



# Edinburgh & the Castles of Scotland

10 days | 12 days with Edinburgh extension

From its ancient castles to its rolling landscapes and blaring bagpipes, Scotland is undeniably intriguing. With plenty of time to explore, you'll get your dose of well-known Scottish icons. Then, head a little off the beaten path, moving farther into the untamed Highlands and over craggy hills laden with lochs and Gaelic-speaking villages.



## Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 liquor tasting
- 4 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

## Included highlights

- Glasgow Cathedral
- Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
- Inveraray Castle
- Urquhart Castle
- Loch Ness
- Blair Castle
- Scotch whisky distillery
- Edinburgh Castle

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 1 hour daily across moderately uneven terrain, including cobblestone streets and unpaved trails, with some steep hills and stairs.

## Group size

15-38

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Glasgow today.

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## Glasgow → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Glasgow

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

Welcome to Scotland! Meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Glasgow

*Included meals: breakfast*

Set out to explore Scotland's "second city" today with a local as your guide.

- Drive past The Burrell Collection museum and admire the city's university.
- Visit the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, which features everything from medieval suits of armor to a collection of work by Scottish artists.
- Discover local highlights, including George Square and the River Clyde.
- Stop outside the city's medieval cathedral for photos.

Spend a free afternoon in Glasgow or add an excursion.

+ Historic Scotland & Stirling Castle

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## Scottish Highlands → 3 nights

### Day 4: Transfer to the Scottish Highlands

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Continue on to the Scottish Highlands, admiring incredible sights as you go.

- Pass Loch Lomond as you drive through scenic Trossachs National Park.
- Stop to explore Inveraray Castle and its gardens.
- Take in stunning scenery as you travel through the Scottish Highlands.

Sit down for an included dinner this evening.

*Please note: Entrance to Inveraray Castle is seasonal and runs from April through October only. When entrance is out of season, it will be replaced with a visit to the Ardkinglas House.*

### Day 5: Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness & Inverness

*Included meals: breakfast*

Surrounded by legend and lore, Loch Ness is one of Scotland's most mysterious sites. Today, get to know the country's largest loch as you explore the area.

- Pay a visit to the medieval ruins of Urquhart Castle.
- Cruise along the legendary Loch Ness, a deep, freshwater lake, and dock in Clansman Harbour.
- Stop in Inverness and enjoy free time to explore the city.

### Day 6: Free day in the Scottish Highlands

*Included meals: breakfast*

Spend a free day in the Scottish Highlands or add an excursion.

+ Eilean Donan Castle & Isle of Skye

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## Edinburgh → 3 nights

### Day 7: Transfer to Edinburgh

*Included meals: breakfast, liquor tasting*

En route to Edinburgh, stop in Perthshire, the gateway to the Scottish Highlands.

- Visit medieval Blair Castle, the former home of the Dukes and Earls of Atholl.
- Explore Blair Athol Distillery with a guide and enjoy a whisky tasting.

*Please note: Entrance to Blair Castle is seasonal and runs from April to late October only. When entrance is out of season, it will be replaced with a visit to Black Watch Castle & Museum.*

Enjoy a free evening in Edinburgh or add an excursion.

+ Scottish Cèilidh

### Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Edinburgh

*Included meals: breakfast*

Get to know Edinburgh in all its medieval beauty on a tour led by a local expert.

- View the elegant Georgian New Town and the Royal Mile, two UNESCO World Heritage sites.
- Pass the King George statue, Bute House, and Sir Walter Scott monument.
- Enter Edinburgh Castle to view the Scottish crown jewels and Stone of Scone.

Spend a free afternoon in Edinburgh or add an excursion.

*Please note: The order of today's activities are subject to change.*

+ Abbotsford House & Melrose Abbey

### Day 9: Free day in Edinburgh & bagpipe lesson

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

Enjoy a free day in Edinburgh or add an excursion.

This evening, head to a private room at a local restaurant and meet with a professional bagpipe player.

- Learn about the history of the bagpipe, Scotland's national instrument, and listen to the musician play a few songs.
  - Pick up your own bagpipe and follow along as they teach the group breathing techniques and tips on how to play.
  - Celebrate your trip during a farewell dinner.
- + St Andrews
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## Flight Home

### Day 10: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or extend your stay to continue exploring Edinburgh.

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## + Edinburgh extension

Continue your tour to keep exploring this historic, hilly city, and discover the charms waiting at the end of every close. Spend your extra time in Edinburgh however you'd like, and lean on your Tour Director to point you toward the most exciting sites.

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## Edinburgh → 2 nights

### Day 10: Free day in Edinburgh

*Included meals: breakfast*

Spend a free day in Edinburgh or add an excursion.

+ Rosslyn Chapel & Royal Yacht Britannia

**Day 11: Free day in Edinburgh**

*Included meals: breakfast*

Enjoy a free day in Edinburgh or add an excursion.

