

Best Scotland road trip itinerary (10, 14 & 17 day options)

 uktravelplanning.com/scotland-road-trip-itinerary

by Tracy Collins

Planning a Scottish road trip? Our detailed Scotland road trip itinerary includes many of the most popular destinations, scenic routes, landmarks and sights when touring Scotland. Over 17 days explore cities, Highlands, islands and part of the popular North Coast 500 route. Options to reduce to a 10 day or 14 day Scotland road trip itinerary are also included.

As road trips go one destination you are sure of an epic road trip is Scotland! In this article we have shared our own epic Scotland road trip itinerary which includes some of our favourite destinations across the country.

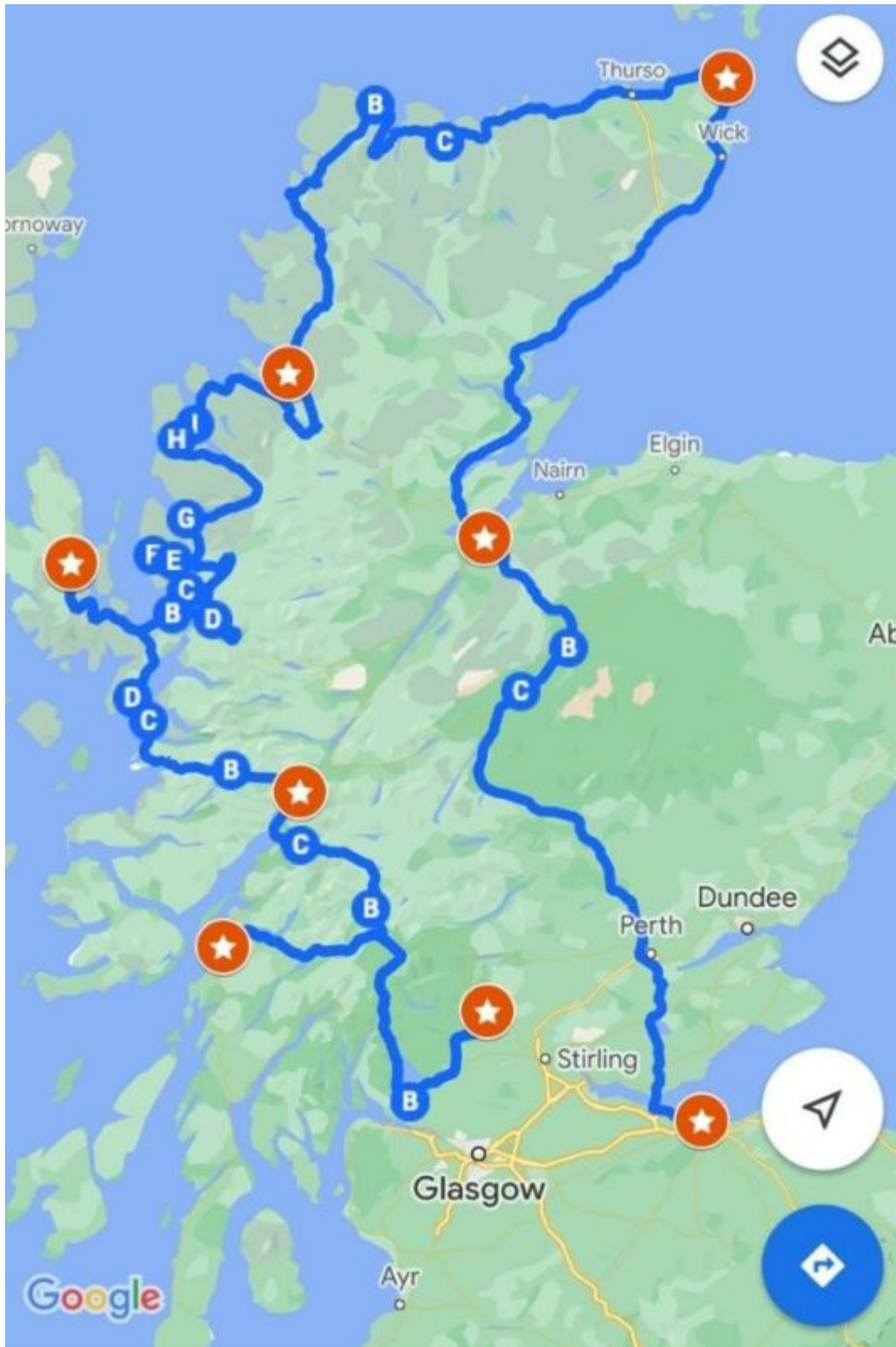
The itinerary starts and ends in Edinburgh and includes our recommended route, highlights to see every day plus where to stay and travel tips along the way. If you are planning to visit Scotland our ultimate Scottish road trip itinerary is an off the peg plan which means you can use as-is or if you prefer simply adapt it to suit your own interests and needs. Although planned for 17 days it is possible to shorten the itinerary to 10 days, 14 days or whatever length you require.

