

THE ULTIMATE 10 DAY SCOTLAND ITINERARY

By Yvette Morrissey / [Wayfaring Kiwi](#)

Are you planning a 10 day trip to Scotland? Or perhaps you've already arrived and you're looking for ideas of what you can do here. Bonnie Scotland may be on the small side, but there is plenty to see and do.

It was always my dream to move to Scotland and I am proud to call Edinburgh home. I've managed to explore almost every corner of this incredible country since moving to Edinburgh in 2018; I have travelled Scotland by car, train, bus, ferry and on foot. In 2018 [I walked the length of Scotland](#) which meant I visited some very off-the-beaten path places, many of which I will share with you in my ultimate 10 day Scotland itinerary.

I've even created a printable checklist for you to download for FREE! It includes all the activities I've mentioned in this itinerary, and there's even some space to add your own bucket list items. You'll find download link at the bottom of this article.

This itinerary contains the best of Scotland. You will visit many different cities, towns and villages. Of course, if you prefer slow travel, you don't have to visit every location in this itinerary- simply pick the places that appeal to you the most and spend a little longer in these areas. The reason I've included so many attractions in this itinerary is so that you can choose which ones appeal the most to you. It's not expected that you will get through absolutely everything! Also, if this isn't your first visit to Scotland, you'll find some more off-beat options too.

I've listed the top attractions in each area, with bonus recommendations to visit if you have the time (or want to swap something out from the main attractions). I've also included my personal off-the-beaten-track recommendations if you want to see something a little different. There are plenty of budget friendly activities too.

That's not all- I've also made recommendations on accommodation and the best places to eat and drink!

I'm now excited to bring to you the perfect Scotland itinerary for 10 days of travel.

WHAT CAN YOU SEE WITH 10 DAYS IN SCOTLAND?

If you're planning a Scotland itinerary 10 days should be enough time to see all the main attractions. Scotland is a relatively small country (it has a population of 5.4 million) and it takes just under 7 hours to drive from the bottom to the very top!

In my ultimate 10 day Scotland itinerary you will see ancient castles, cathedral and abbey ruins, highland cattle, medieval buildings. You will wander down cobble stone streets to the sound of bagpipers busking on the streets, and polish off a day of exploring with a hearty Scottish meal washed down with a dram of whisky. You'll see the Scottish coast, visit a Scottish island, and lose your senses in the Scottish Highlands.

Basically, you will experience everything you should experience when visiting Scotland in 10 days- plus some wonderful off-beat options!

CAR HIRE FOR A 10 DAY SCOTLAND ROAD TRIP

In order to see and experience all Scotland has to offer, you will need to hire a car. Scotland does have a great public transport system, however to experience the very best of Scotland [and to complete this itinerary] I highly recommend hiring a car.

Renting a car isn't as cheap as it is in the United States, but it ultimately will save you time and money if you're planning on spending some time here.

So what is the best option for car rental in Scotland?

[Auto Europe](#) is a car rental agency I recommend for many reasons. Firstly, they compare prices from different rental agencies so you can find the vehicle you are looking for for the best price [they operate similarly to Skyscanner, but for car hire]. They also have great deals on car insurance.

For navigation, I rely on Google Maps which I use on my phone. You can also hire navigation for a small price through [Auto Europe](#) too.

You'll drive on average for 3 hours per day on this 10 day scotland road trip itinerary, which is split up throughout the day.

5 TIPS FOR DRIVING IN SCOTLAND

1. In Scotland, we drive on the left hand side of the road.
2. The roads can be narrow in places, and in places such as the Isle of Skye it is not uncommon to see many single lane roads. Always drive keeping in mind there may be someone in your path around each blind turn.
3. The speed limit isn't always obvious in Scotland, but on motorways and dual carriageways it's 70 mph (112 km/h) , single carriageways are 60 mph (96 km/h) and generally 30 mph (48 km/h) in areas with street lighting, unless otherwise specified. For cars towing caravans or trailers and lorries on motorways or dual carriageways, the speed limit is 60 mph (96 km/h).
4. Scotland has a LOT of roundabouts. Always give way to vehicles from your right, and turn left on entering the roundabout.
5. Fill your vehicle up with fuel at ASDA when you can- they usually have the best fuel prices. You can compare fuel prices [here](#).
For more information about driving in Scotland, [Visit Scotland](#) has a good guide.

BOOKING ACCOMMODATION IN SCOTLAND: A MINI GUIDE

Working as a travel blogger and being an ex-travel agent, I know the best way to book reliable accommodation at the cheapest rates. I'm going to share with you the exact process I use when booking accommodation in Scotland.

TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION IN SCOTLAND

Bed and Breakfast: Scotland has a fantastic array of bed and breakfasts. I highly recommend spending at least one night in a bed and breakfast to enjoy real Scottish hospitality!

Hotels: There are plenty of hotel options in the Scottish cities. B&B's tend to be more common in the smaller towns and villages.

Hostels: Scotland has a fabulous network of hostels throughout- with many being located in very remote areas!

Glamping and camping: Recently Scotland has upped her game when it comes to glamping and eco-friendly accommodation. There are also many

campsites, and for the outdoor lovers [spending a night in a bothy](#) is a great experience.

