



DISCOVERING SCOTLAND



Ron Shive – Discovering Scotland — April 22–May 5, 2023





Trip duration: 14 days






Overview

Apr 22, 2023 – **Depart USA from Raleigh Durham International Airport**






Apr 23, 2023 – **Welcome to Scotland!**

-  Arrival in Edinburgh
-  Panoramic Tour of Edinburgh
-  Summerhall Distillery - Pickering's Gin Distillery Tour
-  Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel



Apr 24, 2023 – **Explore Edinburgh - half day Guide / no coach**

-  Edinburgh Castle
-  Walking tour of Royal mile
-  National Museum of Scotland (self guided)





Apr 25, 2023 – **Edinburgh - Scottish Borders**

-  St Mary's Collegiate Church Haddington
-  Berwick-upon-Tweed
-  The Holy Island of Lindisfarne and Castle (to confirm the tide timings near the time)
-  Bamburgh Castle
-  Cross Keys Hotel, Kelso





Apr 26, 2023 – **Rosslyn chapel - Glasgow**

-  Melrose Abbey
-  Traquair House Brewery
-  Abbotsford House
-  Rosslyn Chapel
-  Holiday Inn Glasgow Theatreland




Apr 27, 2023 – **Glasgow Cathedral - Stirling Castle**

-  Panoramic Tour of Glasgow
-  Glasgow Cathedral
-  Stirling Castle
-  The Church of the Holy Rude







Apr 28, 2023 – **Glasgow - Oban**

-  Boat trip to Inchmahome Priory (To be confirmed later this year)
-  St Conan's Kirk
-  Inverary
-  Oban Bay Hotel & Spa





Apr 29, 2023 - **Isle of Mull and Iona**

-  Ferry from Oban to the Isle of Mull (Single Journey)
-  Isle of Mull
-  Iona Abbey

Apr 30, 2023 - **Glencoe and Isle of Skye**

-  Photo stop -Glencoe valley
-  Glencoe Visitor center
-  Glenfinnan Viaduct
-  Ferry from Mallaig to Armadale
-  Portree, Isle of Skye
-  Royal Hotel Portree






May 01, 2023 - **The Misty island**

-  Kilt Rock & Mealt Falls Viewpoint
-  The Old Man of Storr
-  Dunvegan Castle
-  Talisker Distillery




May 02, 2023 - **Loch Ness - Inverness**

-  Eilean Donan Castle
-  Gin tasting at Fairytale Distillery
-  Inverness - free time
-  Suggestion : Leakey's Bookshop
-  Ben Wyvis Hotel

May 03, 2023 - **Cawdor Castle - Balvenie Distillery**

-  Clava Cairns (to be confirmed if accessible due to weak bridge)
-  Culloden Battlefield
-  Cawdor Castle
-  The Balvenie Distillery - 2 hrs tour
-  The Pitlochry Hydro Hotel

May 04, 2023 - **St Andrews**

-  St Andrews Tour
-  British Golf Museum
-  DoubleTree by Hilton Edinburgh Queensferry Crossing

May 05, 2023 - **Departure**

-  Departure from Edinburgh Airport

Itinerary

Apr 23, 2023 - **Welcome to Scotland!**



Arrival in Edinburgh

📍 Edinburgh Airport -



Meet your dedicated guide and coach at Edinburgh Airport for a start of your tour.



Panoramic Tour of Edinburgh

📍 Edinburgh Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom -



Get acquainted with Edinburgh's most well-loved landmarks during this thrilling panoramic guided tour. You'll sweep past a host of top attractions, both old and new, so have your camera at the ready as you journey through the New Town and its exquisite, world-renowned Georgian architecture found in the iconic St Andrews Square, the bustling George Street, the celebrated Sir Walter Scott Monument and fabulous views of the Old Town skyline from afar. You'll then be whisked up to the old town proper, brimming with history, landmarks and legends. Then amble up the famous Royal Mile (so-called thanks to the wee castle you'll find at the top, and the palace at its foot) before heading for the High Street where you'll find the city's canine hero, Greyfriar's Bobby. By the end of the tour, you'll be familiar with most of the capital's iconic landmarks and be ready to start exploring on foot. One of the best memory-making tours in the city!



Summerhall Distillery - Pickering's Gin Distillery Tour

📍 1 Summerhall Summerhall Distillery, Newington, Edinburgh EH9 1PL, United Kingdom -



Pickering's Gin Distillery Tour

Pickering's Gin Jolly will talk you through our amazing brand story, beginning with a G&T on arrival in our Old Workshop. After marveling at our contraptions and inventions, you'll be shown our unique distilling process in our hand-built distillery. Your tour will finish with a tutored tasting of four award-winning gins from our range.



Apex City of Edinburgh Hotel ★★★★★

📍 61 Grassmarket, Edinburgh, Scotland EH1 2HJ, United Kingdom -



🕒 2 nights 🗨️ 1 👤

🛏️ Bed and breakfast

This chic hotel is ideally located in the heart of Edinburgh's Grassmarket, making it the perfect place to base yourself in the capital. Excellent for business travelers and visitors looking to explore Edinburgh.

All bedrooms are luxurious, with large beds, a 42-inch LCD TV, luxury toiletries and free Wi-Fi. Apex City of Edinburgh guests have access to a swimming pool and fitness center, just a short walk away.



