10 day Scotland and Outer Hebrides

Day 1

- We take you round the City of Edinburgh “off the beaten path” with a drive up Arthur’s seat; 823ft of volcano in the heart of Edinburgh. Enjoy panoramic views of the city.

- We then head to the Forth road and rail bridges. The rail bridge (The Forth Bridge), built in 1881 was considered at the time, the greatest feat of engineering in the industrial world.

- Overlooking these landmarks are some of Scotland’s finest stately homes and castles. First we visit Hopetoun House. Arguably the finest stately home in Scotland.

- Blackness Castle is our next stop. This sea side fortress is a text book example of a Scottish castle.

- Next we move onto the Palace of Linlithgow. A ghostly looking shell of its former grand royal days.

- Finally we visit Rosslyn Chapel. Featured in Hollywood blockbuster The Da Vinci Code. With links to the Knights Templar and Built in 1446, this is believed to be the hiding place of the Holy Grail.

- You also have the option to visit Glenkinchie Whisky Distillery on this Edinburgh tour at no extra cost. (Overnight stay in Edinburgh).
Day 2

- We start the day with a drive south to the Scottish borders region. You will enjoy rolling green landscapes with thick woodland and some of the finest Abbeys, stately homes and castles in the country. There are too many to visit in one day but we have selected the very best to give you a great mix of what the area has to offer.

- Our first stop is the beautiful Melrose Abbey, built under King David 1st order in 1136. This pink sandstone building is an exceptional piece of architecture and employed some of the greatest stonemasons of its day.

- Our next stop is Abbotsford house. This grand baronial house was home to Sir Walter Scott. Poet, novelist and the man responsible for reviving Scotland’s national identity after the prohibition period when playing bagpipes, tartan, Gaelic and anything Scottish was banned. The house contains a vast library and very important artefacts from Scotland’s long history.

- We then take you to a beautiful view point which looks over the border countryside known as Scott’s View.

- Our final stop is the largest castle in Scotland; Floors Castle, home to the Duke of Roxburgh. Dating from 1721 and remodelled in the 1830’s this fairy tale castle is considered by architect William Playfair to be his greatest ever commissioned building.

- We return to Edinburgh where we will stop for the evening. (Overnight in Edinburgh)
Day 3

- We depart Edinburgh and our first stop is the mighty Stirling Castle and Wallace Monument. This commanding position at the foot of the Highland boundary has been fought over for thousands of years as a strategic point to control the entire country.

- We continue north into Highland Perthshire where we visit the beautiful Blair Castle home to the Duke of Atholl for over 700 years. This pristine white castle has a large armoury which includes weapons used during the battle of Culloden.

- After a late lunch we will make our way through the Cairngorm National Park, continuing north to the city of Inverness for the evening. (Overnight stop in Inverness)
Day 4

- We start the day with a visit to Culloden battlefield where the British government troops fought the Jacobite army in 1746. The Scots suffered a heavy defeat and this was to be the last ever battle on UK soil. The visitor centre has a state of the art, 360 degree theatre which allows you to immerse yourself in the battle and hear real accounts from those who fought.

- From Culloden we move a few miles along the road to the 4,000 year old Clava Cairn Burial Chambers. This exceptionally well preserved Bronze Age cemetery is one of Scotland’s most sacred prehistoric sites.

- We continue west to Cawdor Castle. The name may be recognisable from William Shakespeare’s Macbeth. Shakespeare himself visited Cawdor Castle. Learn of the Castle’s link to one of Shakespeare’s darkest tragedies.

- After a late lunch we leave Cawdor and drive along the Moray coast to enjoy a tasting session at the famous Benromach Whisky Distillery. This will give you the opportunity to try Speyside single malt. We continue back to Inverness where we finish for the evening. (Overnight in Inverness)
Day 5

- We start the day with a drive north to the port at Ullapool. Here we board the 10.45 ferry to the Isle of Lewis in the beautiful Outer Hebrides. This crossing takes 2hrs 45mins so we can enjoy lunch on the ship then start sightseeing as soon as we land on the island.

- We spend the afternoon visiting sites in the north west of Lewis. We visit the Blackhouses of Arnol to experience island life in the 1700’s. We then continue to the remote Butt of Lewis. This rocky headland is the most northerly point of the Outer Hebrides and often battered by giant Atlantic sea swells. No other landmass stands between the Butt of Lewis and North America to the west.

