



Landscapes of Scotland: Oban, the Highlands & Edinburgh

15 days | 17 days with St Andrews extension

Scotland astounds, and this Small Group Tour amplifies its allure. You'll hear the echoes of craftspeople's hammers in Glasgow's old mercantile zones; the whirl of fisherfolks' lines on Oban's quays; and the weighty silence of the Isles of Mull and Skye. Edinburgh's magnetic draw strengthens to a pull, and the Highlands' story-filled lochs eagerly await additions of your own. Book this tour to experience it all—and see what St Andrews has in store on the optional extension. (Hint: There's golf history, academic heritage, and photo ops galore.)



Your tour package includes

- 13 nights in handpicked hotels
- 13 breakfasts
- 2 lunches
- 4 dinners with beer or wine
- 1 liquor tasting
- 2 food tastings
- 8 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 train ride
- 3 ferry transfers

Included highlights

- Inveraray Castle
- Isle of Mull's Duart Castle
- Tobermory distillery & tasting
- Jacobite Steam Train ride
- Isle of Skye
- Urquhart Castle & Loch Ness
- Balmoral Castle
- Aberdeenshire farm visit
- Edinburgh Castle
- Bagpipe lesson

Tour pace

You'll walk for at least two hours daily across mostly flat terrain—including paved roads, unpaved trails, and sandy paths—with some steep hills.

Group size

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Glasgow today.

Glasgow → 2 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Glasgow

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Scotland! After touching down, transfer to your hotel and settle in. Then, meet your Tour Director and fellow group members at the evening's included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Glasgow

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

As one of Scotland's cultural and creative centers, the former industrial hub of Glasgow more than holds its own against other top sightseeing destinations. Today, you'll take in its highlights and get to know "the Dear Green Place" with a local as your guide.

- Drive past The Burrell Collection museum and admire the buildings of the University of Glasgow: Founded in 1451, it's the fourth-oldest in the English-speaking world and one of four Renaissance universities still operating in Scotland today.
- Visit the Riverside Museum and examine more than 3,000 items in its transport and technology collections—exhibits that memorialize the city's contributions to shipbuilding, train manufacturing, and heavy industry.
- Walk around 18th-century George Square, admiring the craftsmanship of the adjacent City Chambers and the various statues erected around the city's main public plaza. From there, walk south through the posh Merchant City district to the banks of the River Clyde. Scotland's second-longest river played a key role in Glasgow's growth: Once the heart of the city's industry, it connected its shipyards to the North Atlantic Ocean.

- Stop outside the city's medieval cathedral—the oldest cathedral on the Scottish mainland and the oldest building in all of Glasgow—for photos of its Gothic spires and facades.
- Stroll back into Merchant City and end your tour in Merchant Square. Sheltered within Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket, this indoor market is the city's eating and drinking destination. Sample some local fare before using your free time to explore its stylish bars and restaurants (and maybe grab another snack or two).

From there, depart with your Tour Director on an optional excursion, indulging in a spot of afternoon tea and a tour of the impressive Glasgow Botanic Gardens. If you choose to skip it, you might wander the 55-hectare Glasgow Green—a 15th-century park that ranks as the city's oldest—before popping into the history museum at the People's Palace.
+ Glasgow's Botanic Gardens & Afternoon Tea

Oban Region → 3 nights

Day 4: Oban Region via Inveraray Castle

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

From Glasgow, head northwest to the region surrounding the seaside town of Oban, making a few stops as you go.

- Drive through The Trossachs, one of Scotland's two national parks, and pass by Loch Lomond—the largest on the island of Britain by surface area.
- Leave your bus at majestic Inveraray Castle, seat of the Duke of Argyll, leader of Clan Campbell, since the 18th century. Surrounded by gardens, this country estate was one of the first built in the Gothic Revival style, and you'll get to explore both with a local guide leading the way.

Please note: Entrance to Inveraray Castle is seasonal and only available from April–October. If it's closed, your group will instead visit nearby Ardkinglas House—a classy country estate built in the Scots Baronial style on over 12,000 acres of parkland.

Roll on to the Oban region, then sit down with your group for an evening dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 5: Sightseeing tour of the Isle of Mull

Included meals: breakfast, liquor tasting

Hop aboard a ferry and sail to the Isle of Mull. The second-largest of Scotland's Inner Hebrides archipelago, it's a pastoral paradise—one you'll get to know with the help of your Tour Director.