Edinburgh Castle

📍 Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh, United Kingdom -



Playing a seminal role in Scotland's extraordinary history and one-time home of Mary Queen of Scots, King Arthur and King of Scotland, James VI, Edinburgh Castle is one of the most breathtaking and instantly recognizable fortresses in the world today.

Crowning the city atop a 340-million-year-old brooding volcanic crag, its fabled chapels, vaults, museums and very own Scottish Crown Jewels attract over 1.3 million curious visitors every year. Take a slow ramble up the last stretch of the world-famous Royal Mile, through its gated entrance (watched over by legends William Wallace and Robert the Bruce), drink in the spectacular views across the city to the Pentlands and beyond, then head off to explore this truly iconic jewel of Scotland.



Walking tour of Royal mile

📍 The Royal Mile Edinburgh EH1 1SG Royal Mile, United Kingdom -



Edinburgh's Old Town - a UNESCO World Heritage Site and thrilling, a charm-stuffed maze of cobbled streets and jumbled masonry, celebrated landmarks and secluded surprises that will delight and dazzle you in equal measure. Running through its heart, the Castle-crowned Royal Mile, crammed full of 17th century closes, alleys, and wynds frozen in time; the spectacular St Giles Cathedral (look out for the exquisite stained glass windows); its haunting Real Mary King's Close in the city's shadowy underbelly, and the world-famous Grassmarket, one-time execution spot of the city's delinquents, miscreants 'witches'... today home to some of the city's coolest restaurants, curious pubs and spirited characters that call this place home.



National Museum of Scotland (self guided)

📍 Chambers St, Edinburgh, United Kingdom -



There's no place like the utterly spellbinding National Museum of Scotland for exploring the remarkable story of this captivating country. The world-famous to the obscure, and the fascinating to the mysterious, we invite you to step inside and discover the characters and objects that helped shape not just Scotland but the wider world. Exquisite Celtic, Roman and Viking artifacts including the fascinating Lewis chess pieces (as seen in Harry Potter!); the rich histories of compelling characters like Mary Queen of Scots, Robert the Bruce and Bonnie Prince Charlie; breathtaking dinosaur skeletons and Egyptian Mummies, and the utterly contemporary textiles and fashions of Zandra Rhodes, Vivienne Westwood and Jean Muir. Journey into one of richest collections of rare and unique artifacts in the world and be blown away!

Apr 25, 2023 - **Edinburgh - Scottish Borders**



St Mary's Collegiate Church Haddington

📍 United Kingdom -



The **Collegiate Church of St Mary the Virgin** is a Church of Scotland parish church in Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland.

Building work on the church was started in 1380, and further building and rebuilding has taken place up to the present day. It is the longest church in Scotland, at 206 feet from east to west, and is in the early Gothic style.



Berwick-upon-Tweed

📍 Berwick -



The Holy Island of Lindisfarne and Castle (to confirm the tide timings near the time)

📍 Holy Island, United Kingdom -



Today you will be able to visit The Holy Island, rarely referred to by its Anglo-Saxon name of 'Lindisfarne'.

This historic island lies just off the extreme Northeast corner of England near Berwick-upon-Tweed. The small population of just over 160 persons is swelled by the well over 650,000 visitors coming from all over the world every year.

Lindisfarne is internationally famous both for its medieval religious heritage and also its more recent picturesque 16th century castle.

This is a tidal island which is accessed by a paved causeway which is covered by the North Sea twice in every 24-hour period. Severe weather can produce offsets, particularly with strong winds from the North and Northeast. The causeway crossing times are forecasted 'safe' crossing times.

Lindisfarne Castle sits atop the volcanic mound of Beblowe Craig, and it is one of the most distinct and picturesque features of the Island and can be seen for many miles around. You will be able to visit this castle today.

**Itinerary subject to changes depending on tide times as well as weather conditions.



Bamburgh Castle

📍 Bamburgh Castle, United Kingdom -



Home to the Kings of Northumbria this magnificent coastal castle was completely restored in 1900. Collections of china, porcelain, furniture, paintings, arms and armor further enrich the building. It is the home of the Armstrong family, and the building is all in use which maintains a welcoming lived-in atmosphere. A Royal Center by AD547, the rocky outcrop has been occupied since the prehistoric period. The present fortress is the result of restoration and expansion over the centuries, a building of historic and general interest with the public tour passing through the museum room, grand kings hall, cross hall, armory and the Victorian scullery.



Cross Keys Hotel, Kelso ★★★

📍 The Cross Keys Hotel, 36 -



🕒 1 night | 🍷 1 | 👥

Property Location

A stay at Cross Keys Hotel places you in the heart of Kelso, steps from Kelso Abbey and close to Kelso Racecourse. This hotel is within the vicinity of Floors Castle and Smailholm Tower.

Rooms

Stay in one of 28 guestrooms featuring flat-screen televisions. Complimentary wired and wireless Internet access keeps you connected, and digital programming provides entertainment. Private bathrooms with bathtubs or showers feature complimentary toiletries and hair dryers. Conveniences include coffee/tea makers and complimentary bottled water, and housekeeping is provided daily.

Dining

Satisfy your appetite at one of the hotel's two restaurants. Relax with a refreshing drink at one of the two bars/lounges. Full breakfasts are available daily for a fee.