FINDING THE BEST DEALS ON ACCOMMODATION IN SCOTLAND

For hotels I compare prices on [Booking.com](#), [Agoda](#), and [TRVL](#). Beware using other booking engines- sometimes they *may* have cheaper prices, but that doesn't mean they have great customer service if something goes wrong! Always book with a reputable accommodation provider.

For cheap and quirky rooms or apartments I use [Airbnb](#). Airbnb is also great if you're travelling with others as they don't charge per person- just for the entire property. If you haven't signed up already, you can [get \\$33 USD credit for your first booking by clicking here](#).

For hostels I use [Hostelworld](#) [I only book hostels with a rating of 7.5 or higher, if possible].

I also recommend **checking prices directly** with your chosen hotel, hostel or bed and breakfast. Accommodation providers pay fees to booking sites in order to be listed, so booking direct may save you some money.

Another handy trick I recommend is **searching for additional discounts using Honey**. Honey is a fantastic free tool you can download and pin to your browser. It automatically scans the internet for discount codes and applies them to your cart during checkout. Most accommodation providers such as [Booking.com](#) and [Agoda](#) have discount codes flying around the interweb- so definitely try it!

THE VERY BEST OF SCOTLAND ITINERARY 10 DAYS

DAY 1: EXPLORE EDINBURGH

You'll need a full day to experience the thriving capital of Scotland. You'll want to rise early to make the most of your time here- there is plenty to see and do! For those who are planning on spending more time in Edinburgh, I've written a more [comprehensive list of activities here](#).

SCOTLAND TRAVEL TIP

Want to explore Edinburgh with a local and get taken to some of the most photogenic spots in the city? I'm now offering personalised photography tours in Edinburgh and in the Scottish Highlands! These tours are catered to your interests and last between 2-4 hours. Tours start from £60 and you'll even get a professional digital photograph to keep.

[Get in contact](#) for more information.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN EDINBURGH

Hotels: [The Dunstane Houses](#) is traditional and beautiful, or the [Ibis Edinburgh Royal Mile](#) if you'd like to stay in Old Town.

Hostels: [Castle Rock Hostel](#) is a fantastic hostel and is one of Scotland's top hostels [I once lived in this hostel and can confirm it is incredible]; if you're wanting to save your pennies, [Cowgate Tourist Hostel](#) is one of the most affordable hostels in Edinburgh and has self-catering apartments for groups.

Bed and Breakfast: [JustB](#), located on the edge of Edinburgh is hands-down the best bed and breakfast I've stayed in!

THINGS TO DO IN EDINBURGH

EXPLORE THE ROYAL MILE

Begin your day in the historic heart of Edinburgh. The Royal Mile is located in Edinburgh's Old Town- the oldest part of the city which dates back to the 12th century. The Royal Mile connects Edinburgh Castle to Holyrood Palace.

Take in the medieval architecture, explore the hidden passageways (clooses) and snap a photo of the bagpipers dotted along this iconic street. Fun fact: A Scots mile is actual longer than a traditional mile! The Royal Mile measures 1.81 kilometres, but this measurement system hasn't been used since the eighteenth century.

EDINBURGH CASTLE

A visit to Edinburgh isn't complete without exploring Scotland's most famous castle! Located at the top of the Royal Mile, Edinburgh Castle houses the Scottish Crown Jewels, and the Stone of Destiny (on which Scotland's first kings were crowned). It was also where Mary Queen of Scots gave birth to the

future James VI of Scotland and I of England. Make sure you [grab your tickets online in advance](#) to skip the queue!

Want a quieter castle option? Craigmillar Castle has an [incredible history](#) and is a very romantic castle ruin. If you're spending longer in Edinburgh, I highly recommend visiting.

MONEY SAVING TIP

A [National Trust for Scotland](#) membership or a [Historic Scotland](#) membership is a fantastic way to save money if you plan on visiting many of the attractions Scotland has to offer. Each membership grants you free entry to many of Scotland's main attractions, free parking, discounts at selected shops and quarterly magazine!

GRASSMARKET

The Grassmarket was the site where the city's marketplaces were held. Cattle and horses were sold in this area (which is quite hard to believe today!). It was also the site of a bombing during WWI in 1916. It was also once the site of over 100 public executions.

Despite its dark history, the Grassmarket is a great place to grab a bite to eat. Hula on Victoria Street is a fantastic place to stop in for lunch and has plenty of delicious vegan options and juices.

VICTORIA STREET

Another iconic street in Edinburgh, Victoria Street is rumored to be the inspiration behind Diagon Alley in Harry Potter. Harry Potter fan or no, the street still makes for an Instagram worthy snap!

GREYFRIARS KIRKYARD

Harry Potter fans rejoice- Greyfriars Kirkyard is a grave yard that J.K. Rowling sought inspiration for her characters names. Visit the real Tom Riddle's grave, or just enjoy the fascinating architecture of a Scotland grave yard. Just don't visit at night- it's reportedly haunted!

Located a short walk from the Kirkyard on George IV Street is The Elephant House, a restaurant where J.K. Rowling wrote parts of the Harry Potter series.

NEW TOWN FOR DRINKS

During the evening head into New Town for cocktails or a dram of whisky. Rose Street has a great selection of bars and nightclubs. I recommend **The Black Cat for whisky lovers** and **Panda and Sons for cocktails**. The **Picture House** (a Wetherspoons brand) has excellently priced pub food and drinks if you're travelling on a budget.

