers can discover Melrose Abbey. Founded by King David I in 1136, the Abbey is famed as the burial place of Robert the Bruce's heart. Melrose is home to the award-winning Trimontium Museum and also world-famous as the birthplace of Rugby 7s. The annual tournament which dates back to 1883, is one of Scotland's great sporting events. Enjoy a walk (around 30 minutes) from Tweedbank station or take advantage of the frequent public transport.

Walkers and cyclists will enjoy the Borders Abbeys Way, a 109-km route passing all the Abbeys plus the historic towns of Hawick and Selkirk, and the beautiful St Cuthbert's Way, one of Scotland's Great Trails, which begins in Melrose. Other unmissable attractions in the area near the railway include Floors Castle, a spectacular stately home with beautiful gardens and grounds. And, of course, visitors



to the Scottish Borders must not leave without experiencing the world-class mountain bike trails at the 7stanes centres such as Newcastleton, Glentress and Innerleithen and the sheer spectacle of the Return to the Ridings which takes place between May and August each year.

Did you know ...

- Edinburgh Waverley is Britain's second-largest station and the only one in the world to be named after a novel.
- Construction required 40 miles (65 km) of single-line track over a distance of 31 miles (50 km), plus 42 new bridges, 95 refurbished bridges and two refurbished tunnels, and 1.5 million tonnes of earth to be moved.

Discover...

Rosslyn Chapel

A six-mile taxi ride from Eskbank, Rosslyn Chapel today attracts visitors from far and wide, drawn by its unique and mysterious carvings and the beauty of its setting.

The chapel took some 40 years to complete and its ornate stonework and mysterious symbolism have inspired and intrigued artists and visitors ever since. Today, there are countless theories, myths and legends associated with the Chapel, many of which are impossible to prove or disprove conclusively.

A state-of-the-art visitor centre tells the Chapel's story – from its 15th century origins, through the Reformation, to the Da Vinci Code.

National Mining Museum

Hop off the train at Newtongrange, just 20 minutes from Edinburgh, to discover the history of Scotland's miners. The award-winning National Mining Museum is based at the Lady Victoria Colliery, one of the best surviving examples of a colliery in Europe. See the largest steam engine in Scotland and hear anecdotes from former miners on a guided tour of the pithead.

Gore Glen Woodland Park

The town of Gorebridge is home to Gore Glen Woodland Park, set on the banks of the Gore Water and River South Esk. Take part in outdoor activities with local rangers or enjoy a stroll through woodland paths to soak up the fresh air and beautiful scenery. You can also follow the path to Arniston House for an exclusive tour of this elegant Georgian mansion (available May to September).

The Great Tapestry of Scotland

The Great Tapestry of Scotland is one of the world's largest community arts projects, hand stitched by 1,000 people from across Scotland. It is made up of 160 linen panels and 300 miles of wool – enough to stretch the entire length of Scotland. The tapestry tells the story of Scotland's history, heritage and culture – from the country's land formation millions of years BC right to 2013 when the last panel was complete – and is on permanent display in its own purpose-built gallery and visitor centre in the town of Galashiels.

Abbotsford House

Discover Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott; one of Scotland's most fascinating places. Created almost 200 years ago on the banks of the River Tweed in the Scottish Borders, Abbotsford was the culmination of Scott's creative ambitions as a writer and the fount of his inspiration. Explore the historic



house and discover a treasure trove of intriguing objects and unusual artefacts which inspired Scott's greatest poems and novels.

Trimontium Museum, Melrose

This 5-star Museum tells the story of the Trimontium Roman fort site (near Newstead lies just east of Melrose), the largest Roman fort and settlement north of Hadrian's Wall and the site of one of the largest concentrations of Roman military-related finds in the British Isles. Trimontium was a permanent garrison three times the size of the largest fort on Hadrian's Wall and for a significant period was the most northerly bastion of the Roman Empire. A glimpse of its complex and often fraught history is revealed by the amazing archaeological finds from the site.

Melrose Abbey

One of the four Borders Abbeys, the ever-magnificent ruin of Melrose Abbey was founded by King David I in 1136 and is famed as the burial place of Robert the Bruce's heart. Nearby, the beautifully kept Harmony Garden and Priorwood Garden are filled with colourful blooms. Enjoy a long walk (around 45 minutes) from Tweedbank Station to visit the ruins or jump on a number H3 or 72 bus and be there in less than 15 minutes.

Borders Abbeys Way

The 109kms (68 miles) Borders Abbeys Way passes close to Tweedbank station and is a circular route linking the historic border towns and villages of Jedburgh, Denholm, Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, St Boswells, Kelso and Jedburgh. Along the way you will visit the four great ruined abbeys in the region in Kelso, Jedburgh, Melrose and Dryburgh.