Melrose Abbey

📍 Abbey St, Melrose, United Kingdom -



Nestled at the feet of the Eildon Hills in the valley of Tweed in the Scottish Borders, you'll find Melrose Abbey, resplendent in its coat of red sandstone, and standing proud against a bruised Scottish sky. But these are no ordinary ruins. Famous for being as enlightening as they are fascinating, this 12th-century and historically significant landmark has gathered many an envious accolade over the years: burial site of the fearless heart of Robert the Bruce; target of Oliver Cromwell's staggering military might during the English Civil Wars, and home to the remarkable stone carvings of mythical dragons, demonic gargoyles and intricate foliage that will utterly enchant you, this is one historical odyssey you won't want to miss.

Traquair House Brewery

📍 Traquair House, United Kingdom -



Traquair House Brewery lies in the wing of the house directly underneath the Chapel. It dates back to the early 1700s and was originally a domestic brewery serving the house and the estate. It was disused in the early 1800s but never dismantled. It gradually filled with the family junk until it was completely forgotten.

Peter Maxwell Stuart rediscovered the brewery in the early 1960s and began brewing again as an experiment in 1965 using all the original equipment and fermenting the ales in the original oak tuns, some of which were over 200 years old. Footage has recently come to light showing the 20th Laird brewing with his daughter (the present 21st Lady of Traquair).



Abbotsford House

📍 Melrose, Scotland TD6 9BQ, United Kingdom -



Ivanhoe, Waverley, the Lady of the Lake; Sir Walter Scott certainly knew how to pen a good novel - but he also knew how to build a spectacular house! Standing proud on the banks of the River Tweed, the 19th century Abbotsford House today enjoys the accolade of one the most iconic residences in the world. An enchanting "castle-in-miniature", with its lilliputian towers and faux battlements. It's in this splendid house that you'll stroll through the "Great Scott's" magnificent study, be enchanted by his captivating collection of curiosities, and explore the magnificent library decorated with its intricate and richly carved ceiling. Then top off this fabulous adventure with a ramble through the spectacular colors and heady fragrances of the iconic wall-gardens. As near a place to heaven as you'll find in this breathtaking part of the world!



Rosslyn Chapel

📍 1 Chapel Loan, Roslin, United Kingdom -



Perched atop a tiny hill with a big view, and ready to offer up the secrets made famous by *The Da Vinci Code*. Leave the world you know at the entrance, step through the arched doorway and into the mysterious and otherworldly that is Rosslyn Chapel.

Built in the 15th century for Prince of Orkney, William St Clair, this chapel's exquisitely carved interior so rich in symbolic imagery and deftly cloaked in mystery regularly attracts legions of curious visitors from all over the world, and for good reason. From biblical figures to those of the Knights Templar, flowers to vines, and dozens of representations of the old pagan God, the Green Man, some believe the chapel was intended as some kind of esoteric Templar repository, with as many again believing that the secret vaults below the chapel might be hiding anything from the head of John the Baptist and the Holy Grail to the body of Christ himself. But whatever you discover in this remarkable place, we promise you'll leave wanting to know more.

Holiday Inn Glasgow Theatreland ★★★★★

📍 161 West Nile Street , Glasgow, United Kingdom -



🕒 2 nights 🗨️ 1 👤

Holiday Inn Glasgow - City Ctr Theatreland is situated in the heart of Glasgow City Centre, the perfect location not only for the theatres, but also for the many fantastic Restaurants & Bars that Glasgow has to offer. Dining in the Hotel's French Mediterranean Restaurant is a must. Under the guidance of Executive chef Gerry Sharkey, La Bonne Auberge, was recently awarded an AA Rosette in recognition of the quality of food served and continues to produce dishes only the most passionate and dedicated of chefs can achieve.

Apr 27, 2023 - **Glasgow Cathedral - Stirling Castle**



Panoramic Tour of Glasgow

📍 Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom -



Visit the city of Glasgow today, the largest city in Scotland and full of architectural gems such as the medieval cathedral dedicated to **St. Mungo**, George Square and **Glasgow College of Art**. You will have a sightseeing tour of **Glasgow**.

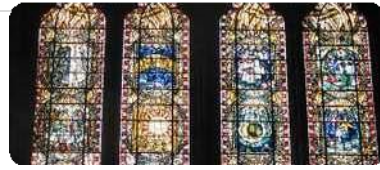
An unmissable visit in this city is its University. The University of Glasgow was founded in the mid-15th century and traditionally accommodated students from wealthy families. Through the installations of the University, Nobel prizes, prime ministers and even illustrious figures in the history of humanity such as the economist Adam Smith and Albert Einstein, who gave some of his first lectures on the theory of relativity in his classrooms, have walked.

You could finish this tour in the Cathedral of St Mungo. The cathedral of Glasgow dates back to the 12th century, and they say that it rises right in the place where the patron saint of the city, St. Mungo, erected his church. After this building, the oldest preserved in the city we can find the necropolis of Glasgow, a Victorian cemetery that populates the hill where you can find fascinating funerary monuments.