- Begin by taking a self-guided tour of Duart Castle. Perched atop a small ridge, surrounded by an expanse of green and a craggy coastline, it served as the ancestral home of Clan Maclean. Walk through the castle's dungeons and state rooms, then take a beat and use your free time to sip on a cuppa in the tea room.
- Stop off in Tobermory, the Isle of Mull's quiet capital. Home to just about 1,000 people and typified by its colorful harborside homes, this fishing village counts otters and eagles among its favorite residents. After roaming about—and trying to spot some of the local wildlife—move along to Tobermory Distillery, specialists in single malt Scotch, for a tour and tasting. (Did you know they're one of the oldest commercial distilleries in all of Scotland?)

Return to Oban by ferry and explore the town at your leisure. For those looking for a meal: Oban's known as the seafood capital of Scotland, so pop into a restaurant and ask for their catch of the day.

Day 6: Free day in the Oban Region

Included meals: breakfast

Make the most of a scheduled free day: Either add an excursion to the infamous village of Glencoe—site of the 1692 massacre of Clan MacDonald by government forces—or get to know the Oban Region at your own pace.
+ Glencoe, the Western Highlands & Lunch

Isle of Skye Region → 2 nights

Day 7: Jacobite Steam Train & ferry to Isle of Skye

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Spend the day riding the gorgeous Jacobite Steam Train—better known as the Hogwarts Express to fans of the *Harry Potter* book and film franchise.

- Climb aboard your crimson cabin in the Highland town of Fort William—not quite Platform 9 ¾, but beautiful nonetheless—before rumbling on to the fishing town of Mallaig.
- Along your 41-mile ride, you'll pass by and over some of the Scottish Highlands' iconic sights: Lochs Eil and Eilt, Arisaig village, and the stone-hewn archways of the Glenfinnan Viaduct.

After free time in Mallaig, hop aboard a ferry and sail through the Inner Hebrides, an otherworldly place that's home to some of the country's most spectacular landscapes. Once you've settled into your hotel in the Isle of Skye Region, join your group for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

Please note: The Jacobite Steam Train runs from early April through late October. While out of season, the train will be replaced by a bus ride to the Glenfinnan Monument, a memorial to fallen Jacobite clansmen with jaw-dropping views of the viaduct and Loch Shield beyond.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Isle of Skye

Included meals: breakfast

Spend today exploring Scotland's second-largest island by bus, immersing yourself in nature as you drive along dramatic coastlines, through jagged mountains, and across lush moorlands.

- Cross the Sligachan Old Bridge. Built in the 1810s to cross the Sligachan River, this stone span supposedly sits over enchanted waters. (Legend has it that if you stick your face in the current for seven seconds, then let it dry naturally, the fairies of the river will grant you eternal beauty.)
- Continue northward onto the Trotternish Peninsula, stopping for a full-frame view of the Old Man of Storr. At just over 2,300 feet tall, this famous rock formation is the defining feature of the Trotternish landslip.
- Walk into the hills of Uig to the Fairy Glen—a small, magical valley off the beaten path where some say fairies live within the nooks of the hilly landscape.
- Enjoy free time to explore the town of Portree, the main village of the island, complete with its fair share of colorful harbor

houses, delicious food, and quaint independent shops. We recommend an early dinner: This meal's on your own today, so be sure to eat your fill of the local fare before boarding the bus back to your hotel.

Inverness → 2 nights

Day 9: Inverness via Loch Ness

Included meals: breakfast

Continue on through the famed Scottish Highlands, stopping along the way to get to know one of Scotland's most mysterious sites.

- Stop for a photo at the medieval ruins of Urquhart Castle, a once-great stronghold situated on the shores of Loch Ness. Take in panoramic views of the gash-like lake, whose depths are purportedly home to the mythical Nessie.
- Cruise atop the largest loch in the country, enjoying refreshments as you go, before docking in Clansman Harbour and continuing on your way.

Arrive in Inverness—the “Capital of the Highlands” and one of Scotland's eight cities—and use your free evening to relax in your hotel or explore the area. Feeling hungry? Track down some traditional fare, or a uniquely Scottish dish: chicken tikka masala, a now-beloved curry house staple created and first served in Glasgow back in 1971.

Day 10: Free day in Inverness

Included meals: breakfast

Today, zip off into the Highlands for a day at Culloden Moor and Cawdor Castle. Alternatively, explore Inverness on your own, checking off landmarks like Inverness Castle or sauntering down to the verdant Ness Islands.

