



A Scottish Journey 2025

As soon as you step foot in Scotland, you'll be under its spell. Revelling in mystical monsters, snug glens and infamous battles, allow yourself to breathe deeply and take it all in. Bask at the edge of the world where sea meets sky. Wander through centuries-old cities filled with a vibrancy for life. And discover a locally owned whisky room filled with flavours (and their secrets!) beyond your imagination. Wherever the path through Scotland takes you, rest assured the memories made here will last a lifetime.





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Malmaison Edinburgh City @ 18:00

22 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh, EH2
1AY

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Worth noting

Booking an August departure in 2026? You'll be in Edinburgh during The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo – an unforgettable music festival. Applies to 4, 11, 18 and 21 August departures.



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Unearth the magic hidden in Isle of Skye and Isle of Mull
- ✓ Uncover the intricacies behind Scottish whisky culture with a tasting experience
- ✓ Immerse yourself in the captivating history of Culloden Battlefield

More inclusions

- ✓ 9 breakfasts, 5 dinners
- ✓ 9 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- Scotland - GBP



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Edinburgh (Scotland)

Orange glows from low-lit lamps that dot centuries-old houses, leading the path to a stoned castle on top of the hill. Paths smudged with long forgotten footsteps eager to tell their tale. And an array of locally owned stores that have stood the test of time. Edinburgh is the city that hosts our group meet. We'll gather with those we're sharing this journey with, then clink glasses and share stories of our own as we tuck into a welcome meal.

Included today



Accommodation

Malmaison Edinburgh City
(or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

Day 2 | Edinburgh – St Andrews – Cairngorms National Park – Cairngorms Region

This morning we'll wind northwards, passing through the quaint villages of East Neuk where the sea breeze will caress your cheeks with its fresh saltwater scent.

Then: enjoy free time in St Andrews – where young royalty meets golf heritage. Seek out the University of St Andrews, where a certain love story began its *once-upon-a-time*. Polish off your golf facts with a venture around the British Golf Museum – home to a rich and colourful history that spans centuries. Or travel back in time to when St Andrews housed the largest cathedral in all of Scotland; its ruins will evoke a sense of age-old nostalgia, inspiring you to imagine a time without modern buildings, renovated houses and the latest technology. As we head northwards to our hotel in the Highlands, bask in the ever-changing scenery filled with rugged glens and dramatic hills.

Included today



Accommodation

The Balmoral Arms (or
similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 3 | Cairngorms Region

Ah that fresh Highland air filling your lungs – there's no feeling like it! We'll begin our day with a visit to one of the treasures Scotland is famed for... a magnificent castle. Prominent and majestic in stature, this piece of history looms over the land like the kings and queens who once lived within its walls reigned over its people – with strength, power and perseverance. With a bounty of castles in the area, you might be wondering which stronghold we'll explore... We'll give the honour of divulging to your local Tour Leader.

Following our stroll into the past, Mother Nature calls our name. Something to be aware of? The weather – as varied as it is in bonnie Scotland – will dictate the atmosphere you experience. Low cloud over mulls and glens promises an ethereal feeling that raises the hairs on the back of your neck – as though a Gaelic witch is brewing a storm, whilst clear blue skies vow vast scenery that never ends. Our minds filled with lush landscapes and local tales, we'll return to our hotel where we can slumber and ready ourselves for Day 4's ventures.

Included today



Accommodation

The Balmoral Arms (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 4 | Cairngorms Region – Cairngorms National Park – Inverness

Wake up and breathe in your morning coffee – another day of embracing all that Scotland has to offer is right beneath our noses. First: buckle up in the minicoach and watch a cacophony of green forest trees, imposing mountains and shimmering waters flit by from the comfort of your seat as we travel towards the Highlands’ capital: Inverness.

Before we cross into city lines, let’s have a moment for the Highland Folk Museum. It’s Britain’s first open-air museum buzzing with direct insight into the past. Embrace scurrying red squirrels, rugged thatched homes and a welcoming smile at every turn. And – for guests who have a passion for all things film and TV, this was a location used for *Outlander*!

Onwards to Inverness. Settle in for dinner with your newfound travel companions as a local bagpiper welcomes you to this evening’s meal, playing traditional notes in a melody that will stir the soul.

Included today



Accommodation

The Kingsmills Hotel (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 5 | Inverness

Greet Inverness with joy – this city is nestled in the heart of the Highlands, where the lingering breath of the Loch Ness monster reaches its tall roofs and winding streets. During our walking tour with a local guide, we'll stroll along the cobbled streets of Old Town, glance towards the towering structure of Inverness Castle, and hear the Scottish war-drums and bagpipes in our minds as ancient tales of days gone by are shared.

Later, secrets will be spilled – and hopefully not a single drop of liquid gold – as we experience a whisky tasting at Malt Rooms, a business created by two locals and their love of traditional beverages. More diverse than your usual distillery which proudly houses a signature label, the Malt Rooms is home to a vast array of Scottish whiskies. So, ask yourself... will you prefer a smoked flavour that caresses your throat? Or will it be a sweet, fruity nectar that lifts your spirits? Bellies warmed; the rest of the day is yours to roam the flourishing city as you please – perhaps that includes a spot of haggis!

Included today



Accommodation

The Kingsmills Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 6 | Inverness – Culloden, Loch Ness and Plockton – Isle of Skye

Wave a fond “*mar sin leat*” (farewell in Scottish Gaelic) to the spirited city of Inverness – our next stop is just a short drive away, and it’s laden with the ghosts of a bloody battle from 1796. Embrace the gooseflesh along your arms as you hear tales of the Jacobite Rising’s final, tragic, end. From harrowing history to magical mythology – keep your eyes peeled for Scotland’s favourite monster in the calming waters of Loch Ness. Any slight ripple could be her shyly welcoming you to her home!