Glasgow Cathedral

📍 91 Wishart St, Glasgow, United Kingdom



High Kirk of Glasgow, St Kentigern's or even St Mungo's Cathedral ... whatever you call this near one thousand-year-old landmark, this astonishing example of Scottish Gothic architecture is widely regarded as one of Europe's greatest cathedrals. Extraordinary stained glass windows; burial site of the city's patron saint and founder, St Mungo; pristine white pillars and ceiling of the 16th Century Blackadder Aisle (or chapel) and crypt of St Kentigern. There's plenty here to ignite the imagination and lift the spirit! Roam around the cathedral exploring and you'll wander through Glasgow's colorful and compelling history, from the age-old trades on which she built her fortune, to the military and the law. If you have time, head next door to the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life & Art, an utterly charming haven of peace and tranquility in one of the busiest cities in the world.



Stirling Castle

📍 Castle Esplanade, Stirling, United Kingdom -



Built on the towering volcanic plug that is Castle Hill, and with dazzling views across to the iconic Wallace Monument and wild Highlands beyond, Stirling Castle is one of the most impressive - and important! - castles in Scotland. An unmissable experience, jump back in time to meet the costumed cast of 16th-century castle life; roam the Great Hall and Kitchens; discover the sensational centuries-old sculptures and tapestries - then unwind and explore the simply enchanting gardens. This jewel of Scotland was a favored residence of Stewart kings and queens (Mary Queen of Scots was crowned here), and it's easy to see why. This 'huge brooch clasping Highlands and Lowlands together' is simply delightful!



The Church of the Holy Rude

📍 St John St, Stirling FK8 1ED, United Kingdom -



The Church of the Holy Rude is the medieval parish church of Stirling, Scotland. It is named after the Holy Rood, a relic of the True Cross on which Jesus was crucified. The church was founded in 1129 during the reign of David I, but the earliest part of the present church dates from the 15th century.

Apr 28, 2023 - **Glasgow - Oban**



Boat trip to Inchmahome Priory

📍 Port Of Menteith, United Kingdom -



Although most of the buildings are now ruins, much of the original 13th-century structure remains, and it is now in the care of Historic Scotland, who maintain and preserve it as an important historic site. The priory can be visited by boat, operated by Historic Scotland from the nearby pier at Port of Menteith, from March to September.

Inchmahome Priory is situated on Inchmahome ("Inch" meaning an island), the largest of three islands in the center of Lake of Menteith, close to Aberfoyle, Scotland.

The name "Inchmahome" comes from the Gaelic *Innis MoCholmaig*, meaning Island of St Colmaig.

The priory was founded in 1238 by the Earl of Menteith, Walter Comyn, for a small community of the Augustinian order (the Black Canons). The Comyn family were one of the most powerful in Scotland at the time, and had an imposing country house on Inch Talla, one of the other islands on the Lake of Menteith. There is some evidence that there was a church on the island before the priory was established.

The priory has a long history of receiving many notable guests. King Robert the Bruce visited three times: in 1306, 1308 and 1310. His visits were likely politically motivated, as the first prior had sworn allegiance to Edward I, the English king. In 1358, the future King Robert II also stayed at the priory. In 1547, the priory served as a refuge for Queen Mary, aged four, hidden here for a few weeks following the disastrous defeat of the Scots army at the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh during the Rough Wooing.



St Conan's Kirk

📍 Lochawe, Dalmally PA33 1AQ, United Kingdom -



Inverary

📍 Inveraray, Inveraray, United Kingdom -



Stop for a short stroll along the cobbled street of Inverary.

Overlooking the still waters of Loch Fyne, Inveraray is a traditional county town of Argyll. Established in 1745 by the 3rd Duke of Argyll, head of the powerful Clan Campbell, the town is an absolute set piece of Scottish Georgian architecture.

Key buildings that are worth visiting include the neoclassical church, and Inveraray Jail and courthouse, now an award-winning museum that graphically recounts prison conditions from medieval times up until the 19th century.

A short walk north of the New Town, the neo-Gothic Inveraray Castle remains the family home of the Dukes of Argyll. The castle is set in extensive grounds which contain a number of marked walks, the most strenuous of which rises over 800 feet to the tower atop Dun Na Cuaiche from where there is a spectacular view over the castle, town, and loch.



Oban Bay Hotel & Spa ★★★

📍 Corran Esplanade, Oban, United Kingdom -



🕒 2 nights 🛏 1 👤

Oban Bay Hotel & Spa is a gorgeous hotel situated on the edge of Oban's picturesque esplanade. This three Star Hotel is the perfect place to discover the Scotland's West Coast.

Apr 29, 2023 - **Isle of Mull and Iona**



Ferry from Oban to the Isle of Mull

📍 Oban -



The most direct route to **Mull** is by **ferry from Oban**, which drops you at **Craignure**. The journey takes 46 minutes.