This evening, enjoy a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

+ Palace of Holyroodhouse & Afternoon Tea

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**Flight Home****Day 12: Departure**

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: [goaheadtours.ca/SCH](https://goaheadtours.ca/SCH) | 1-800-754-5066

## Day 3: Historic Scotland & Stirling Castle

\$159CAD/\$169CAD\* (6 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Visit Stirling, a town steeped in the history of the Wars of Scottish Independence. For generations, Stirling Castle held off British advances and served as a rallying point for rebellious Scots. It was within Stirling Castle that the infant Mary Stewart was crowned Mary, Queen of Scots. You'll learn more about the castle's extensive history as you follow along with an audio guide. In addition to the castle, you'll visit the town of Falkirk. While here, stop to see The Kelpies. These two 98-foot-high steel sculptures pay homage to the role horses played in Scotland's agricultural development. Then, visit the ruins of the Antonine Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage site built in 142 A.D., just 20 years after the completion of Hadrian's Wall.

## Day 6: Eilean Donan Castle & Isle of Skye

\$165CAD/\$175CAD\* (10 hours, departs in the morning)

Cross the Skye Bridge over Loch Alsh to the Isle of Skye, famous for its association with Bonnie Prince Charlie. Then, set off for a guided sightseeing tour of the isle, exploring the town of Portree and stopping to view the rock pinnacle known as the Old Man of Storr. Next, admire breathtaking view of Kilt Rock before taking a scenic drive through the Scottish Highlands to visit Eilean Donan Castle. Explore the iconic site, arguably the world's most photographed castle, with a local guide.

## Day 7: Scottish Cèilidh

\$175CAD/\$185CAD\* (4 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

Enjoy a special evening of Scottish tradition as you witness an authentic cèilidh, an age-old Scottish celebration. Sit down to an included dinner and be serenaded by a band playing Scottish folk tunes while you dine. As the evening winds down, dancers take to the stage to perform a series of traditional dances. Then, cap it all off by joining the company on stage to try the steps for yourself.

## Day 8: Abbotsford House & Melrose Abbey

\$145CAD/\$155CAD\* (5 hours, departs in the afternoon with lunch)

Travel through the Scottish Borders region to Abbotsford, where you'll enjoy an included lunch. Continue on to Abbotsford House, the 19th-century estate of Sir Walter Scott. The poet designed his home in the Romantic style to imitate the elaborate baronial estates of British aristocrats. Today, it serves as a museum for Scottish memorabilia and artifacts that Walter Scott collected throughout his lifetime. Later, visit the ruins of Melrose Abbey, one of the most impressive of the four Borders abbeys. Please note: Due to renovation projects, groups will visit Dryburgh Abbey through the end of 2024. Dryburgh is regarded as the most peaceful of the four Borders abbeys thanks to its

location set within the woods along the River Tweed.

## Day 9: St Andrews

\$159CAD/\$169CAD\* (6 hours, departure time varies)

St Andrews may be most well known as the home of golf, but it's also the site of Scotland's oldest university. On this excursion, you'll pass by the 16th-century grounds of St Andrews University, the alma mater of Prince William, who met Kate Middleton here. You'll also join a local guide to enter the ruins of the town's medieval cathedral and 13th-century castle which overlooks the North Sea. After, enjoy free time in town for lunch or to visit the British Golf Museum.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 10: Rosslyn Chapel & Royal Yacht Britannia

\$159CAD (5 hours, departs in the morning)

Famous for its connections to the Holy Grail as depicted in the bestselling novel "The Da Vinci Code," Rosslyn Chapel is a place shrouded in mystery and legend. Step inside with a local guide to marvel at the crypt, colorful stained glass windows, and the intricate carvings that adorn the interior pillars and arches. Then, make your way back to Edinburgh, where you'll board the Royal Yacht Britannia. Once the floating residence of Queen Elizabeth II, you'll see how the Royal Family and the ship's crew lived and worked above and below decks during its commission.

Please Note: This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure. Photography inside Rosslyn Chapel is not permitted, and a dress code of no short sleeves or shorts is strictly enforced. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

### Day 11: Palace of Holyroodhouse & Afternoon Tea

\$185CAD/\$195CAD\* (5 hours, departs in the morning)

Make your way down the Royal Mile to pop by the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the King's official residence in Edinburgh. This 16th-century retreat has been the Scottish home to British monarchs for more than 600 years. Take a self-guided audio tour of the palace and gardens to learn more about the royal family. You'll walk through the state apartments, throne room, and portrait gallery, before heading outside to stroll along the pathways that wind through the manicured grounds. Then, enjoy a spot of afternoon tea complete with unlimited tea, sweet and savory pastries, plus scones served with clotted cream and jam. Please note: Photography is not permitted inside the palace.

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.ca/terms](https://goaheadtours.ca/terms)