If you are planning to hire a car in the UK we recommend reading our practical **guide to car rental** (and driving in the UK) which has essential information, tips and points to consider.



*This post may contain compensated links, meaning that if you buy through them, we get a small commission at no extra cost. Please read our **full disclosure** for further information. As an Amazon Associate, I earn from qualifying purchases.*

Scotland Road Trip Map & Itinerary – Overview



[Click for our Scotland road trip map \(Google maps\)](#)

SCOTLAND ITINERARY AND ROAD TRIP ROUTE

Days 1/2/3 – Edinburgh

Days 3/4/5- Callander

Days 5/6/7 – Oban & Islands

Days 7/8/9 – Fort William

Days 9/10/11/12 – Isle of Skye

Days 12/13 – Ullapool (*North Coast 500*)

Days 13/14 – Durness/Tongue/Skail (*North Coast 500*)

Days 14/15 – John O’Groats (*North Coast 500*)


Days 15/16/17 – Inverness

Day 17 – Edinburgh

Days 1 and 2 – Edinburgh



On Day 1 arrive in the capital city of Scotland, Edinburgh, via train. If you are staying in London and plan to take a road trip around Scotland it is quick and easy to take the train between the two capitals. Read more about how to get from London to Edinburgh in this article.

 **Good to know** – *Journey time is around 4½ to 5 hours so if you leave London at 9 am you should get into Edinburgh at around 1 pm – 1.30 pm which is the perfect time to head to your accommodation to check-in.*

Arriving in Edinburgh early afternoon leaves a decent amount of the day for sightseeing particularly in summer. Day 2 is another day to explore Edinburgh. Below are the main highlights we recommend including in your itinerary.

Read our guide to [things to do in Edinburgh](#) which also includes suggested itinerary ideas.

What to see in Edinburgh

✓ *The Edinburgh **hop-on hop-off bus** stops at the main attractions and landmarks and is a great way to get around the city – [book your tickets here](#).*

✓ If your itinerary includes visiting **Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Yacht Britannia and the Palace of Holyroodhouse** we recommend [purchasing a city card](#) that includes entry to all 3 royal attractions plus the Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour for 48 hours. (Note that Holyroodhouse is closed Tues/Wed).

Edinburgh Castle – [Tour and skip-the-line ticket](#)

Palace of Holyroodhouse (The Palace of Holyroodhouse is closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays) – [Buy your ticket here](#)

The Royal Mile – start at the Castle and walk down to Holyroodhouse

Scott Monument

The Real Mary King's Close and [Underground Vaults Tour](#) – One of the most haunted places on earth apparently! 🗿

Where to stay in Edinburgh

£ – [Elder York Guest House](#) – This is our choice of accommodation whenever we stay in Edinburgh – excellent breakfast, near the train station and nice rooms. * *Note there are stairs to the accommodation so this is not suitable if you have any mobility issues.*

££ – [Ibis Syles Edinburgh St Andrews Square](#) – With 24-hour reception, a bar and restaurant and free WiFi.