Isle of Mull

📍 Isle of Mull, United Kingdom -



Scotland's fourth-largest island and one of its most popular tourist destinations, the Isle of Mull off the country's west coast will, we promise, take your breath away! From the picture-postcard town of Tobermory to people's favorite, the Ben More (or Big Hill) Munro, dazzling white sands and turquoise waters that decorate the Ross, this island is a treasure trove of visual delights. The perfect stage for exploring everything (and there are lots!) on offer here. Start your journey in the multicolored Tobermory, with the wonderful Mull Museum, the uber-popular Tobermory Distillery, and the marvelous new aquarium for your fill of fun. Then head out to enjoy yourself amongst the island's fabled landscapes. From the magnificent 13th century Duart Castle, ancestral seat of the Maclean clan, to the sublime Calgary Beach, the island's finest stretch of silver-sanded beach, with breathtaking views over to Coll and Tiree, to a spot of whale and dolphin watching with any of the myriad boat tours. On a successful trip you'll spot minke whales, orcas, dolphins, basking sharks, and seals galore. Back on dry land, Mull has a legendary reputation for great food. There are so many great places to eat here.



Iona Abbey

📍 Isle of Iona PA76 6SQ, UK, United Kingdom -



Since St Columba landed on Iona in AD563, founding the monastery that was to become one of Europe's most significant, Iona has been at the heart of Scotland's religious life. What you see today is centuries old, but still heavily reconstructed after many a Viking attack throughout the 6th and 7th centuries. A survey carried out in 1549 recorded a staggering 48 Scottish kings buried here - as well as 8 Norwegian and 4 Irish kings. The extraordinary nave, complete with magnificent Romanesque and Gothic vaults and columns, is a remarkable space with the nearby cloister a breathtaking piece of architecture where you'll find medieval grave slabs rubbing shoulders with more contemporary sculptures, and at its center, a large bronze sculpture The Descent of the Spirit by Lithuanian Sculptor Jacques Lipchitz. Back outside, the museum displays exquisitely carved high crosses alongside other stones, a replica of the beautifully carved St John's Cross, and the mound that marks the burial spot of these 48 kings, including the legendary Macbeth. A truly unique journey through Scotland's ancient religious past.



Photo stop -Glencoe valley

📍 Glencoe, Scotland PH49, Glencoe, United Kingdom -



Created by volcanic eruptions and sculpted by glaciers, Glencoe, one of the world's top travel destinations and undoubtedly one of its most beautiful, has a habit of getting under your skin and into your heart. Prepare to fall in love and to never want to leave this iconic landscape brimming with history, legend, adventure, myth - and loss. The enduring story of the 38 men, women, and children of the MacDonald clan who were murdered in the glen on the 13th February 1692 by a regiment of soldiers whom they had welcomed into their homes, is explored at the terrific Glencoe Visitor Centre, and although no buildings from the time of the massacre survive, you can find the nearby Inverigan ruins sitting on a site where several MacDonalds were killed. Beyond the area's fascinating history, Glencoe is an outdoor adventurer's paradise.



Glencoe Visitor Center

📍 Glencoe, Scotland PH49, Glencoe, United Kingdom -



The eco-friendly visitor center, nestled in a woodland glade, is an essential starting point for your adventures in Glencoe and Glen Etive. Get a taste of the stories that make Glencoe National Nature Reserve so special and plan your visit to the area here.

Our cinema space plays an unmissable short film – *The Glen Revealed* – three times every hour. Narrated by *Game of Thrones* actor Rory McCann, it'll take you on a journey through millions of years and leave you inspired to support the National Trust for Scotland's work here today.

Check out the 'Pioneers of the Peaks' exhibition, which shines a spotlight on the men and women who have pushed the limits of climbing in Glencoe's mountains for over a century. We also celebrate the volunteers who come to their rescue in an emergency, and the avalanche experts who study the snows here every winter.



Glenfinnan Viaduct

📍 A830 Rd, Glenfinnan, United Kingdom -



This giant curving viaduct is an iconic scene for any Harry Potter fans and hopeful Hogwarts attendees. But even if the Hogwarts Express hadn't been shown chugging along the railroad on its way to the famous school of witchcraft and wizardry, this viaduct would still deserve to be an icon in its own right. The setting promises excellent views as the viaduct overlooks the waters of Loch Shiel and the Glenfinnan Monument. Built in the 1890s, this railroad viaduct was the first structure in Britain to be built with mass concrete. It was this innovative building method that allows the overpass to remain in such good shape today. The viaduct was constructed by Robert McAlpine and Sons under the control of Sir Robert McAlpine, who became so fond of constructing in concrete that he was given the nickname "Concrete Bob." The crew built the 100-foot-tall, 416-yard-long bridge along an elegant curve, which lets train passengers look out the window and catch fantastic views of the other end of the train chugging along the tracks against a backdrop of beautiful Highland scenery.



Ferry from Mallaig to Armadale

📍 Armadale -



The crossing between **Mallaig** and **Armadale** is a short one, taking some 25 minutes, and the start and finish points are clearly visible from one another.



Portree, Isle of Skye

📍 Portree, Portree, United Kingdom –



In Portree, the pull of an island steeped in ancient legend mingles with the vitality and spirit of modernity to create this wonderfully intriguing and lively town. A jewel just waiting to be discovered, and brimming with delightful sights and friendly locals. There's plenty here to tickle your fancy and beckon you to explore. The bustling harbor area is the biggest draw, fringed with cliffs and fabulously colorful buildings, and offering breathtaking views out over the sea beyond. You'll also want to stop by the Royal Hotel, once-upon-a-time MacNab's Inn and the very spot where Bonnie Prince Charlie bade farewell for the last time in 1746 to his sweetheart Flora MacDonald. Stroll the town's lesser trodden streets and explore the fabulous craft shops and local foodie haunts you'll find there, then head for the terrific Heritage Centre and Aros Experience, created to bring to life the incredible history, myths and characters of this unforgettable island we promise you'll find it hard to say goodbye to.