EDINBURGH BUDGET TIP

If you're saving your pennies, the Cowgate area in Old Town has a selection of cheap pubs and nightclubs. I recommend **The Globe Bar, Sneaky Pete's** and **Stramash** to grab some cheap drinks. **The Three Sisters** is a lively sports bar that is usually thriving that also plays your classic dance tunes.

IF YOU HAVE TIME VISIT...

The Palace of Holyroodhouse

At the lower end of the Royal Mile sits the Palace of Holyroodhouse. This palace is often overlooked in favour of Edinburgh castle, but it is honestly worth a visit. It was the primary residence of Mary Queen of Scots, and the site where her private secretary was murdered by her husband, Lord Darnley (which ultimately led to his undoing). The palace is still very much in use- the Queen stays here for one week in June every year. Her niece, Zara Tindall (nee Phillips) was married here! Don't forget to [purchase your skip the line ticket](#) in advance online.

Dean Village

This leafy and tranquil canal-side village is quite a contrast to the bustling city centre which is located a short 20 minute walk away. The pleasant mixture of colourful flats and 19th century brick buildings on either side of the Water of Leith canal make for a fantastic Instagrammable opportunity- or just simply enjoy the serenity.

Cramond Island

Fancy walking to an island? This tidal island is a [great spot for photographers!](#)

THE BEST OF EDINBURGH

Shopping: Princes Street in New Town has a large collection of department stores. The Royal Mile is filled with shops, but be warned- it is a lot more expensive to shop here compared to elsewhere!

Breakfast: Mimi's Bakehouse in Leith does a fantastic traditional Scottish

breakfast.

Lunch: Hula on Victoria Street is a healthy and delicious juice bar with plenty of vegan and vegetarian lunch options. Their rainbow bowls are heaven!

Dinner: Harmonium is a vegan restaurant in Leith which is to die for (pun intended!).

Live music: Stramash is a large and popular with tourists and locals, and has everything you want and need in a music bar. Local tip: Every Wednesday night there is a free ceilidh starting at 10pm.

Cheap drinks: The Globe Bar on Niddry Street has spirits starting from £1.50!

Nightclub: Bourbon in New Town is a great place to dance until the wee hours of the morning.

Whisky pub: The Bow Bar on Victoria Street is a traditional wee Scottish pub and boasts one of the largest whisky collections in Edinburgh.

Quirky tour: Red Bus Bistro- have afternoon tea on a tour bus!

Haunted Tour: Mercat.

DAY 2: EXPLORE ANCIENT ABBEY'S IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Rise early to explore the area that has some of the richest history in Scotland: the Scottish Borders. You will explore the 4 abbeys in the area, which is also popular cycle route. You'll then spend the night in the cute village of Peebles.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

Hotels: [The Cross Keys Wetherspoon](#) or [Macdonald Cadrona Hotel](#).

Hostels: [Kailzie Bunkhouse](#) is located 10 minutes from Peebles.

Bed and Breakfast: [Whitestone House](#) is a great budget bed and breakfast. Don't be put off by the reviews- I had a lovely stay here. [Tweed View](#) is also a great wee bed and breakfast.

THINGS TO DO IN THE SCOTTISH BORDERS

KELSO ABBEY

Kelso abbey was founded in the 12th century by a community of Tironensian monks. Prince Henry of Scotland (1114–1152) is buried here, as well as several of the Dukes of Roxburghe.

Kelso is also a very pretty town, being the subject for many artists since the late 17th century!

JEDBURGH ABBEY

Jedburgh abbey is a ruined Augustinian abbey. It took over 70 years to build during the 12 century! It is known for its unusual mix of Romanesque and early Gothic architecture.

The town of Jedburgh was home to the Earl of Bothwell, Mary Queen of Scots third husband, who was accused of raping Queen Mary therefore forcing her hand.

Located in Jedburgh is also the **Mary Queen of Scots House**, which is now a museum. It is believed she stayed here when she fell gravely ill after riding 30 miles to Hermitage and back in one day to visit the Earl after he was seriously wounded.

DRYBURGH ABBEY

Dryburgh Abbey is one of the [most romantic locations in Scotland](#). It has some of the best Gothic church architecture in Scotland. It is most famously known for being the chosen burial place for Sir Walter Scott. There is a large tomb within the ruin of the abbey where this famous Scottish writer is buried alongside his family. The pretty River Tweed, is located near the site of the abbey.

MELROSE ABBEY

Founded in 1136, Melrose Abbey is the most spectacular of the four abbeys and is the burial place for some notable Scottish figures. Alexander II of Scotland is buried here, and so is King Robert the Bruce's heart! I recommend having lunch here at either the **Ship Inn** for cheap pub food or the **George & Abottsford Restaurant**.

PEEBLES KIRK

The Peebles Kirk is quite magnificent- and a highly underrated attraction! It is thought to be the burial place of St Nicholas after a stone urn was discovered with his supposed remains. The site was associated with miracles, and Alexander III built the church on the site in the 1200s.

Peebles Kirk is beautiful in late April, early May when the large cherry blossom tree that towers over it is in flower.

WANT TO SAVE TIME?

If you're wanting to save a bit of time and prefer not to visit all four abbeys, I recommend just visiting Jedburgh, Dryburgh and Melrose abbey- or just the latter two.