£££ – [The Balmoral Hotel](#) – Edinburgh's most famous luxury hotel offers guests a Michelin-starred restaurant, a pool and a gym.

£££ – [The Witchery](#) – Lavishly furnished suites display gothic touches and 4-poster beds. Ideal location near Edinburgh Castle.

★ [Find more accommodation options in our guide to where to stay in Edinburgh](#)

Days 3/4/5 – Callander

 **Day 3 – Edinburgh to Callander (Via The Kelpies and Stirling)**

On day 3 we travel from Edinburgh to Callandar. We recommend picking up your hire car at the point you are ready to leave the city to avoid any unnecessary parking expenses (or difficulties)

Car hire options in Edinburgh include picking up at Waverley Train Station or Edinburgh Airport.

The drive from the centre of Edinburgh to Callander takes just over 1 hour. Distance is 52 miles (83 km) via the M9. This route will take you past Falkirk and Stirling.



 **Day 4 – Day trip to Pitlochry and Killin**



Experience beautiful landscapes on your journey

Logistics

Callander to Killin via A84

- Distance – 22 miles (35 km)
- Journey time – 35 mins

Killin to Kenmore and Aberfeldy via A827

- Distance – 23 miles (36 km)
- Journey time – 38 mins (stop off to admire the views)

Aberfeldy to Pitlochry via A827

- Distance – 15 miles (24 km)
- Journey time – 25 mins

Pitlochry to Callander via Cumrie Crieff on A9 & A822

- Distance – 68 miles (109 km)
- Journey time – 1 hour 44 mins

★ **Highlights of the day**

- Falls of Dochart
- Drive along the banks of Loch Tay

- Scenic beauty and picturesque views (*don't forget to charge your phone, pack memory cards for your cameras etc!*)
- Blair Athol distillery
- Pitlochry Dam and Fish Ladder walk
- Afternoon tea at Crieff Hydro Hotel (Beautiful views)

Where to stay in Callander

£ – Callander Hostel

££ – Highland Guest House

£££ – Roman Camp Country House Hotel

Day 5/6 – Oban

Day 5 – Callander to Oban via The Trossachs and Loch Lomond



Logistics

Day 5 is a day spent exploring the Trossachs National Park, Loch Lomond National Park and Loch Katrine (Callander is located on the edge of the park) before heading for 2 nights in Oban.

Take a picnic and enjoy the views and scent of the forests. Head to the village of Balloch (a 45-minute drive from Callander) for a boat trip across Loch Lomond.

Oban is a 1 hour 45 mins drive from Balloch where you will check into your accommodation for the next 2 nights.

Mileage Callander to Balloch is 28 miles (45 km)

Mileage from Balloch to Oban is 74 miles (119 km)

★ Highlights of the day

- Loch Lomond (the Queen of Scottish lochs)
- Loch Katrine
- Scenic views
- Boat trip across Loch Lomond from Balloch (*Island Discovery 2-Hour Cruise*)