Royal Hotel Portree ★★★

📍 Bank Street, United Kingdom –



🕒 2 nights | 🛏️ 1 | 👤

🛏️ Bed and breakfast

This hotel on Skye features stunning sea views and benefits from an outstanding location. Most of standard double/twin rooms have outstanding views of Portree Bay and guests all comment when they enter the rooms what a stunning view they have.

All rooms are en suite, have tea and coffee making facilities and super fast fiber optic broadband. The WiFi is also available in all of public areas including the hotel bar, both restaurants and all the public areas including the residents' lounge.

Kilt Rock & Mealt Falls Viewpoint

May 01, 2023 - **The Misty island**



Two unmissable and intricately connected must-see sights on the Isle of Skye are the legendary Kilt Rock and Mealt Falls, an utterly dizzying showstopper atop the Trotternish Peninsula that will take your breath away! Mealt Falls plunges a whopping 55 meters off the edge of the cliff, plunging into the wild sea below, an impressive spectacle on its own, but add the backdrop of the iconic Kilt Rock, so-called because its sea-weathered basalt columns have shaped themselves like, you guessed, a kilt, and you've got a simply spectacular display of nature at its magical best. There's a small gate that leads to the viewing area on the cliff top, alongside - perhaps oddly! - a few information displays that tell visitors about the dinosaurs that once roamed this beautiful part of the world. Maybe keep an eye out for a footprint or two!



The Old Man of Storr

📍 Trotternish, United Kingdom -



This is probably the most famous walk on the Island and definitely the busiest. The 'Old Man' is a large pinnacle of rock that stands high and can be seen for miles around.

As part of the Trotternish ridge the Storr was created by a massive ancient landslide, leaving one of the most photographed landscapes in the world.



Dunvegan Castle

📍 MacLeod Estate, Dunvegan House, Isle of Skye, Dunvegan, United Kingdom -



On the sleepy shores of Loch MacLeod on the North West of Skye, the island's most famous fortress, Dunvegan Castle, looms majestically over its 42,000 acres of wild and windswept land. Seat of the chief of Clan MacLeod who still own and operate the castle, visitors are invited in to explore what's believed to be Scotland's longest continuously inhabited castle by one family, and there's a veritable treasure trove of fascinating artifacts to discover. From the family portraits, medals and antique furniture to the remarkable Fairy Flag, an exquisite silk banner dating from between the 4th and 7th centuries, to Prince Charlie's waistcoat and a lock of his hair, donated to the clan by Flora MacDonald's granddaughter, a ramble around Dunvegan really is a fascinating journey through one of Scotland's most enduring stories. Don't miss the extraordinary Rory Mor's Drinking Horn, the 16th-century vessel that can hold half a gallon of wine (or whatever the preferred tippie of the evening!). Not one to waste an opportunity to partake of family tradition, John Macleod – the 29th chief - downed the contents in one minute and 57 seconds back in 1956. The gardens here are just as impressive as the castle's interior, a tapestry of woodland glades, shimmering pools, tumbling waterfalls and ornate bridges and islands decorated with rich and diverse plantlife. There's been a lot of work done here over the last four decades to bring these gardens back to their former splendor, and the results are truly spectacular.



Talisker Distillery

📍 Isle of Skye, IV47 8SZ, United Kingdom -



On the western shore of the sleepy Loch Harport in the tiny village of Carbost, Skye's only distillery, the Talisker Distillery, probably has the best views in Scotland - there can't be a better place to sip on a dram! And a very special dram it is too ... the Talisker whiskies are legendary. Often referred to as "the lava of the Cuillins", the fiery tippie produced here is pretty special, distilled in an exceptional craft distillery that operates on an unexpectedly small scale. A guided tour will see you exploring the distillation process which uses barley grown on the Black Isle and malted at Muir of Ord. You'll get a birds-eye view of the magnificent 5 copper stills and the traditional worm tubs that ensure the unique taste of the Talisker whiskies before everyone's favorite part, a taste of their multi-award winning Talisker Single Malt Scotch Whisky in the Visitor Centre.



Eilean Donan Castle

📍 Kyle of Lochalsh, Dornie, United Kingdom -



Situated on a tiny island where three great sea lochs converge, and surrounded by the most breathtaking scenery, you'll find Hollywood hotspot; tourist must-see and fortress extraordinaire, Eilean Donan Castle - the ultimate Scottish legend. Built by the Macrae Clan in the 13th Century to defend against hordes of marauding Vikings, Eilean Donan was razed and rebuilt several times before being partially destroyed during a Jacobite uprising in 1719. It then lay in ruins for the best part of 200 years until a certain Lieutenant Colonel John MacRae-Gilstrap bought the island in 1911, and started work to restore it to its former glory. Climb the steps to the Keep Door; explore the fascinating Billenting Room just choc-full of historic artifacts; furniture by the iconic Chippendale and Sheraton, cannonballs fired during the bombardment of 1719, and a simply fabulous collection of dueling pistols and dirks. There's also a first-rate Visitor Center, where you can learn more about the past events of Eilean Donan and the surrounding area. An unforgettable day in an unforgettable place!