You may also decide to spend the night in Melrose; it is a charming town with all facilities. [Burt's Hotel](#) is a popular option, located right in the heart of Melrose.

DAY 3: SHOPPING AND SITE-SEEING IN GLASGOW

While Edinburgh may be known for its pretty gothic architecture, Glasgow is known for its slogan 'People Make Glasgow'.

If you're going to spend a night out anywhere in Scotland- it's in Glasgow! This lively city has an abundance of bars and pubs, cheap places to eat, and vibrant nightlife.

You'll have a lie in and make your way to Glasgow, where I recommend getting your shopping fix in the city centre and then donning your finest outfit and heading out for cocktails! Or a whisky- it's up to you!

Or if shopping isn't your thing, there are a range of other interesting things to do.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN GLASGOW

Hotels: The [Ibis Styles](#) in the city centre is cute and quirky, and the [Native Glasgow](#) is lovely too.

Hostels: The [Glasgow Youth Hostel](#).

Bed and Breakfast: [Argyll Guest House](#).

THINGS TO DO IN GLASGOW

VISIT GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

Glasgow University is known for being the inspiration for Hogwarts from Harry Potter. It is a truly spectacular building- make sure you visit the cloisters located inside the main building. Glasgow University also offers some spectacular views across the city.

KELVINGROVE ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Located next to Glasgow University is Kelvin Grove Art Gallery and Museum- which is completely free to enter! Explore the 22 galleries which feature everything from art to Ancient Egypt. They also have changing exhibitions and displays- so there is bound to be something new to see every visit.

ADMIRE THE GLASGOW CITY CENTRE MURAL TRAIL

Glasgow is home to an array of beautiful treet art, sprinkled throughout the city. They have even created a cool [Mural Trail](#) you can follow to ensure you get some great snaps for Instagram. Be sure to check out the Billy Connolly murals, which were created to mark the 75th birthday of the much-loved Glaswegian comedian.

GLASGOW CATHEDRAL & THE NECROPOLIS

Glasgow Cathedral (also known as the High Kirk of Glasgow) was built in the 1100s on the site of where St Mungo's was supposedly buried in AD 612. It's the only cathedral on the Scottish mainland to survive the Reformation of 1560!

Explore the crypt which was built to house tomb of St Mungo, and admire the Blackadder aisle's ceiling, which is studded with brightly painted carved stone bosses.

The Necropolis is a stunning Victorian graveyard located behind Glasgow Cathedral. Over 50,000 people are buried here, and the highest point of the cemetery offers fantastic views of Glasgow!

DAY 4: LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK & GLEN COE

On day four of this Scotland itinerary for 10 days you will begin your adventure into the Scottish Highlands!

You will depart Glasgow in the morning and drive through Scotland's first national park: The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, which shows off some of Scotland's most spectacular scenery. Today will be a leisure drive- there are many lay-bys and car parks you can pull into on your way to Glencoe to take photos and admire the rugged mountains and vast lochs!

The road through to the village of Glencoe takes you through the heart of an ancient volcano.

Glencoe has been used as a filming location for many films, including James Bond's *Skyfall* and the *Harry Potter* movies.

You can easily fit in all the recommendation stops on this itinerary in one day.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN GLEN COE

Hotels: [The Boathouse](#) is an amazing holiday home; [The Ballachulish Hotel](#) or the [Isles of Glencoe Hotel](#) are other fantastic options.

Hostels: [Glencoe Youth Hostel](#).

Bed and Breakfast: [RiverBeds Lodges \(with Hot Tubs!\)](#); [Airbnb](#) have some nice options too.

THINGS TO DO IN THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK + GLENCOE

LOCH LOMOND

You will drive alongside the bonnie Loch Lomond for 25 miles (the total shoreline is 153 km!). As you drive deeper into the highlands, keep your eyes peeled for red deer and oak woodlands. There are many things to do in and around Loch Lomond, so much so that it deserves a post of its own!

STOP AT THE DROVERS INN [FOR LUNCH]

The Drover's Inn is truly wonderful. Walking through the door of the stone building is like walking into another century; the inn was opened in 1705 as a

cattle drovers lodging and the interior seems unchanged. It's got everything you'd picture a traditional Scottish inn should have: tartan carpeting, antique furnishings, live music- even an impressive Taxidermy collection of animals from Scotland's past and present.

Legend has it that Rob Roy MacGregor used to drink here!

ADMIRE THE FALLS OF FALLOCH

Located just 2.2 miles from The Drover's Inn is the Falls of Falloch, a spectacular 30 ft waterfall well worth the short walk.

SNAP A PHOTO OF THE 'WEE WHITE HOOSE' [AKA THE GLENCOE HOUSE]

One of the most iconic images of Glencoe is the 'wee white hoose' that is nestled right in front of one of Scotland's most impressive munros: Buachaille Etive Mor. There is a car park on the A82 you can park your car in [search for "Parking for Buachaille Etive Mor" on Google maps], to wander down to take a snap. Just be cautious of oncoming traffic as this is a popular spot for tourists to stop!

OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO IN GLENCOE

Glen Coe is located in Lochaber, which is known as the Outdoors Capital of Scotland! There are plenty of outdoor activities to satisfy the adventurer, and here are a few of my favourites:

- Go hiking or bag a munro
- Ski, snowboard or go mountain biking at the Glencoe Mountain resort
- Hire a sea kayak on Loch Leven
- Via Ferrata

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK OPTION: DRYMEN AND BALMAHA

Another option is heading around the eastern side of Loch Lomond to Drymen and Balmaha. You could always spend two nights in this area, if you

have the time and have a love for the outdoors, as there are abundant hiking options available here!