Back onto the minicoach for our next stop: Plockton! Or, as it’s lovingly known as to the locals – “The Jewel of the Highlands”. Seek out fresh, rose-coloured tulips growing in bunches. Cast your eyes over quaint homes that seem to have tumbled out of an old fairytale. Follow the mountain line under a cloud-filled (or clear blue!) sky. Most importantly, feel the peace this place brings to your soul.

Our journey takes us to our home for the next two nights – the Isle of Skye – where we’ll stay at a family-owned hotel surrounded by fragrant gardens and splendid views just a peek through your window. But first, a group dinner with decadent food awaits our arrival!

Included today



Accommodation

Duisdale House Hotel (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



Day 7 | Isle of Skye

Do you know the origins of the word ‘Skye’? It’s derived from Old Norse ‘skuy’ meaning ‘cloud island’. That may be an indicator of today’s weather – but don’t let that stop you from experiencing the isle’s mythic charm. Today’s journey begins in Portree – a quaint fishing village, and Skye’s capital. Dotted along the harbour is a line of pastel-coloured buildings bright enough to tussle with any cloudy day. Stroll beside calm waters, breathe in that fresh Scottish air and pick up a spot of lunch (including Scottish favourite Irn-Bru!) ready to eat during our travels later.

Then, we’ll immerse ourselves in the gentle hum of mountains, lochs and castles as golden eagles circle in the sky and wild dolphins jump in the sea. A taste of the sights our eyes will twinkle at today? The Old Man of Storr – famed for hiking and views, Kilt Rock – a cascading waterfall with plunging depths, and Quiraing – a walking route where every tickle of wind caresses your cheek. This evening, enjoy dinner at your own leisure – we suggest embracing the island life with a plate (or two!) of fresh seafood.

Included today



Accommodation

Duisdale House Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

Day 8 | Isle of Skye – Isle of Mull

From one island to another, our adventure continues. Let’s dive into the origins of Scottish Gaelic a little, giving you some food for thought as we pass through languid lochs, gleaming glens and magnificent Munros (mountains to us!). Irish settlers, known as Scoti, brought the language with them during the 4th or 5th century. From then, the language travelled through the land like a rush of water until the 16th century when it began to decline due to the immergence of English. Some words are preserved and many pockets of the population hope to revive Gaelic culture today. After a lunch stop in Mallaig (try to find some shortcakes to fill that spot!), our Tour Leader will share more stories and historic anecdotes alongside folklore and fairytales about the enchanted setting we find ourselves in until we settle in our new home for the next two nights: Mull.

Included today



Accommodation

Western Isles Hotel (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 9 | Isle of Mull – Isle of Iona – Isle of Mull

Do you believe in fairies? How about mermaids, seal people and sea monsters? Today's stop, the Isle of Iona is a bewitched island, filled with magic, mischief and mystery. Every gale, every scent of seawater, and every patch of glen could hold a tiny glimmer of mystical intrigue if you look close enough. During our meander across Iona, we'll visit Iona Abbey. Being the oldest Catholic church in the UK (and one of the oldest in Western civilisation), this sacred site holds an unearthly amount of history within its stone walls. If you wander to the edge of the land, you can look out onto the glistening waters and imagine the legends of the deep. Is that a flick of a fin you'll see in the distance? Upon our return to Mull, we'll toast to our Scottish journey and the friendships made with a final dinner together.

Included today



Accommodation

Western Isles Hotel (or similar)



Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner

Day 10 | Isle of Mull – Stirling – Edinburgh

One final adventure for the road? Before we head back to the point where our tale began, let's create a few more memories for the postcards we send back home. We'll briefly stop in Oban for some free time after we arrive at the mainland. The seafood capital of Scotland boasts a bustling port, crashing waves that rival the anger of the old gods, and all the colours of the rainbow dotted along the harbour.

Our second-to-last stop takes us to Stirling where its magnificent hilltop castle will raise the hairs on the back of your necks as it presides over the city and all who wander there. Once we're inside its gleaming walls adorned with immaculately painted crests, high ceilings and rich, decadent materials, we'll soak up sweeping views, gasp at the enormity of it all, and wonder what whispers haunt the rooms. Our final journey aboard the minicoach is now upon us, so settle in, swap your favourite memories, and follow the back roads to Edinburgh with a heart full of Scottish stories.

Included today



Meals

- + Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

What's the weather like?

Weather in Scotland is very unpredictable, even in the peak summer months, highs sometimes only reach 18°C (64°F). Winter months average 7°C (45°F) and can be wet and windy. In the north, winters can get very cold and snowy (especially in the mountains).

Whatever the season, ensure you pack layers and don't forget your trusty rain jacket!

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

How long are the ferry journeys?

The timings of ferries will differ depending on the day's schedule. However, the following timings are typical: Isle of Skye to Highlands can be between 25 minutes to an hour depending on weather; Highlands to Isle of Mull is approximately 18 minutes; a round trip to Isle of Iona from Isle of Mull is 30 minutes; Isle of Mull to Oban can be between 55 minutes and an hour twenty minutes, depending on weather. The crossings are usually smooth and scenic, although wet and windy weather can impact them at certain times of the year.

Will we get to visit a whisky distillery?



We'll enjoy a sublime, immersive whisky experience at the Malt Rooms where you can taste whiskies from different brands.

Do the August departures include tickets to The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo?

Our departures don't include tickets to The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. However, you will be in Edinburgh at the time of the festival if you book to join us in August. Please note, Edinburgh is very busy during this time with longer wait times at restaurants. Book in advance as much as possible so you don't miss out!

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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