Where to stay in Oban

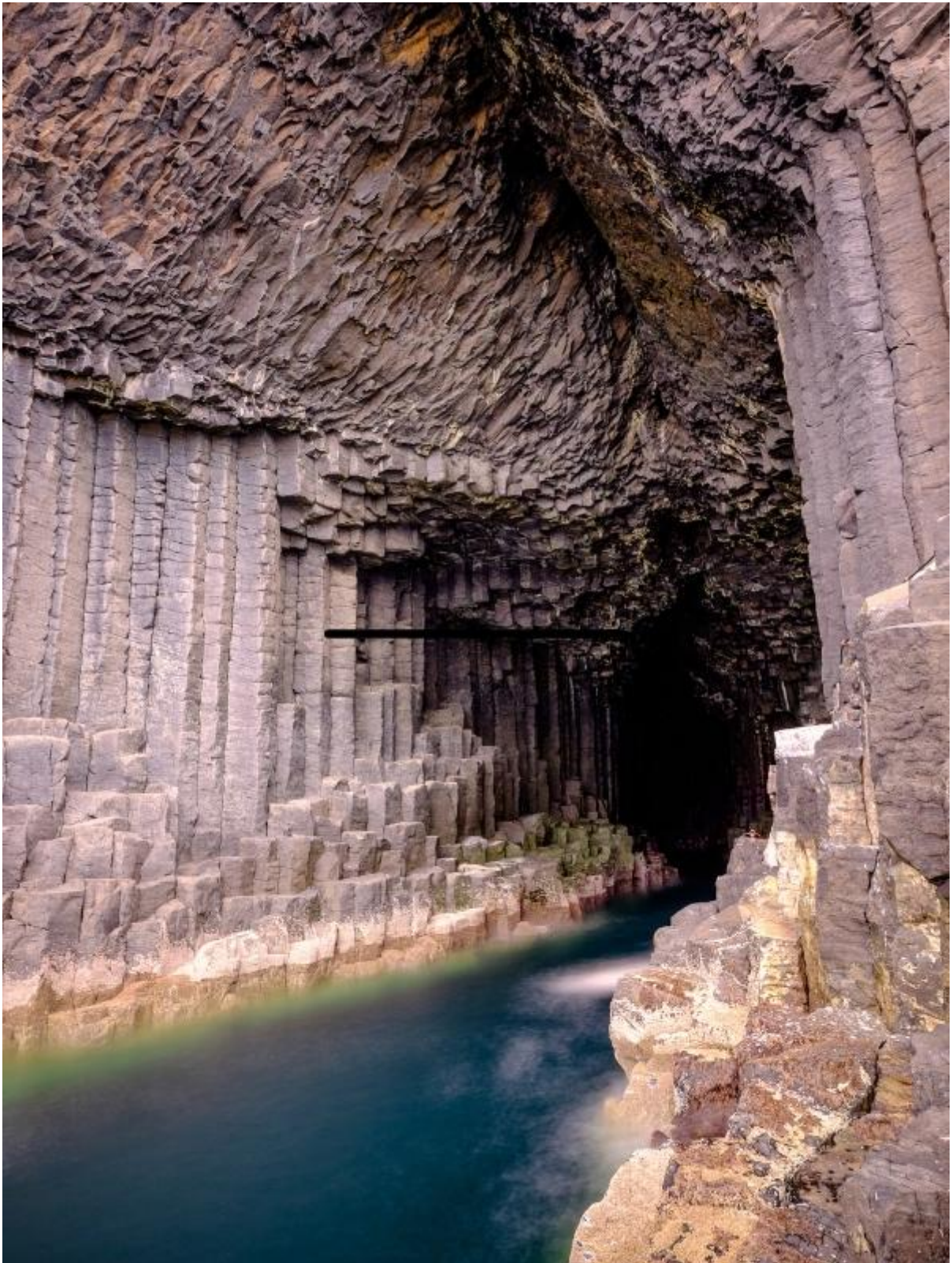
£ – **Oban Youth Hostel**

££ – **Greencourt Guest House**

£££ – **No.26 By The Sea**



Day 6 – Tour to Mull, Iona and Staffa



The boat tour visits Fingal's Cave

Logistics

Day 6 drive from your accommodation in Oban to join the 3 Isles tour of Mull, Iona and Staffa. This is an all-day tour departing from Oban at 9:55 and returning at 20:05.

★ Highlights of the day

- Ferry to Mull and road trip of the island

- Duart Castle
- Iona and Iona Abbey
- Boat trip to the Isle of Staffa to see Fingal's Cave

Days 7/8/9 – Fort William

Day 7 – Oban to Fort William



Logistics

Today we drive from Oban to Fort William via Rannock Moor and Glen Coe on the A82. In our view, the drive through Glen Coe is one of the most spectacular drives in Scotland (if not the world) Rannock Moor is a barren and rugged landscape and is one of the most remote places in Britain.

Stop at the Rannock Moor viewpoint and enjoy the views over this incredible place.