Drymen is known for being the end of the first official day of the West Highland Way. It's also known for having the **oldest (registered) pub in Scotland- the Clachan Inn!** Stop off for a pint before continuing on your way to Balmaha, a small village that is a popular picnic spot.

If you keep on driving you could even spend a night at [Rowardennan Lodge Youth Hostel](#)- a fabulous hostel on the bonny banks of Loch Lomond.

DAY 5: DRIVE OVER THE SEA TO THE ISLE OF SKYE

Today you will depart Glencoe and drive to the magical Isle of Skye- one of Scotland's most magnificent islands known for its rugged landscapes, cute fishing villages and medieval castles.

The drive itself takes you through the outdoor capital of Lochaber to Lochalsh, home of the Five Sisters of Kintail, before you drive over the bridge to the Isle of Skye (that's right- there's a bridge so there's no need to catch a boat across!). You'll spend two nights in the main town of Portree, a great base for exploring the island, features harbourside pubs and boutique shops.

On your journey to Scotland's largest island you'll discover two ancient castles. When you arrive on the island, you'll make your way around the east coast of the island to discover its natural beauty.

You will spend two days in the Isle of Skye (the absolute minimal amount of time I recommend) but you are welcome to spend longer here if you want to see everything. I've written a [comprehensive guide to the Isle of Skye here](#).

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN THE ISLE OF SKYE

Hotels: [Breton House](#) or [The Cosy Cabin](#).

Hostels: [Portree Youth Hostel](#) or [Skyewalker Hostel](#).

Bed and Breakfast: [Airbnb](#) have some nice options.

THINGS TO DO IN THE ISLE OF SKYE

SPOT SOME HEILAN' COOS

Highland cows or 'heilan coos' are a Scottish cattle breed known for their long horns and shaggy caramel coats. I've been to Invergarry during the summer, autumn and winter and I always spot this herd in the paddock next to the bridge on the A82 as you drive into Invergarry. It's well worth a quick photo stop! There is a carpark at a hotel which is close to the paddock as you enter the village.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK OPTION: INVERGARRY CASTLE

You'll take a slight detour to visit Invergarry castle next, a beautiful ruin which was once the seat of the Chiefs of the Clan MacDonnell of Glengarry.

Bonnie Prince Charlie visited the castle is said to have rested there after his defeat at Culloden, in 1746. The castle was burned shortly after Culloden by Cumberland's redcoats, however the walls of the castle refused to yield and have survived to this very day!

The castle ruin cannot be entered (it's fenced off) but you can get close enough to look inside the ruin. It is especially beautiful in the spring when the flower bushes are in bloom.

EILEAN DONAN CASTLE

Just before you cross the bridge into Skye, make sure you visit Scotland's most photographed castle. Seat to the MacRae clan, Eilean Donan Castle is often referred to as the most romantic castle in Scotland- with good reason. It is situated on an island at the point where three sea lochs meet and surrounded by stunning scenery. It's appeared in many films, including *Highlander* and *The World is Not Enough*.

Eilean Donan Castle was first inhabited around the 6th century, and the first fortified castle was built in the mid 1200s. The castle was rebuilt many times over the course of Scotland's colourful history. King Robert the Bruce is also rumoured to have sought refuge here while being hunted by the English.

There is a visitors centre and ample parking available next to the castle.

OLD MAN OF STORR

This iconic landmark is closely located north of Portree. You can view the Old Man of Storr from the roadside, or there is a popular [hike to the landmark](#) you can do if you have time. For the adventurous looking for a challenge, there is a hike to the [summit of the Old Man of Storr](#). Be mindful of loose rocks and rock falls- you will need good quality hiking boots to attempt these hikes. Allow 1.5 – 5 hours for each of these hikes. The Old Man of Storr can also be seen from **The Lump in Portree** if you look carefully.

THE QUIRAING

The Quiraing is my favourite location in the Isle of Skye. There is a small car park you can park your car.

Hike along the [hill circuit](#) [3-4 hours] to get the best views; you don't have to do the whole thing, but make sure you walk to **The Prison** and **The Needle**, two impressive rock formations. This location is also the perfect place to watch the sunrise, so you may want to delay visiting until the following day.

Just like the Old Man of Storr, be mindful of rock falls and loose rocks in this area.

SCOTLAND TRAVEL TIP

One thing to be aware of is that many of the roads in the Isle of Skye are single track. During the summer months, Skye can get very busy, so it is worth rising early to avoid peak traffic times or travel in the shoulder-season. When I visited in November, I barely saw one tourist on the road!

DAY 6: EXPLORE THE SLEAT PENINSULA

On your second day in the Isle of Skye, you can choose to relax in the tiny town of Portree or drive around the stunning Sleat Peninsula. Your first day on Skye is spent visiting the common tourist attractions that attract thousands of tourists every year, but on day two it's time to get off the beaten track!

The Sleat Peninsula is a less visited area in Skye, which is surprising considering it is one of the nicest drives I've done in Scotland. Just picture

violet, heather-clad mountains contrasted with glittering blue sea and rocky shorelines and this will give you an indication on just why this drive is one for the bucket list!

