

Scotland

Itinerary and Travel Notes

Days 1 and 2: Friday, August 16 and Saturday, August 17
Travel to Edinburgh

TRANSPORTATION

Flight

American Airlines flight 123 departs from Philadelphia at 9:00 PM
9:10 AM scheduled arrival in Edinburgh (Saturday, 8/17)
Booked: 3/4
Confirmation: 123ABC

Rental Car

Pick up at Hertz (10 Picardy Place, Edinburgh)
Premium Car Mercedes C Class
Booked 5/31
Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: It's always a good idea to take a few photos of your rental car before starting your journey to document the condition.

LODGING

B+B Edinburgh, 3 Rothesay Terrace
Length of Stay: 8/17 - 8/20
Booked: 3/11
Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: You have booked the Family Suite and it was paid at the time of your reservation.

There is no parking on-site but a discount for 24 hours at the NCP Car Park on Castle Terrace can be found on the [hotel website](#).



Day 3: Sunday, August 18 Edinburgh

Welcome to Edinburgh! Enjoy exploring this evocative and history-rich city until your Royal Tattoo package begins at 6:30 PM. I suggest devoting today to Edinburgh Castle and the Royal Mile.

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Edinburgh Castle and the Royal Mile

- It's best to arrive at Edinburgh Castle right as it opens (9:30 AM) to beat the crowds.
- Audio tours are available at a 20% discount for Explorer Pass holders.
- Entry to the National War Museum and the Regimental Museum of The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards is included in castle admission. There will be signs to direct you inside the castle complex.
- In a tradition dating back to 1861, at 1:00 PM daily a 105 mm field gun is fired from the battery.

St. Giles Cathedral

- Open from 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM, with short daily worship services at noon.
- Free to enter, but you can leave a donation or pay for a guided tour.
- Make sure to check out the Thistle Chapel, which is home to the Order of the Thistle chivalric order. It has a gold leaf ceiling and impressive neogothic woodwork.

Holyrood Palace and Abbey

- The Queen's official residence in Scotland, located at the end of the Royal Mile.
- A special exhibition features the wedding outfits of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (Harry and Meghan).
- Admission to the Abbey, which dates to the 12th century, is included with your palace entry and Explorer Pass.

Princes Street Gardens

- Paved walkways meander through flowers and fountains in the shadow of Edinburgh Castle.

Notes: I recommend dining away from the Royal Mile for higher quality and more reasonably priced food. Likewise, souvenir prices along the Royal Mile will probably be the highest you see on the trip. If you see something you love or can't live without, please purchase it, but otherwise you may have better luck elsewhere.



6:30 PM: Royal Military Tattoo

Booking: 123ABC

You have purchased the Bruce Package, which begins at The Scotch Whisky Experience located at 354 Castlehill. Dinner is included.

Notes: Even though it will be summer, take warm clothing, including a blanket if you've brought one along. The show goes on rain or shine, so be prepared. Umbrellas are not allowed. There may be a cushion rental option for £1, which would be well worth it for warmth and comfort.

Day 4: Monday, August 19 Edinburgh

Today, you have the entire day at leisure in lovely Edinburgh. Certainly you should revisit any spots along the Royal Mile that you didn't see yesterday, but today would also be a good day to explore further afield.

ACTIVITIES

Edinburgh Tour bus tour

- Buses arrive every 10-12 minutes and tickets (£15 per person) can be purchased at each bus stop.
- The closest stop to your hotel is Charlotte Square.
- I recommend taking the entire tour first (about 1 hour) to get the full lay of the land and benefit of commentary before starting to hop on and off at desired locations.

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

- Open from 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM.
- It's free to enter the gardens, but the admission to the ten glasshouses is £7 (£6 for 60+).



Day 5: Tuesday, August 20 Edinburgh to Inverness

Today, you're headed to Inverness! Enjoy the drive north through Cairngorms National Park and into the Highlands. The distance between your hotels by way of Stirling Castle is about three and a half hours.

SIGHTS ALONG THE WAY

Falkirk Wheel (27 miles from Edinburgh on Lime Road in Falkirk)

- Rotating boat lift that is a remarkable feat of engineering.
- Ride the wheel in a boat for £13.50/£11.50. Rides begin every hour and ten minutes starting at 11:10 AM.