+ Historic Highlands: Culloden Moor & Cawdor Castle

Aberdeen → 2 nights

Day 11: Aberdeen via Balmoral Castle

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Set out for Aberdeen—Scotland's third-largest city—by way of Cairngorms National Park, where you'll stop to visit the beautiful, Scottish Baronial-style Balmoral Castle, where Queen Elizabeth II spent her final days.

- Set off on a self-guided audio tour of the castle grounds—from its gardens to its ballroom and other exhibitions—and understand just why the Royal Family uses it as a summer home.
- After taking a closer look at the residence made famous in multiple seasons of the hit show, “The Crown,” sit down for an included lunch at a local restaurant within Cairngorms National Park.

Continue on to Aberdeen and enjoy a free evening, perhaps getting to know the city center before returning to your hotel.

Day 12: Sightseeing tour of Aberdeen

Included meals: breakfast

Meet up with a local guide this morning and get to know the “Granite City” on a guided tour.

- Pass through the campus of the University of Aberdeen, another of Scotland's four ancient universities, and learn about its three ceremonial colleges: Christ's College, King's College, and Marischal College.
- Admire the 13th-century Brig o' Balgownie, the oldest bridge in the country, and contemplate how it's inspired poetry and folklore over the years.
- Visit Footdee (pronounced “fittie”), a beautifully preserved traditional fishing village marking the eastern end of Aberdeen Harbour.
- Take a short walk through Old Aberdeen—the historic heart of the city and home to the famed King's College—followed by free time to explore the area.

Craving some castles to round out your day of sightseeing? Join your group on an optional outing to Dunnottar Castle in the nearby town of Stonehaven. Or, enjoy an afternoon to yourself and make for the tip of the Girdle Ness Peninsula, where you'll find a lighthouse, an old artillery battery, and some wild, rocky beaches. + Dunnottar Castle & Stonehaven

Edinburgh → 2 nights

Day 13: Edinburgh via farm visit

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, tasting

Travel deeper into the Aberdeenshire council area to visit a working cattle farm and learn about Scotland's agricultural pedigree.

- Meet up with your farm guide and set off on a walking tour of the grounds, including its barns and land.

- Learn about the history of the iconic Highland cow. Then, hear about the farm's high standards for raising beef cattle, before sitting down to a tasting of some fine cuts produced on-site.
- Sit down for a delicious included lunch at the farm. (Vegetarian options will be available.)

Finally, make your way to Edinburgh and, if you'd like, fill your night with song and dance at an optional cèilidh (say it "KAY-lee"). Alternatively, break off from the group for a free evening and get in some early sightseeing before tomorrow's outing.

+ Scottish Cèilidh

Day 14: Sightseeing tour of Edinburgh & bagpipe lesson

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

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

- Pass through a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the elegant New Town, before moving through another (the Old Town) to see the Royal Mile—a famous street that connects Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse. See the King George statue, Bute House (the official residence of the First Minister of Scotland), and the Sir Walter Scott monument.
- Head up to the summit of Calton Hill, a monument-laden geographic feature best known as the headquarters of the Scottish government. Scope out the Royal Mile from above, then make your way to the Old Calton Burial Ground, the final resting place of such luminaries as the philosopher David Hume.
- Enter Edinburgh Castle to view two timeless icons: the Scottish Crown Jewels and the Stone of Scone, a fixture at coronation ceremonies since at least the 13th century.

This evening, head to a private room at a local restaurant and meet 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 essential breathing techniques and share other playing tips.

Celebrate your trip, and your fellow travelers, over a farewell dinner served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 15: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or extend your stay to the famed university town (and golfers' mecca) of St. Andrews.

+ St Andrews extension

Say "St Andrews," and some may conjure images of crater-like sand bunkers bedeviling professional golfers, while others may remember quiet hours spent pouring over tomes at the third-oldest university in the English-speaking world. However, there's more to this seaside town—things like a botanical garden with more than 8,000 species of plants and mesmerizing medieval ruins. Get to know the real St Andrews on this trip's extension.

St Andrews → 2 nights

Day 15: Transfer to St Andrews & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Travel from Edinburgh to the beautiful Scottish coast today, stopping en route to explore the East Neuk resort town of Anstruther. Afterward, join up with a local guide for a tour of St Andrews—the birthplace of golf and the site of Scotland's oldest university.