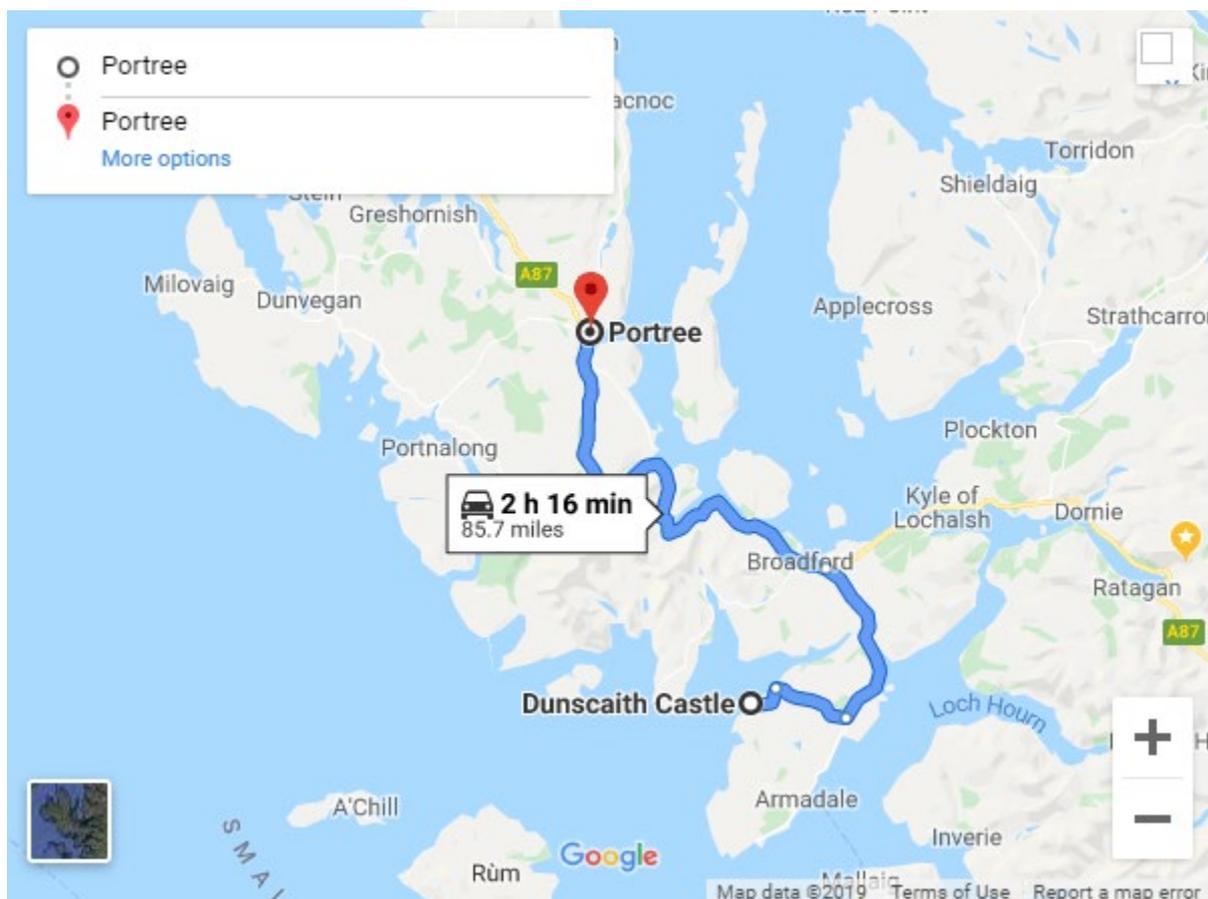
IF YOU DECIDE TO RELAX IN PORTREE...

Go for a walk around **The Lump** and climb the **Apothecary's Tower** for views of the town all the way to the Old Man of Storr. Follow the path back into the town and marvel at the famous **colourful houses along Portree harbour**, and go for a spot of shopping in the town centre.

DRIVING THE SLEAT PENINSULA

The Sleat Peninsula is known as the "garden of Skye" and is home to clan MacDonald of Sleat.

This is the route I recommend taking:



This route will take you through the Cuillen mountains to **Dunscaith Castle**, a ruin that sits on the coast. It once belonged to the Clan MacDonald of Sleat, but some time in the 14th century it was taken from them by the Clan MacLeod. It was held briefly by the MacAskill (allies of the MacLeods) but it was recaptured by the MacDonalds sometime in the 15th century.

There isn't much left of Dunscaith Castle, but the views surround the ruin are simply spectacular! This is certainly an off the beaten track experience you can brag about.

When you return to your car you can continue on in the same direction, as the road eventually loops back to the A851 that will take you to Portree via the A87.

SPENDING MORE TIME IN THE ISLE OF SKYE?

Make sure you visit these locations:

- Neist Point Lighthouse
- Fairy Glen
- Dunvegan Castle
- Talisker Whisky Distillery
- Fairy Pools

DAY 7: VISIT THE HIGHLAND'S CAPITAL CITY INVERNESS

On day 7 you will visit the capital of the highlands: Inverness.

Inverness is located at the north-eastern end of the Great Glen, a line of five lochs extending from Fort William in the south-west and which has historically been an important area of trade and movement through the highlands. It's also known as the gateway to the north west highlands, and is the starting point for the popular North Coast 500.