Distance – 83 miles (133 km)

Journey time – 2 hours (but do plan to stop off and enjoy the views along the way)

★ Highlights of the day

Rannock Moor Viewpoint

Glen Etive (James Bond Skyfall drive)

Glen Coe – don't miss the new visitor's centre

Viewpoints along the way:

- Three sister's car park
- Buachaille Etive Mòr car park

Views of Ben Nevis (the UK's highest peak)

Where to stay in Fort William

£ – Garrison Cells

££ – The Garrison

£££ – Victoria House B&B

Day 8 – The Jacobite



The famous Jacobite steam train (the Hogwarts Express)



Logistics

Riding the Harry Potter train (or the Jacobite to give it its muggle name) is every Harry Potter fan's dream and is one of the most popular train journeys in the UK.

Read – [How to ride the Harry Potter train in Scotland](#)

★ Highlights of the day ☐

- Riding the train across the Glenfinnan Viaduct
- Observing the train from the Glenfinnan viewpoint crossing the viaduct later in the day
- Glenfinnan Church
- Neptune's Staircase

Day 9/10/11/12 – Isle of Skye

Day 9 – Fort William to Skye via Mallaig



Logistics

Drive from Fort William to Mallaig which takes around 1 hour. Distance 43 miles (69 km) via A830. Cross over from Mallaig to Armadale on Skye via the CalMac ferry.

The ferry takes 30 mins. There are xx departures per day. Book asap as this is a very popular route.

On arrival at Armadale, you will head to your accommodation. We recommend staying around Portree and exploring the island from there as your base.

Drive time from Armadale to Portree is around 1 hour via the A851 and A87. Distance is 42 miles (62 km)

★ **Highlights of the day**

- Scenic views on drive from Fort William to Mallaig
- Ferry crossing
- Drive to Portree (depending on crossing time you can stop and enjoy the scenery along the way)

Where to stay in Skye

£ – **Sonas, Dundans**

££ – Loch Eyre House

£££ – Raasay House Hotel

 **Days 10/11 – Exploring Skye**





Logistics

We have 2 full days to explore the Isle of Skye.

We plan to drive the western driving loop on Day 10 and the northern driving loop on Day 11.

Many of the roads in Skye are narrow single-file lanes and you will need to pay attention to other road users (and animals!) as you drive.

★ Highlights of the days

Day 10

Dunvegan Castle

Neist Point Lighthouse

Talisker Distillery

The Fairy Pools

Sligachan Old Bridge

Day 11

Old Man of Storr

Kilt Rock and Mealt Falls

Uig

The Fairy Glen

Read – *One day itinerary for the Isle of Skye*

Day 12/13 – Ullapool





Logistics

Check out from accommodation today and drive across the Skye bridge to the mainland and the Kyle of Lochalsh. The distance from Portree to the Kyle of Lochalsh via A87 is 50 mins – 34 miles/55 km.

The destination for this evening is Ullapool but there are a couple of places worth exploring along the way.

1. Plockton – 14 minutes from Kyle of Lochalsh (6 miles/ 10 km)
2. Eilean Donan Castle – Drive from Plockton to Eilean Donan Castle is around 20 minutes via A87. (11 miles/18 km)

The last leg of the journey today is from Eilean Donan Castle to Ullapool. This takes around 3 hours via Poolewe on the A890 and A832. Distance is 120 miles (193 km) You are now driving the famous North Coast Scotland route.

★ Highlights of the day

- Plockton – Beautiful village famously featuring in the Hamish MacBeth TV series
- Eilean Donan Castle – £10 admission charge for adults
- Driving over the famous Bealach Na Ba road from Kishorn to Applecross!

Where to stay in Ullapool

£ – Dacama House

££ – Broomview Cottage B&B

Day 13/14 – Durness & Tongue



Logistics

First leg – Ullapool to Durness via Scourie on the A835, A894 and A838. Distance – 67 miles/109 km. Time – 1 hour 45 mins.