GLASGOW – AYR/ STRANRAER

Glasgow to Ayr

Travelling on the Glasgow – Ayr/Stranraer Line takes you through some of the most tranquil valleys and serene coastlines in Scotland. Leaving Glasgow Central Station, you'll travel south-westerly passing through Paisley, the largest town in the historic county of Renfrewshire, before continuing south towards Ayr and Girvan. Passing through the woodlands and gentle, rolling hills of Rabbie Burns' homeland on down to Stranraer, this journey has much to offer including superb views of the Firth of Clyde and the Isle of Arran. Also of note is Prestwick International Airport – the only place in Britain Elvis Presley ever visited.

Approaching Ayr, which dates as far back as the early 13th century, you'll see long sandy beaches and the national racecourse. Robert Burns was born just two miles away in a cottage in Alloway on 25th January 1759.

If you're travelling on to Northern Ireland by ferry you will want to alight in Ayr to catch a connecting bus to the ferry terminal at Cairnryan.

Ayr to Stranraer

To reach Stranraer you will need to change trains in Ayr.

Departing Ayr, your next stop is Maybole. This small town has magnificent views of the surrounding hills. Kirkoswald which lies a little west of Maybole, is where Robert Burns studied land surveying and in the local parish churchyard, Douglas Graham and John Davidson (the locals who were the inspiration for Tam o' Shanter and Souter Johnnie) are buried. Also nearby is Culzean Castle, one of the grandest houses in Scotland.

Leaving Maybole, you'll see the 16th century Baltersan Castle on the right and, further on, the Carrick Hills. The large monument to the right is to Sir Charles Fergusson of Kilkerran.

Approaching Girvan, the largest town between Ayr and Stranraer, you will be treated to beautiful views of Ailsa Craig. Travelling from Girvan to Barrhill, you will pass over three viaducts – each with its own interesting history – and reaching Pinwherry you will see Knockdolian, otherwise known as False Ailsa, a hill that, from the sea, is often mistaken for Ailsa Craig.

Passing through Barrhill, home of the Martyrs' tomb and arguably one of the last traditional rural stations in Scotland, the train climbs onwards to Chirmorie, the highest point on the line at 690ft. To the east lies Merrick, the highest mountain in southern Scotland at 2765ft then the line generally falls steeply down into the valley of the Luce where you will see the ancient remains of Glenluce Abbey. The Abbey was built around 1192 and remained in use until the Reformation in 1560.

Stranraer is the final stop on this route and is an attractive little town with narrow winding streets dating back 500 years. The Old Town Hall, built in 1776, houses Stranraer Museum and explores the history of the town's polar explorers, Sir John Ross and his nephew James Clark Ross.



Discover...

Ayr

Visit the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in nearby Alloway and be regaled by tales of his life inside the restored cottage where Robert was born. Children will love the play park themed around Burns' famous works.

Culzean Castle

Set in 200 acres of country park, the first written reference of Culzean dates to the 1400's. In 1569, Sir Thomas Kennedy was given the Culzean estates by his brother, the 4th Earl of Cassillis, and he began building and enlarging the tower house. Over the next few centuries, Culzean Castle transformed from a relatively modest tower house into a neo-classical mansion. Today you can see the result of many years of careful restoration by the National Trust for Scotland.

Crossraguel Abbey

Two miles south of Maybole are the remains of a Clunaic abbey dating back to 1215. It lasted as an ecclesiastic institution until 1569 and is one of the best-preserved abbeys in Scotland today.

Girvan

Take a boat trip to Ailsa Craig – the plug of an ancient, extinct volcano – 10 miles offshore. Today it's a bird sanctuary for gannets and puffins and is also the source of material for curling stones.

Portpatrick

A picturesque port on the Rhins of Galloway, the town has the best sunshine record in Dumfries and Galloway. It lies at the western end of the Southern Upland Way (the long-distance walk through the Borders to Berwickshire) and has a traditional harbour with a pitch and putt course adjacent.

Spectacular Gardens

There are three gardens within easy reach of Stranraer. The nearest is Castle Kennedy, four miles east of Stranraer. Owned by the Earl and Countess of Stair, it's one of the showpieces of Galloway being built around the 17th century. Further east at Dunragit is Glenwhan, one of the best gardens created in recent times. Logan Botanic Garden at Port Logan is unrivalled as the country's most exotic walled garden.

The Mull of Galloway Lighthouse

Marking the southernmost point of Scotland with a light 325ft above sea level, this lighthouse built in 1830 (now automated), is open to visitors between March and October.

Stranraer

Visit the Castle of St. John, built around 1500 by the Adairs of Kilhilt. It has been used as a home, a court, a prison, a military garrison and is currently a museum.