Stirling Castle (38 miles from Edinburgh in the town of Stirling)

- Impressive hilltop castle complex that was the home of Scottish royals for generations.

Notes: I recommend arriving early to beat some of the day-tripping crowds. The castle opens at 9:30 AM.

The town of Stirling has a few good lunch options. If you're ready for a break from pub food, I recommend Mamma Mia (52 Spittal Street), which is an authentic and tasty Italian restaurant.

Leault Farms Sheepdog Demonstration (144 miles from Edinburgh, off the A9 highway in Kincaig)

- 45-minute working sheepdog demonstration given by a fourth-generation shepherd.
- The demonstration begins at 4:00 PM and costs £6 per person (cash only). No reservations necessary.

Notes: Wear sturdy and comfortable shoes, as the car park is gravel and you'll be walking / standing in grass. It may be muddy.

There may be puppies and opportunities to shear sheep or bottle-feed lambs.

There are some good dinner options in nearby Aviemore. I recommend The Old Bridge Inn.

LODGING

Macdonald Drumossie Hotel, Old Perth Road, Inverness

Length of Stay: 8/20 - 8/23

Booked: 3/18

Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: You have booked a Feature Double room. Breakfast is included.



Day 6: Wednesday, August 21
Inverness

You're in for a treat today with a private tour of some of the best sights in the Highlands. Have a great time taking in the history of the Clava Cairns and Culloden Moor, and enjoy your dram at Glenmorangie!

9:00 AM: Private Tour of the Highlands

Booked: 4/1

Tour Number: 678ZXY

Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: Jim will pick you up at the hotel. I recommend being in the lobby area ten minutes early. Stops include Clava Cairns, Culloden Moor, Glenmorangie Distillery, Dunrobin Castle, and more. You have paid a deposit of \$135.02. The remaining balance will be due on July 24. Because you are already paying Jim as your guide, a tip is not necessary.



Day 7: Thursday, August 22

Loch Ness Area

Now that you are pros on Highland history and culture, it's time to visit one of the most famous lakes in the world: Loch Ness. Regardless of whether or not you're interested in monster hunting, the area is beautiful and well worth a drive. It takes about an hour without stops to drive from your hotel to Fort Augustus at the far end of the loch.

DRIVING TOUR OF LOCH NESS

Please refer to the attached document for the map and itinerary for your driving tour.

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN FORT AUGUSTUS

Fort Augustus Locks

- Watch ships make their way through the Caledonian Canal

Clansman Centre (10:30 AM - 6:00 PM)

- Recreated interior of a Highland turf house where you can watch live demonstrations of putting on a plaid and making and using claymore swords. Also has a "quirky" gift shop.

Notes: For the best views, travel counterclockwise around the loch.

Admission to Urquhart Castle is included in your Explorer Pass.

Dores Inn is highly recommended for its delicious food and the gorgeous view from the pub garden.

If you decide you do want to take a monster-hunting cruise, you can do so from Fort Augustus or Drumnadrochit (near Urquhart Castle).



Day 8: Friday, August 23

Isle of Skye

You're off to the incomparable Isle of Skye! The travel time between your hotels is about two hours and fifteen minutes, but it will likely take you longer because you'll want to stop to snap photos and take in the scenery.

There are two routes you can take to Skye. The southern route (101 miles to your hotel, via the A82) takes you back down along Loch Ness, so it may make sense to take a northern route (99 miles, via the A9 and A835) to see a different part of Scotland. There aren't many major landmarks or sights other than the scenery, but it's a lovely drive through a sparsely inhabited part of the country.

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Eilean Donan Castle (75 [southern route] or 79 [northern route] miles from your hotel in the town of Dornie)

- My personal favorite castle in Scotland, Eilean Donan's setting between three stunning lochs is a dream.
- Admission is £10.00/£9.00 for 60+ and includes an audio guide.
- The castle opens at 10:00 AM and last admission is at 5:00 PM.

Museum of the Isles (4 miles from your hotel, £8 admission)

- Sitting alongside Armadale Castle (and with admission that includes the castle gardens), this museum gives a great, easily-digestible history of the ruling Clan Donald and the Lordship of the Isles.

Torabhaig Distillery (.2 miles from your hotel)

- 45-minute tours available every 30 minutes from 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM (£10).
- Brand new; started making whisky in January of 2017 and is only the second distillery on Skye.