Second leg – Durness to Tongue on the A838 Distance – 29 miles/47 kms. Time – 1 hour

Accommodation for the night is in Skail (23 miles from Tongue) which adds another 30 mins to the day's driving time but accommodation is available in Tongue too.

Plan longer for each leg due to stopping to enjoy scenic views, unscheduled delays such as traffic/wildlife/sheep and rest stops.

★ **Highlights of the day**

Clachtoll Beach

Clashnessie Beach

Smoo Cave

[Golden Eagle Zipline](#)

Where to stay in Durness or Tongue

£ – Wee Hoose Glamping Pod

££ – Farr Bay Inn

£££ – Altnaharra Hotel

Day 14/15 – John O’Groats





Logistics

Take the coastal road today from Tongue/Skail to John O' Groats via the A836.

From our recommended accommodation in Skail the distance is 62 miles (99 km). From Tongue, the distance is 64 miles (103 km)

Journey time to John O'Groats is around 1 hour 45 mins.

★ Highlights of the day

- Dunnet Head
- St John's Point
- Stacks of Duncansby

Where to stay in John O'Groats

£ – Hamnavoe B&B

££ – The Anchorage B&B

££ – Northern Sands Hotel

Day 15/16/17 – Inverness



Logistics

Leave John O’Groats and head south to our last stop in the Scottish Highlands – the city of Inverness.

Journey time is 2 hours 40 mins via A99 and A9

Distance is 119 miles (192 km)

Where to stay in Inverness

£ – Alba B&B

££ – Heathmount Hotel

£££ – Bunchrew House Hotel

Day 16 – Inverness



Visit Urquhart castle on the banks of Loch Ness

Logistics of the day

Today is spent exploring the main sights and landmarks in and around Inverness. The itinerary for today includes visiting Culloden, the Clava Cairns, Urquhart Castle and Loch Ness.

Read – Day trips from Inverness

★ Highlights of the day

- Culloden Battlefield
- Loch Ness and cruise – there are a few companies that offer boat trips on Loch Ness or you can take a day tour from Inverness if you prefer
- Castle Urquart

Day 17 – Edinburgh



Logistics

Today drive back to Edinburgh from Inverness to return the rental car. The drive time is dependent on the option you choose. The 3 options are

1. A9 3 hours – 156 miles (250 km)
2. A9/M9 3 hours 30 mins – 179 miles (288 km) This goes via Stirling

3. A93 4 hours – 171 miles (275 km) through the Cairngorms National Park and down via Perth to Edinburgh

★ Highlights of the day

If you have time we recommend option 3 through the Cairngorms as this is a beautifully scenic route.

Where to next?

Once back in Edinburgh you can connect with onward travel via the train station or airport.

We had planned to take the Caledonian Sleeper back to London which is a great way to get back to the UK capital and save time (as it is an overnight service)but have changed our plans to meet friends in York.

Frequently asked questions about planning a road trip in Scotland

What is the best road trip in Scotland?

The most famous road trip in Scotland is the North Coast 500 but there are many fantastic road trips in Scotland to choose from.

These include

- South West Coast 300 – Through Dumfries & Galloway and southern Ayrshire.
- North East 250 – Includes the Malt Whisky Trail, the Cairngorms National Park Aberdeen and the Moray Firth Coast
- The Borders Historic Route

How long is a road trip around Scotland?

As you can see from the above road trips they can vary. Some of Scotland's road trips can be as little as 90 miles (the Snow Roads Scenic Route in the Cairngorms) to 500 kms for the North Coast 500.

How many days do you need to tour Scotland?

We recommend planning at least a week for your road trip – longer if you can! There is so much to see from historic castles to stunning coastlines, fishing villages, lochs and munros, to islands more!

Take your time – stop and enjoy the beautiful scenery along the way!

Plan your trip to Scotland

Read more in our extensive guides to Scotland

Scotland Travel Guide

Guide to the different regions of Scotland

19 beautiful places to visit in Scotland

Guide to Scottish Islands

Books to read about Scotland (or best movies set in Scotland)

Best Outlander Tours in Scotland 2022