



Skye & the Highlands



Thursday, July 23. Departure this evening from your international gateway city.

Friday, July 24. Upon arrival in Edinburgh you will be met and transferred to your city-center hotel. There will be time to unpack, relax, and rest from the flight before an orientation to this beautiful city, sometimes characterized as “The Athens of the North.” The rest of the afternoon is free to unwind and begin exploring the surrounding neighborhood. A dinner party at the hotel welcomes us to Scotland. **(D) Overnight: Edinburgh**

Saturday, July 25. This morning a local guide introduces the city, beginning with a tour of Edinburgh Castle that includes a visit to the “Honours of Scotland,” the Crown Jewels. From here we’ll explore the Royal Mile, stopping to see St. Giles Cathedral and the Palace of Holyrood House. Then it’s on up Calton Hill and into the “New Town,” built in the 18th century. The afternoon and evening are free. **(B) Overnight: Edinburgh**

Sunday, July 26. Leaving the capital, we head north across the Forth Bridge. We’ll make a stop in Pitlochry, famous for its woolen mills, as we continue up into the Highlands. A short drive brings us to Blair Atholl, where we’ll stop for lunch and visit the castle – the Dukes of Atholl are the only nobility in Britain still allowed to maintain a private army! Further north to Inverness, the “capital of the Highlands.” There will be time to relax and freshen up before dinner at the hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Inverness**

Monday, July 27. A morning excursion takes us to Culloden, the site of the battle in 1745 where Scottish hopes of independence were dashed by the “butcher” Cumberland and his Hanoverian infantry. We’ll return to Inverness for a free afternoon and evening in the city. **(B) Overnight: Inverness**

Tuesday, July 28. Our morning begins with a cruise on Loch Ness ending at the romantic ruins of Urquhart Castle. We’ll disembark, meet our bus, and stop in at the Loch Ness Monster Visitor Centre. After lunch we’ll drive across the heather-clad moors to Eilean Donan Castle for a visit, and from there it is a short journey across the new bridge to the Isle of Skye, where we continue on to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Skye**

Wednesday, July 29. A panorama of Skye today, with highlights that include a visit to Dunvegan Castle, the oldest inhabited castle in Britain and home to the Chiefs of MacLeod for more than 800 years. We’ll also visit the Talisker Whisky Distillery, the island’s only distillery. We’ll gather for dinner at the hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Skye**

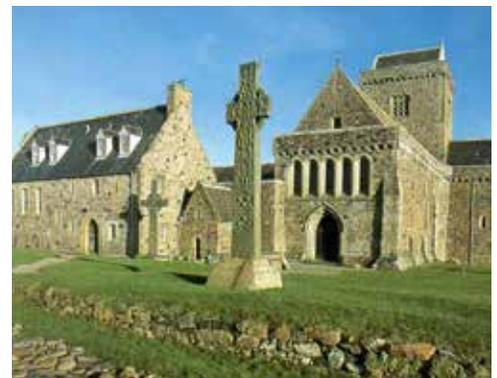
Thursday, July 30. We cross by ferry back to the mainland and follow the coast south. Skirting around Fort William, we stop in the breathtakingly beautiful and haunting valley of Glen Coe, literally the “Valley of Weeping.” It was here that the MacDonalds were betrayed and brutally murdered by Campbell of Glenlyon in 1692. The Visitor Centre’s short film recounts the events leading up to that fateful day. A short drive brings us to the ferry where we cross over to the Isle of Mull and the town of Tobermory where we have dinner and spend the night. **(B, D) Overnight: Mull**

Friday, July 31. Today is a full-day excursion across the Island of Mull to the holy island of Iona. Before we board the ferry to Iona we’ll visit the Colomba Centre, which retells the story of St. Columba’s life. Once on Iona we’ll explore the Abbey complex, including Columba’s Shrine. We return by bus and ferry to Tobermory for a free evening. **(B) Overnight: Mull**

Saturday, August 1. Departing the Highlands, we cross the vastness of Rannoch Moor and travel along the banks of lovely Loch Lomond to our hotel in Stirling. After checking in we will have plenty of time this afternoon to visit Stirling Castle, set atop a craggy rock, controlling the gateway between the Highlands and the Lowlands of Scotland. Our final dinner party this evening brings us together to share stories of our adventures. **(B, D) Overnight: Stirling**

Sunday, August 2. It is a short drive from Stirling back to the airport in Edinburgh for return flights to the U.S.A. **(B)**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, D - dinner



The Abbey of Iona