

Cairn Stone Adventure Tours

BEST OF SCOTLAND 2010 ITINERARY

(Revised 7-6-09)

- April 28 (Wed) We will board a 5:00 PM United flight in Chicago.
- April 29 (Thur) We will land at London Heathrow at 7:10 AM. After a 90 minute break we will board a BMI (you will love the flight attendants hats) flight to the beautiful, new Turnhouse Airport in Edinburgh. After clearing customs we will be shuttled to our hotel (either the Cairn or the City Centre Holiday Inn) just ½ block from Princess Street and the lovely park. An enchanting, vibrant, and medieval city awaits us after our orientation walk. It will be early to bed in preparation for our big day on Friday.
- April 30 (Fri) After a full Scottish breakfast we will do the fabulous Edinburgh city hike. It is about 8 ½ miles and will take a good part of the day. Highlights include Princess Gardens, Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile, the Grassmarket, a pub stop at Greyfriars Bobby, Cowgate, the Holyrood Castle, Scottish Parliament, Holyrood Park and the breathtaking trail up to Arthur's Seat, Calton Hill, and back to the theatre district for dinner.
- May 1 (Sat) After breakfast and a little more shopping we will board our motorcoach for the scenic ride to Callander and the lovely Trossochs region. Our hike at Ben A'an will take us up a river and through heather to an unforgettable view. Our lodging will be in the nearby quaint village of Callander. We have neat friends there who have set us up with a bed and breakfast experience and a traditional group dinner with entertainment. Sean Connery has been seen horseback riding in the area.
- May 2 (Sun) After a hearty Scottish breakfast we will move further northwest into the beautiful Highlands. En route we will stop in the dramatic Glen Coe region for a breathtaking hike up to Lost Valley, where the Macdonald clan hid their stolen cattle. Shorter hikers can enjoy a hike to the river. We will have a late lunch at the famous Clachaig Inn before moving on to the harbor resort town of Oban and the lovely Royal Hotel.
- May 3 (Mon) After breakfast we will take a beautiful coastal hike just outside the city of Oban. The hike features sea cliffs, ancient ruins, the Dunstaffnage Castle and magnificent sea views. We will have a tour at the Oban Distillery in the afternoon and lots of time to explore this picturesque resort city.
- May 4 (Tue) This will be a big "doubleheader" day as we move on to the Isle of Skye. Our first stop will be 60 miles out of Oban at Glen Nevis near Ft. William. This is the spectacular glen where the most dramatic scenes in Braveheart were filmed. Hikes will range from 1.4 to 7.0 miles before we have lunch along Loch Linnhe in Ft. William. Then it is on to the port city of Mallaig (forty miles to the west) with a stop for an incredible 5K coastal hike along the Silver Sands of Morar. This hike ends at arguably the most beautiful 9 hole golf course in the world. The movie "Local Hero" was filmed here. We will then board a ferry in nearby

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- Mallaig for the 30 minute ride to the magical Isle of Skye. Our lodging for the next two nights will be at the lovely Cuillen Hills Hotel, situated over the harbor in the amazingly beautiful resort city of Portree.
- May 5 (Wed) Following a full Scottish breakfast in the elegant dining room overlooking the harbour, we will hike to the Old Man of Storr. This hike can range from 1 to 10 miles and is a real treat for the eyes. A short afternoon hike of 3 miles is planned that starts on a beautiful coastal trail at the base of our hotel and follows an old trail where golden eagles, seals, otters, and dolphins may be spotted. The trail eventually winds through a moor and up a hill and back to our hotel.
- May 6 (Thur) Following another great breakfast, we will get an early start back to the West Highlands. There will be an optional walk across the Skye Bridge into Kyle of Lochalsh (1.3 miles). Then it is on to Plockton, the Jewel of the Highlands. This small harbor village is famous for its palm trees. We will have a short pre lunch hike and then dine in the village. It is then on to wonderful Beinn Eighe for some more awesome hiking, including a genuine Scotch Pine forest, high munro lakes, beautiful heather, and the most pristine loch in all of Scotland. Following the hike, will re-hydrate with wine and cheese along the beautiful Loch Maree before the short drive to Inverness and our lodging at the Palace Hotel on the River Ness.
- May 7 (Fri) A pre-breakfast hike along the beautiful River Ness trail and the Caledonia Canal will be orchestrated. Then it is on to a beautiful ride along the Great Glen Way. Our Loch Ness experience will be a gorgeous short hike up to the Urganhart Castle and the magnificent view of this famous loch where “Nessie” is alleged to roam. Then it is on to Sterling which is often described as Scotland’s heart and soul. The giant William Wallace Monument (Braveheart) on the way into the city will fire you up! Our lodging is at the really cool Barceló Hotel in the Old Town district at the base of Sterling Castle. A short hike of Old Town and its cobblestone streets is planned before dinner.
- May 8 (Sat) Following breakfast we will depart for the 90 minute ride to the Kingdom of Fife and historic St. Andrews. En route we will do an awesome hike at Alva Glen. It features five waterfalls and some cool grass trails high up in the glen. Then on to St. Andrews for a beautiful trek including the ruins of Scotland’s biggest cathedral, the old town gate, Scotland’s oldest university, the Old Course (the home of golf) and the West Beach where the movie Chariots of Fire was filmed. There will be time for shopping and dining before we return to Sterling.
- May 9 (Sun) Sadly, it is time to leave Bonnie Scotland. It is about an hour’s drive to the Edinburgh airport. Our BMI flight leaves at 11:30 AM and we will arrive back in Chicago at 6:18 PM after a two hour layover in London.