- First, sit down to a traditional pub lunch of fish and chips—a local favorite.
- Walk by the grounds of the University of St Andrews, an institution of higher education that has existed since 1413. (Fun fact for our anglophiles: Prince William met Kate Middleton while studying there!)
- Enter the ruins of the town's medieval cathedral—a 12th-century structure that, in its heyday, was the largest church ever built in Scotland. Then, make the short walk to St Andrews Castle, and marvel at the view of the North Sea.

Day 16: Free day in St Andrews

Included meals: breakfast

Today, cruise past the Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve and across the River Tay for an optional excursion into the city of Dundee. If free time's what you seek, stay behind in St Andrews, and maybe hit the links for a game of golf at the oldest course in the world. (It takes some serious planning—and more than a little luck—to get a tee time, though, so plan accordingly.)

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

+ A Day in Dundee

Flight Home

Day 17: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Edinburgh 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/SCS | 1-800-754-5066

Day 3: Glasgow's Botanic Gardens & Afternoon Tea

\$140CAD/\$150CAD* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Named one of the coolest neighborhoods in the UK (and the world), Glasgow's West End is home to elegant architecture, an emerging food scene, and cute cobbled lanes. You'll begin today's adventure with a visit to the Tenement House, an apartment-turned-museum that offers a glimpse into the life of shorthand typist Agnes Toward. Enter the rowhouse and step back in time as you view the Victorian decor, pantry stocks, handwritten letters, and other furnishings of her former home. Then, head to the Glasgow Botanic Gardens: Set in the heart of the city, its various glasshouses nurture thousands of plant species. Cap the day off with afternoon tea—a must in the UK—and enjoy finger sandwiches, biscuits, and jams before returning to your hotel.

Day 6: Glencoe, the Western Highlands & Lunch

\$175CAD/\$185CAD* (7 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Spend the day diving into Scotland's rich history and dramatic landscapes as you travel throughout the Western Highlands. Start in Glencoe, a village of fewer than 400 people and the site of a 1692 massacre of a local clan by members of Scottish government forces. Learn about the area and the infamous ambush, and why Clan MacDonald was attacked by the army in the first place. Then, step inside the eco-friendly Glencoe Visitor Centre, a cultural history exhibit that's nestled in the breathtaking surroundings of the Glencoe Valley. Break for an included lunch at a local restaurant before continuing on a scenic drive, stopping at several viewpoints to take in landmarks like the ruined Kilchurn Castle on Loch Awe. Continue admiring the countryside as you return back to your hotel in the Oban region.

Day 10: Historic Highlands: Culloden Moor & Cawdor Castle

\$165CAD (5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Today, discover the Scottish Highlands' fascinating past with visits to a pair of historic places. Start off by making your way to Culloden Moor, site of the British's final victory over the Jacobite uprising in 1746. Learn more about this insurrection before heading out to the terrain where the Battle of Culloden was fought. Afterward, head to stately Cawdor Castle for an audio-guided tour of the grounds, and discover how this fortress inspired the clan castle in the acclaimed "Outlander" series.

Please note: In the event Cawdor Castle is closed, it'll be replaced with a visit to Fort George. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

Day 12: Dunnottar Castle & Stonehaven

\$135CAD/\$145CAD* (3.5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Standing guard atop a cliff overlooking the North Sea, the ruins of medieval Dunnottar Castle are a must-see in the Aberdeen region. Explore the grounds with a local guide, learning how it was once home to the now-defunct Earl Marischal and hosted the likes of William Wallace and Mary, Queen of Scots. Afterward, head to the charming port town of Stonehaven and take some free time to explore at your own pace—maybe even stopping at the fish and chip shop where John Davie first thought to deep-fry a Mars Bar. Taste the indulgent treat before heading back to your hotel in Aberdeen.

Day 13: 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.

Extension excursion options

Day 16: A Day in Dundee

\$199CAD/\$209CAD* (4.5 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Often called the sunniest town in Scotland, waterfront Dundee is home to world-class museums, centuries-old warships, and so much more. Start your day in this UNESCO Design City with a self-guided tour of V&A Dundee—the first Victoria and Albert museum outside of London—and absorb more than 500 years of Scottish design heritage. After taking in exhibitions on fashion, architecture, and other fields, travel by bus to the picturesque Broughty Ferry neighborhood, where you'll enjoy an included lunch before returning to St Andrews.

*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