The drive from Portree to Inverness takes just over 3 hours- but the scenery of the highlands makes up for the long drive. There are many scenic stops along the way to enjoy.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN INVERNESS

Hotels: [Culloden House](#) if you're after luxury (the location of the Jacobite camp the night before the Battle of Culloden in 1476- it's now been transformed into luxury accommodation); [The Wee Lodge](#) is great if you can find availability (so popular it's almost always booked out) or [Kilcumin Guest House](#) is a good medium-budget option.

Hostels: For the budget concious, [Inverness Tourist Hostel](#) is super cheap. [Bazpackers](#) is a great modern hostel..

Bed and Breakfast: [Balcroydon B&B](#) or [Culliss B&B](#)

THINGS TO DO IN INVERNESS

URQUHART CASTLE AND LOCH NESS

It's easy to combine Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness because the castle sits beside the legendary loch! The ruin of Urquhart castle was once a royal castle, and later gifted to clan Grant. The present ruin dates back to the 13th century, although it is speculated that it used to be the fortress of Bridei, King of the Northern Picts! It's also said that St Columba visited Bridei in the 6th century. It's also said Columba converted a Pictish nobleman who was on his deathbed to Christianity!

Loch Ness is "home" to the legendary Loch Ness Monster- or Nessie, as the locals like to call her! While it's unlikely you'll spot Nessie, the views from atop the castle ruin make for a fantastic photo opportunity.

INVERNESS CASTLE

Inverness Castle is a more modern Scottish castle, and by modern I mean it was built in 1836! The red sandstone structure sits on a cliff overlooking River Ness. This is a castle you can just marvel at from the outside- which is definitely its most aesthetically pleasing point.

CLAVA CAIRNS

Clava Cairns is a well-preserved cemetery from the Bronze Age (dating back around 4,000 years!). It consists of a complex of passage graves; ring cairns, kerb cairns and standing stones.

CULLODEN BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield of Culloden is the site of the fateful final Jacobite Uprising in 1746, where supporters of the Bonnie Prince Charlie clashed with the Duke of Cumberland's government troops.

If you're an Outlander fan, you'll recall this was the battle that Claire and Jamie were trying to prevent from happening.

We all know how the battle of Culloden ended on Drumossie Moor; the battle was over within an hour and with 1500-2000 men massacred. It's conclusion led to the Highland Clearances, where the Scottish were stripped of their lands, their tartan, and their culture.

The battle site is free to visit, but the interactive Culloden Visitor Centre is worth paying to see.

DAY 8: CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK & PITLOCHRY

Day 8 is a little more relaxed; you can either tick off some more activities in Inverness in the morning or drive straight to Pitlochry, a charming burgh located at the foot of the Cairngorms National Park.

A good stopping point between Inverness and Pitlochry is Blair Atholl. This does require a slight detour from the A9, but the drive is much more appealing.

Option: If you'd prefer to spend more time in another area, you can cut this day out of the itinerary and spend the extra day somewhere else!

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

Hotels: [McKays Hotel](#) is fabulously located in the centre of the town and has a bar and restaurant downstairs.

Hostels: [Pitlochry Youth Hostel](#).

Bed and Breakfast: [Ellangowan House Bed and Breakfast](#).

THINGS TO DO IN THE CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK & PITLOCHRY

BLAIR CASTLE

Blair Castle, the ancestral home of the Clan Murray, is a vast white castle set amongst a nine acre walled garden. There is a lot to see here: a ruined kirk, peacocks, a red deer park, Highland cattle and the native red squirrel can often be spotted in the garden's trees.

STROLL THROUGH THE TOWN

Pitlochry is a picturesque wee burgh, sitting cosily below Beinn Bhraicigh (Ben Vrackie), the speckled mountain and beside the River Tummel, in some of the most beautiful scenery in Scotland. There is a nice viewpoint of the town from the [Pitlochry Youth Hostel](#).

You'll want to spend your time in Pitlochry by **browsing the shops on the main street**, admire the locks on the **Iron Suspension Bridge**, or going for a walk on one of the **many walking trails**.

You'll spend the evening relaxing in one of the cosy pubs for a warm meal.

OPTION FOR CASTLE AND BOOK LOVERS: ABERFELDY

Located just 25 minutes south-west of Pitlochry is Aberfeldy. There are two main attractions: **Castle Menzies** and the **Birks of Aberfeldy**.

Castle Menzies is a beautiful 16th century castle and is actually located a short drive from Aberfeldy, in Weem. It is the seat of Clan Menzies and the Menzies Baronets and a good Renaissance example of the transition in Scottish castles from earlier rugged Highland fortresses to mansion houses. Bonnie Prince Charlie rested here for two nights on his way to the battle of Culloden in 1746! Visit their [website](#) for opening times.

The **Birks of Aberfeldy** are known for being the namesake of one of Robert Burns' most famous poems. [Walk the path](#) through the birch trees to the **Falls of Moness**– a spectacular waterfall- which inspired the poem during Burns' tour of the Scottish Highlands. The walk takes between 1-2 hours.

There is also an amazing bookstore in Aberfeldy called the **Watermill Bookshop & Cafe**. The downstairs cafe even has a reading area- so if you're a book lover and want to relax with one of their many beautiful books about Scotland, take a break here!