LODGING

Toravaig House Hotel, Knock Bay, Sleat

Length of Stay: 8/25 - 8/27

Booked: 3/20

Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: You have booked a Hillview Double room. Your credit card was charged for one night upon booking.
Breakfast is included and there is a restaurant onsite for dinner if you choose.



Day 9: Saturday, August 24

Isle of Skye

The Isle of Skye is one of the most enchanting parts of Scotland. Get ready for some serious scenery.

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Driving Circuit of the Trotternish Peninsula (starts and ends in Portree, 37 miles / 55 minutes from your hotel)

- This area of Skye has some of her best and most unique scenery. Notable sights include:
 - Old Man of Storr - 50m tall basalt pinnacle. Visible from the road (on the left, six miles north of Portree) but also accessible via a mile-long path from a car park at the northern end of Loch Leathan.
 - Kilt Rock - Huge sea cliffs with a waterfall. About 9 miles north of Portree.
 - The Quiraing - Incredible, otherworldly landscape. Take the road between Staffin and Uig; there's a parking area at the highest point that allows you access to stunning views.
 - Duntulm Castle - Ruins of a MacDonald fortress that was abandoned in 1739 at the northernmost point of Skye.
 - Fairy Glen - "A strange and enchanting natural landscape of miniature conical hills, rocky towers, ruined cottages, and a tiny roadside loch" (Lonely Planet). Just south of Uig.

Dunvegan Castle (52 miles / 1.25 hours from your hotel)

- Skye's most famous historic building with parts dating to the 14th century.
- Houses a number of historical artifacts, including some related to Bonnie Prince Charlie.
- Admission to the castle and gardens is £14 (John may be £11). They also offer 25-minute boat trips to see the local seal colony (£9.50) and two-hour wildlife cruises in the loch (£70).
- An easy one-mile walk that leads to a white beach is available from the end of a minor road beyond the castle entrance.

Notes: As the largest town on the island, Portree has the most dining options. It may make sense to have dinner there, but you can always stop in Broadford or eat in your hotel restaurant.



Day 10: Sunday, August 25

Fort William

This final leg of your trip takes you to an area rich in Jacobite history and delicious seafood! If you didn't stop at Eileen Donan Castle on your way to Skye, make sure to swing by as you leave. After a beautiful two-hour drive, enjoy the day in Fort William before making your way south to Oban for the next two nights.

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

West Highland Museum (Cameron Square, free)

- Small museum highlighting artifacts of Highland history.

Wildlife cruises on Loch Linnhe (£17.50 for 90 minutes)

- Include the scenic loch, salmon farm, seal colony, and views of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.
- No booking ahead; just go to the Crannog Cruises kiosk on Town Pier.

Glen Nevis

- Beautiful glen just outside of town that boasts an impressive gorge, one of the three highest waterfalls in Scotland, and Britain's tallest mountain, Ben Nevis.
- A Visitor Centre is available for information on local sights and walks.
- Steall Waterfall - from the Upper Glen Nevis Car Park, walk 1.5 miles through a gorge with views of the waterfall and a beautiful valley.

Road to the Isles

- 46-mile-long scenic drive through a region with important ties to Jacobite history - take the Alternative Coastal Route rather than highway for better scenery.
- Along the way is Glenfinnan, the area where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his army; there's a monument to the Highlanders in a "hauntingly beautiful" setting along the loch.
 - Also offers views of the famous Glenfinnan Viaduct, which has 21 magnificent arches.
 - Boat trips are available on the loch.

DINING

I highly recommend Crannog for delicious seafood in a lochside location; even the view from the bathroom is lovely. Lunch is from 12:00 - 2:30 PM and dinner begins at 6:00 PM.



LODGING

Perle Oban (Station Square, Oban)

Length of Stay: 8/27 - 8/29

Booked: 3/26

Confirmation: 123ABC

Day 11: Monday, August 26 Oban

Start your day in Oban by leaving it; you're off to wander Kilmartin Glen, one of the best prehistoric sites in Scotland. Then toast to your day, your trip, and your anniversary on a tour of Oban Distillery.