NITH VALLEY

Glasgow to Kilmarnock

Leaving Glasgow Central Station, heading out through the southside of Glasgow, you will pass through many suburban stations, for example, Pollokshaws West – which is adjacent to Pollok Park, the home of the famous Burrell Collection. Heading out of Glasgow, through Renfrewshire and into East Ayrshire, you will travel through Dunlop, famous for its cheese, and Stewarton, famous for its bonnets. Along this stretch of line on a clear day the views of the Isle of Arran and the Mull of Kintyre are breathtaking.

Then, trundling ever southward through rolling pastures filled with cattle, it's past Kilmaurs (with its quaint parish church dating back to 1170 and long history of cutlery, shoe and bonnet-making) heading towards Kilmarnock.

Kilmarnock to Carlisle

Kilmarnock station - with its Italianate tower dominating the south end – is built high above street level and, at one entrance, is adorned by a modern floral clock. Leaving Kilmarnock keep your eyes peeled to the east for the volcanic outcrop Loudon Hill, where Robert the Bruce scored a notable victory over the English in 1307.

Just before Auchinleck the National Burns Memorial can be seen standing on high ground to the east in Mauchline, where Burns lived for four years; and, nearby, Auchinleck House which was once the home of the 18th century author James Boswell – whose contemporaries claim wrote 'the greatest biography written in the English language'.

Approaching New Cumnock, you will catch the first glimpse of the River Nith, which journeys out to the Solway Firth 50 miles away. The upper reaches of the river are fished for sea trout and further downstream the Nith is famous for its salmon.

Between Sanquhar and Dumfries the Nith Valley Line is at its most picturesque and the train crosses the River Nith via the award-winning Portrack Viaduct. Look west from the viaduct into the grounds of Portrack House for a glimpse of the Garden of Cosmic Speculation. To the east you may catch sight of Lowther Hill and its radar station reminiscent of a giant golf ball perched on a tee.

Arriving in Dumfries, you'll see one of Scotland's most handsome stations. Dumfries is immersed in Burns history as The Bard moved here in 1791, living out his final years until his death on 21 July 1796. Leaving Dumfries you'll be presented with the towering sight of Criffel to the south west, which, at 1866ft, dominates the western horizon.

Travelling further south, towards the English border, the Solway Firth comes into view and on a clear day you can see all the way to the Lake District. Passing through Annan, you'll soon come upon the famous Gretna Green (where the station features a wildlife garden) – the site of so many weddings over the Blacksmith's anvil.

Then the English border is crossed and shortly, having crossed the rivers Esk and Eden, you find yourself entering Carlisle under the still-watchful eyes of its 11th century castle.



Did you know ...

Ballochmyle Viaduct carrying the Kilmarnock-Dumfries line across the River Ayr is the highest extant railway viaduct in Britain and for many years its masonry arch was the longest in the world.

The roof of Glasgow Central Station contains 48,000 panes, making it one of the largest in the world.

Discover...

Dunlop

Sample the local 'sweetmilk' cheese - available from the local newsagents.

A little-known Everest fact: Sherpa Tenzing was wearing a balaclava knitted in Stewarton when he scaled Mount Everest with Edmund Hillary in 1953.

Kilmarnock

Discover more about the local area or maybe even your ancestors at Burns Monument Centre or just enjoy the surrounding 30 acres of Kay Park. Maybe you'd prefer The Dick Institute – housing a museum of local and industrial history, natural sciences and two contemporary art galleries, there's something for everyone. Or if grandeur is more your thing, visit the ancient Dean Castle, linked to some of the most notable events in Scottish history.

Dumfries House

Within walking distance of Auchinleck station is Dumfries House, a Palladian mansion designed by the Adam brothers and recently saved - along with all its original Chippendale furniture - for the nation by Prince Charles in 2007. It has been described as an 18th century time-capsule – virtually unchanged for 250 years.

The Southern Upland Way

At Sanquhar you can alight to join the two-hundred-mile walking route between Portpatrick and Cockburnspath. The path visits Castle Kennedy, New Luce, St John's Town of Dalry, Sanquhar, Wanlockhead, St Mary's Loch, Traquair, Galashiels and Longformacus, among others en route. The Sir Walter Scott Way shares part of the route and the Annandale Way also joins briefly at Beattock.

Dumfries

Here, echoes of Burns abound; but a lesser-known literary connection is that this was the childhood home of J M Barrie, author of Peter Pan. A visit to the museum is a fascinating way to spend the day. Situated in an 18th century windmill above the town, you'll find many prehistoric fossils and the Camera Obscura provides captivating panoramic views ranging for miles.

Or if you are a fan of Burns, a pilgrimage to the Burns House, where you can see the chair where he wrote his very last works, is a must. There's also the memorial statue, his favourite drinking place - the Globe Inn, his house at 24 Burns Street, and his mausoleum in St Michael's Churchyard to take in.

Gretna Green

Gretna Green, world-renowned for its 'runaway' weddings, lies just to the north of the railway station. Visit the Old Blacksmiths shop, dating back to 1715 and the site of the symbolic wedding anvil.