Gin tasting at Fairytale Distillery

📍 Ardelve, Scotland IV40 8DY, Ardelve, United Kingdom -



You could be mistaken for thinking you've stepped into the pages of a Brother's Grimm Fairytale. Hidden away in the Highlands is what must be one of the UK's most quirky and unique settings for a distillery – a village of fairytale cottages, although this isn't a case of make believe. A stone's throw from the world-famous Eilean Donan Castle, The Fairytale Distillery produces a range of Scottish Gin expressions all lovingly crafted in the distillery. With its rusty chimneys, squint slated roof and even a cat on the roof, a nod to the Old Tom style of gin, the distillery is just one of three businesses where visitors can enjoy a bite to eat in the cafe, visit the distillery or pick up some freshly baked bread. There are also gin tasting and gin school experiences available.



Inverness - free time

📍 Inverness Scotland, Inverness, United Kingdom -



Inverness is the capital of the Scottish Highlands.

Inverness really has got all the elements for a memorable city break. Discover its flourishing culinary scene, explore the Victorian Market or Eastgate Shopping Centre for a bit of retail therapy, catch one of the many events at Eden Court and other venues, or take your time to admire art exhibitions in the city's gallery spaces. Just taking a wander through the handsome city center is pretty enjoyable too; appreciate Inverness Castle and St Andrew's Cathedral, then stroll along the banks of the River Ness, crossing the suspension bridge for some peace and relaxation on the Ness Islands.



Suggestion : Leakey's Bookshop

📍 Church St, Inverness IV1 1EY, United Kingdom -



Scotland's largest secondhand bookshop housed in the old Gaelic Church of Inverness, family-owned and run since 1979 selling used and antiquarian books.

The wood burning fire that heats the shop has filled many customers with amazement. If you come to Inverness, Leakey's will be one of the highlights of your visit.



Ben Wyvis Hotel ★★★

📍 Strathpeffer, Strathpeffer, United Kingdom -



🕒 1 night 🛏️ 1 👥

🍽️ Bed and breakfast

Situated in the picturesque spa town of Strathpeffer, the Ben Wyvis is housed in its own extensive grounds. Rooms are attractively furnished, as are the public areas. The surrounding area provides a wealth of activities, including walking, golf, and fishing, as well as visiting the castles and distilleries of the region. An ideal base from which to explore this beautiful area.

May 03, 2023 - **Cawdor Castle - Balvenie Distillery**



Clava Cairns (to be confirmed if accessible due to weak bridge)

📍 Clava Cairns, United Kingdom -



Clava Cairns, one of Scotland's most evocative prehistoric sites. Clava Cairns or the Prehistoric Burial Cairns of Bulnuaran of Clava are a group of three Bronze Age cairns located near Inverness.

It is said that the stone circle here was the inspiration for the Craigh na Dun time portal in the Outlander books.

The Clava Cairns are about 4,000 years old and were built to house the dead. The cemetery remained a sacred place in the landscape for millennia, and provides many clues to the beliefs of Bronze Age society.



Culloden Battlefield

📍 Culloden Moor, Inverness, United Kingdom -



Culloden Moor really must be included in any tour of Scotland, whether or not you're a history buff. The impact of the notorious 1746 Battle of Culloden on the culture and history of the Scottish Highlands - and way beyond - was profound, and when you walk in the footsteps of the characters who were there, you can't fail to feel the uneasy sense of loss and tragedy that still lingers to this day. Walk along these legendary battle lines, see the ancient graves of fallen soldiers and enjoy a true Highland adventure as you explore the fabulously insightful visitors centre which stands next to the battlefield. Must-sees are the spectacular 360-degree battle immersion theatre, which puts you right in the heart of the action - and your heart in your mouth! You'll also uncover the true story of the 1745 Rising, visit the wonderfully restored 18th-century Leanach Cottage, and get hands-on with the terrific interactive displays that reveal the background to the conflict. A remarkable monument and a guide to one of the country's most pivotal days in history.



Cawdor Castle

📍 Cawdor Castle, United Kingdom -



Perched upon the east bank of the steep-sided Allt Dearg valley about five miles southwest of the Nairn, and with 600 years of turbulent history, epic and bloody feuds and a smidgeon of kidnappings and murder, Cawdor Castle has played a remarkable role in Scotland's extraordinary history. Although perhaps best known for the Macbeth connection, the 11th-century events upon which the play is based actually took place many years before this iconic castle was built; however, it does boast an extraordinary tale surrounding its construction. According to legend, the castle is built around a thorn tree, since identified as a holly dating from around 1372, and which you can still see today in the dungeon. Take a wander through the castle's 11 rooms for a thrilling ride through Scottish history ... from the fabulous Drawing room complete with an old leather wheelchair and minstrel gallery, the Tapestry Bedroom with its exquisite wall hangings, the remarkable Dining Room with its majestic stone fireplace and the Old Kitchen which still retains its 19th-century range and assortment of antique cooking utensils. When you're done, the castle's wonderfully manicured grounds are home to three simply stunning gardens, the Cawdor 'Big Wood' - and even a 9-hole golf course.