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Kilmartin Glen (28 miles / 47 minutes from your hotel)

- The Kilmartin House Museum of Ancient Culture is a good place to start your visit. It also has a cafe.
- Within six miles of Kilmartin, there are over one hundred rock carvings and twenty-five standing stone sites. This [list of the monuments](#) in the area may be helpful in choosing which of the main locations to see.

3:40 PM: Tour of Oban Distillery

- Your Sensory & Flavour Finding Tour includes a guided tour of the distillery, a dram of Oban 14-year-old, and a dram of Oban Little Bay.
- Booked 6/11, Confirmation 123ABC.

Dunollie Castle (1.3 miles north of your hotel)

- Ruins of a MacDougall castle with a museum of local and clan history in the 1745 House nearby.



Day 12: Tuesday, August 27

Oban to Edinburgh

It's your last day in Scotland! Happily, you'll be traveling another beautiful route on your way back to Edinburgh. The distance between your hotels is about three hours.

SIGHTS ALONG THE WAY

Loch Lommond and the Trossachs National Park

- This park is very popular with Glaswegians looking to escape the city, and you will drive right through on your way to Edinburgh.
- Loch Lommond is mainland Britain's largest lake and has about sixty islands. You could easily deviate from your route to explore it on foot or by boat by turning south onto A82 near Crianlarich.
- The Trossachs have excellent walking and hiking paths.

Inchmahome Priory (78 miles / two hours from your hotel)

- Ruins of a monastery where both Robert the Bruce and Mary Queen of Scots sought sanctuary.
- Located on an island accessible by ferry.
- Turn right onto A81 in Callander and follow for 13 miles to the Port of Monteith.

Doune Castle (79 miles / two hours from your hotel)

- This small castle has often served as a filming location, most famously as the French castle in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and Castle Leoch in *Outlander*.
- Tours are narrated by Eric Idle, with additional commentary by Sam Heughan.
- Admission is included in your Explorer Pass.
- Be aware that the turn into the Doune Castle complex is a bit narrow.

Notes: Keep an eye out for Stirling Castle perched on its rocky hill! It will be on your left about 35 miles out from your Edinburgh hotel.

LODGING

Edinburgh Marriott Hotel (111 Glasgow Road, Edinburgh)

Length of Stay: 8/29 - 8/30

Booked: 3/20

Confirmation: 123ABC



Day 13: Wednesday, August 28
Flight Home

TRANSPORTATION

Flight

American Airlines flight 987 departs from Edinburgh at 10:00 AM

1:00 PM scheduled arrival in Philadelphia

Booked: 3/4

Confirmation: 123ABC

Notes: Your rental car should be returned to CCRC Reception.



Traveling to Scotland

General Tips, Tricks, and Helpful Hints

I hope you have a wonderful trip to the Scotland! Here are some of my best tips to help ensure you have the best time possible:

Weather and Clothing

The weather in Scotland can be a bit unpredictable, so remember to always be prepared for changes in temperature and sudden rain showers. It's best to dress in layers and keep a rain jacket accessible. Sturdy, waterproof shoes are also recommended to ensure that rain showers or uneven ground don't impact your ability to see and do everything on your itinerary!

Packing Essentials

- Keep in mind when packing that, as in much of Europe, Scottish hotel rooms may be smaller than those in the USA and sometimes there are no elevators.
- Don't forget to pack insect repellent. Midges (gnat-like insects, some of which bite) are notorious in the Highlands, especially on overcast days with little wind. You'll find a repellent called Smidge for sale across Scotland. Light colored, long-sleeved clothing is also recommended.
- Scotland's electrical system is 230v, so you'll need an adapter to use your electronics. This universal adapter will come in handy if you don't already have one.

Money Matters

- The currency in Scotland is the British pound sterling (£). Getting money from an ATM (or, better yet, ordering pounds from your bank before you leave) often gets you a better rate than using a currency exchange service, especially in airports.
- While many places accept credit cards, some smaller establishments, gift shops, and local artisans may prefer or only accept cash, so it's wise to have some on hand.
- Tipping: 10% in sit down restaurants and closer to 15% in fancier establishments if there's no service charge already on your bill. Not necessary in pubs unless you've had truly exceptional service.

Driving

- Drive on the left side of the road.
- Many roads, particularly on Skye, are only wide enough for one car. Keep an eye out for pull-offs on the left side to use when another car approaches or if a car wants to pass you from behind.