From Aberfeldy, you can drive the longer, more scenic route via Amulree to Crieff [the A826/A822] before turning left onto the A85 to head towards St Andrews.

DAY 9: VISIT THE SEASIDE TOWN OF ST. ANDREWS

St Andrews is known as the "home of golf" because the sport was first played on the Links at The Old Course in St Andrews!

St Andrews is also a lovely town full of interesting things to see and do. It's also the location where Prince William met his future wife, Kate Middleton while they were attending St Andrews University- one of the oldest universities in the world!

The town is easily navigated on foot, and it's possible to see everything St Andrews has to offer in a day, plus have some time to relax.

PLACES TO EAT: Popular with students, The Vic serves great food at an affordable price; **Jannettas Gelateria**– known as the 'Home of gelato' is a must visit; **Greyfriars Inn** and **The Keys Bar** are popular drinking holes.

RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATION IN ST. ANDREWS

Hotels: [The Old Course Hotel](#) is situated in the middle of the oldest golf course in the world, and is a good luxury option. [The Albany](#) is a fantastic budget option.

Hostels: [St. Andrews Tourist Hostel](#) is fantastically priced and right in the heart of St. Andrews.

Bed and Breakfast: [Shangri-la bed and breakfast.](#)

THINGS TO DO IN ST ANDREWS

ST. ANDREWS CATHDRAL

Once Scotland's largest church, St. Andrews Cathedral is the most famous attraction in the town, and perhaps the most famous ruin in Scotland. It is free to explore the ruin and accompanying graveyard. For a small fee, you can climb to the top of St Rule's Tower for spectacular views across St Andrews!

St Mary's Chapel on the Rock is also located nearby; this chapel was built in the late 1300s on the site believed to be the original location of St Andrew's relics. It was ruined after the Scottish Reformation, but the foundations are still visible.

ST. ANDREWS CASTLE

This castle ruin has been by turns a stronghold, palace and a prison. Explore the infamous 'bottle dungeon' and the underground mine and countermine.

It costs £6 per adult to go inside St. Andrews castle- or if you're trying to save money, there is a good view of the castle from the small beach next to the castle!

THE OLD COURSE

The oldest golf course in the world, The Old Course attracts famous golfers and celebrities from all over the world! Each year in fall, amateur celebrities will play against the pros at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. Celebrities that have played in the past include Michael Douglas, Samuel L Jackson, Morgan Freeman, Hugh Grant and Jamie Dornan.

DAY 10: HISTORY AND CULTURE IN STIRLING, FALKIRK & LINLITHGOW

On your final day you'll drive back to Edinburgh but stop off at some important historical attractions on the way. You'll pass through Stirling first, followed by Falkirk and then Linlithgow- birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots!

THINGS TO DO IN STIRLING, FALKIRK & LINLITHGOW

STIRLING CASTLE

Stirling Castle [in Stirling] is one of the largest and most important castles in Scotland, both historically and architecturally. It sits atop a steep crag, which

gives it an excellent defensive position. Here are some fascinating facts about Stirling Castle:

- After the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, Robert the Bruce destroyed Stirling Castle to stop it falling into English hands.
- There is a hole in the wall of the castle that is reputed to have been made so a young Mary Queen of Scots could look at the view of Stirling.
- Several Kings and Queens were crowned at Stirling, including Mary Queen of Scots.
- The oldest football in the world was found in the Palace at Stirling Castle.
- William, the 8th Earl of Douglas, was murdered at Stirling Castle. In 1452, James II had the Earl assassinated and his body was flung from a castle window down into the gardens.

THE KELPIES

The Kelpies are 30-metre-high horse-head sculptures- the largest equine sculptures in the world. They are located in Falkirk, and there is a visitors centre on site.

LINLITHGOW PALACE

Linlithgow Palace is the birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots and James V. It has also been the location for several films and tv series, including *Outlaw King* and *Outlander*.

It was a favoured residence of the Stewart kings and queens from James I onward. There is a fantastic view of Linlithgow Palace from across the loch it sits next to.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK OPTION: CALLENDAR HOUSE

If you've had your fill of palaces, you can swap Linlithgow Palace for the majestic Callendar House, a mansion that was once home Scotland's most famous noble families. Callendar House has also hosted some very famous Scottish guests, such as Mary Queen of Scots, Oliver Cromwell, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Queen Victoria. The house lies along the line of the Antonine Wall, a Roman fortification which was built in AD 142 (20 years after Hadrian's Wall). If you follow the path that leads from the front of the building out to the road,

you will see the ditch which ran along the northern side of the wall. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Interesting facts:

- The tree that sits on a mound of earth to the west of the entrance has some 60 bodies buried beneath it!
- The marriage agreement between Mary, Queen of Scots and Francis II was signed here.
- Lady Anne Livingston (a Jacobite) hosted and distracted the general of the English army while Bonnie Prince Charlie's army approached and took the English army by surprise, which led to the victory of the Battle of Falkirk Muir.

CONCLUSION:

There is a lot to squeeze into this 10-day itinerary so don't feel the pressure to tick everything off. You can also extend this itinerary by a few days if you so desire.

It's best to pick 2-3 attractions in each area, and visit those, and then plan to visit whatever you missed on your next trip to Scotland!

If you have any questions about planning a trip to Scotland, why not join my [Scotland Travel Tips group](#) on Facebook?