The Balvenie Distillery - 2 hrs tour

📍 Balvenie Distillery, Dufftown, Keith AB55 4BB, United Kingdom -



Step inside the distillery doors of The Balvenie and discover how we make our whisky. During your 2.5 hour tour you will meet and interact with the Makers of our fine Single Malts; learn about the five rare crafts of whisky making that we proudly maintain; explore the famous warehouse 24; take part in an intimate group tasting with a selection of whiskies from the Distillery.



The Pitlochry Hydro Hotel ★★★

📍 Knockard Road, Pitlochry, United Kingdom -



🕒 1 night 🛏️ 1 👥

🍽️ Bed and breakfast

The Pitlochry Hydro Hotel is a stunning example of original Highland architecture, complete with chic contemporary interiors.

As one of the most popular hotels in Perthshire, the Pitlochry Hydro Hotel offers everything guests need for the ultimate relaxing stay. There's plenty to see and do in the local area, and the hotel itself comes fully equipped with a fitness center, shared lounge, terrace and gardens.



St Andrews Tour

📍 St Andrews, St Andrews, United Kingdom -



Your private guide will give you a personal walking tour of the Cathedral, Castle and University. St Andrew's was once the religious center of Scotland, its Cathedral was once as big as Santiago de Compostela, now left in ruins. As an option you can go to the Cathedral Museum and/or up St. Rules Tower for a panoramic view. After a short walk along the coast you reach St Andrew's castle. This was home of the Bishops and was a key part of the religious conflicts in the 16th century. Underneath you can go in the tunnel mines used to attack and counter attack. St Andrew's University is the oldest in Scotland, dating to 1410-3. It has kept its unique traditions such as raison day and the May dip. We will take a walk around its historic quadrangle and if open visit St Salvator's Chapel. You will have opportunity to visit one of the many golf shops, walk part of the Old Course and visit the British Golf Museum.



British Golf Museum

📍 Bruce Embankment, United Kingdom -



The British Golf Museum just near the Old Course in the famed St Andrews, Scotland. Imaginative exhibitions, hands on activities and stunning multimedia displays bring to life over 500 years of golfing history.



DoubleTree by Hilton Edinburgh Queensferry Crossing ★★★★★

📍 St Margarets Head, North Queensferry, United Kingdom -



🕒 1 night 🗨 1 🧑 2

Situated in a stunning location, on the North banks of the Firth of Forth, this friendly 4-star hotel enjoys some spectacular panoramic views across the Firth and iconic Forth bridges. Queensferry Hotel offers comfortable rooms in a stunning location, where the guests can take in the marvelous panoramic views as they dine in the hotel's restaurant. Whatever one's reason for visiting the area, the magnificent setting of this hotel makes it a good option for an enjoyable stay in North Queensferry.

May 05, 2023 - **Departure**



Departure from Edinburgh Airport



Edinburgh, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Trip Cost

Land Only

\$3,999 – Per Person in Double Room
\$1000 – Single Room Supplement

Make your own flight arrangements and meet us at the hotel by 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 23, 2023.

Land and Air

\$5,753 – Per Person in Double Room
\$1000 – Single Room Supplement

Flights

April 22, UA 2477M – Depart RDU at 4:21 p.m. to EWR (arrive 6:07 p.m.)
April 22, UA 36M – Depart EWR at 8:10 p.m. to EDI (arrive 8:05 a.m. on July 23)
May 5, UA 37H – Depart EDI at 9:40 a.m. to EWR (arrive 12:20 p.m.)
May 5, UA 1819H – Depart EWR at 2:00 p.m. to RDU (arrive 3:41 p.m.)

Deposit

\$1000 Non-Refundable Deposit is due by September 30, 2022. Checks should be made payable to Spiritus Mundi Travel. Mail to: Spiritus Mundi Travel, 532 Circle Drive, Burlington, NC 27215. (If you cancel after October 1, your deposit will be refunded only upon securing another person to travel in your place.) When sending the deposit, designate whether it is for “Land Only” or “Land and Air.”

This trip is limited to the first 20 individuals who make their deposit.

Final Payment

The remaining balance for the trip is due on January 20, 2023.

Hotels to Be Used

- 2 x Edinburgh -Apex City Hotel 4* similar **DBB/BB**
- 1 x Scottish Borders - Cross Keys Hotel, Kelso or similar **DBB** 2 x
- Glasgow - Hampton by Hilton Glasgow - or similar **BB/BB** 2 x
- Oban area - Oban Bay Hotel or similar **DBB/DBB**
- 2 x Isle of Skye - **Royal Hotel - DBB/DBB**
- 1 x Inverness area - Ben Wyvis Hotel, Stratpefer or similar **DBB**
- 1 x Pitlochry area - The Pitlochry Hydro Hotel or similar **DBB**
- 1 x Dunfermline area - DoubleTree by Hilton Queensferry Crossing 4* / BW Keavil House Hotel 4* or similar - **DBB**

Including

All hotels in 3 or 4 star hotels
Daily breakfast at the hotels
9 Dinners at the hotel – 3 Dinners on your own
1 Packed Lunch for Isle of Mull
All transportation by private bus
All ferry tickets
All entrance fees per the itinerary
Sightseeing per the itinerary

Professional guide

Excludes

Lunch - except for 1 day

Drinks

Travel insurance

Personal Expenses

Tips for Driver and Guide

Porterage