- Finally we make our way back to Stornoway for the evening. (Overnight Stornoway)
Day 6

- We set off to explore many sites in the central area of Lewis starting with Shawbost and the ancient Norse mill and kiln. These buildings provide a rare glimpse into the island’s Scandinavian past. The nearby town of Shawbost is also famous for producing the world renowned Harris Tweed.

- Our next stop is Dun Carloway Broch. This well preserved building dates from the last century BC.

- A short drive brings us to Gearrannan Village which dates back to the Iron Age. However the houses present today are from the 1600’s

- The next site we visit is the mighty Callanish Stone Circle. Pre dating the Pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge, this 5000 year old wonder is a marvel to explore.

- Our final destination is the island of Great Bernera. Linked to Lewis by bridge, it boasts great beaches, farming crofts and the Iron Age house at Bosta.

- Finally we return to Stornoway for the evening. (Overnight in Stornoway)
Day 7

- We depart from Stornoway and drive south to the Isle of Harris. Here you will discover some of the finest beaches and remote scenery in Scotland.

- Our first stop is the coastal village of Bunabhainneadar. Here you can take in the sites of the North Harris Mountains.

- Next we take the “golden road” around the south/east of the island. This remote area scattered with little villages were only accessible by sea until a road was built at great cost, hence its name.

- We stop at St Clement’s Church near Rodel. Built in 1520 it’s considered to be the grandest medieval building in the Western Isles.

- Next stop is the village of Leverburgh for lunch.

- Our final stop before catching the ferry is a real jewel of the Western Isles. Luskentyre Beach could be mistaken for the Caribbean. The fine white sand and turquoise water is very tempting on a warm summer’s day.

- We catch the 16.00pm ferry to the Isle of Skye where we stop for the evening. (Overnight in Portree, Isle of Skye)
Day 8

- We start with driving a loop round the geological wonder of the Trotternish Peninsular. We visit The Old Man of Storr (featured in the movie Prometheus) then continue to the 200ft Kilt Rock Waterfall.

- We then visit the strange landscape of the Quiraing. This volcanic wonder is one of the most beautiful sites on the island.

- Next we visit another bizarre feature known as the Fairy Glen. It can only be described as a miniature mountain landscape suitable for elves and goblins.

- We continue west across the island to the only remaining inhabited castle on Skye. Home to Clan Macleod for the last 800 years, Dunvegan Castle and gardens is a great place to immerse you in history, boasting the longest continuous habitation of any castle in Scotland.

- You have the choice to include Talisker Distillery and fresh Oyster tasting (Overnight stay on the Isle of Skye)
Day 9

- For our next adventure we make our way to the opposite side of the island. Here we visit the magnificent Cuillin Mountains and take a boat trip on the Bella Jane to spot seals, dolphins and rare birds in the spectacular Loch Coruisk. The road to Elgol is worth the drive alone but the reward at the end of 15 miles on a single track road is one of the best views in Scotland.

- After a stop for lunch we drive around the north side of the Black Cuillin Mountains. Here we pick up the rugged walking trail to the mystical fairy pools at Glenbrittle. This path is not suitable for those with walking difficulties as we have two river crossings to negotiate and roughly 4 miles to walk. Appropriate footwear is essential.

- We then make our way back to your accommodation on the Isle of Skye. (Overnight on the Isle of Skye)
Day 10

- We make our way off the island via the ferry from Armadale to Mallaig. Back of the mainland we enjoy the spectacular views on the road to the isles and visit Glenfinnan Viaduct (featured in Harry Potter Movies and the Jacobite memorial).

- Next stop is one of Scotland’s most desired spots, Glencoe. Towering mountains on all sides and a bloody history make this an unforgettable experience for all who visit.

- We continue south to visit Etive Mor, an extinct super volcano known locally as “the Shepard of Glencoe”. Here we turn off the beaten path into Glen Etive for spectacular scenery and hopefully spot Red Deer in their native habitat.

- We sadly leave the highlands from this point and return to Edinburgh where we say farewell and trust you have enjoyed an unforgettable trip.