

SCOTLAND

The Isle of Skye

A Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep in to the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium

accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine

or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **Pre-Tour Edinburgh Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.



Overview

Unparalleled scenery, incredible walks, local folklore, and history come together effortlessly in the Highlands and Western Islands. Your adventure begins in Inverness, “capital of the Highlands,” with a tour of the Culloden Battlefields, scene of the last Jacobite Rebellion. The Isle of Skye, buffering Scotland’s northwest from the Atlantic, contrasts rocky shoreline and plunging cliffs with soft white-sand beaches and timeless villages in placid bays. Walks reveal the rugged interior, and, rising to headlands, distant views of islands and mainland, shimmering water contrasting with verdant pasture. Scotland’s history comes alive along the way, in stories and sights, castles and country-house hotels. A place where the concept of time loses its usual significance as millions of years of history lie beneath every footprint. Accommodations represent a confluence of comfort, coziness, and elegance, perfected in plush rooms and fireside salons. In the some of the best dining rooms on the Isle of Skye, quality Scottish fare is always on the menu—fresh salmon, grass-fed beef, and fine malts.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Tour of Culloden Battlefields; 1 mile, easy. Inverness riverside walk; 2.5 miles, easy. Transfer to the Isle of Skye 2.5 hours.

You meet your guides and the rest of your fellow travel companions and begin the day by walking the nearby Culloden Battlefields. In April 1746, this site saw the last pitched battle on British soil, when the British Army decimated Bonnie Prince Charlie's small force in a brief battle that had a lasting effect on Scottish, British, and European history. The morning concludes with a pleasant, easy walk along the banks of the River Ness to the charming Ness Islands, a series of small, wooded islands surrounded by the surging river.

After lunch in town, your drive to the Isle of Skye begins along the shore of Loch Ness, Scotland's most famous loch and, at 23 miles, one of the longest. After passing the remains of Urquhart Castle, your route heads west through Glen Shiel, taking in some of the most stunning scenery in the Scottish Highlands. Shortly before reaching the Isle of Skye, you make a brief stop at the restored 13th-century Eilean Donan castle, one of Scotland's iconic landmarks. You cross the Skye Bridge and from here it is a short drive to today's final destination: the charming Eilean Iarmain Hotel, located on tranquil Isle Ornsay on the Sound of Sleat.

Eilean Iarmain, Sleat

This charming hotel, with spectacular views overlooking the Sound of Sleat on the Isle of Skye, has comfortable rooms with traditional furnishings, and in its public spaces, traditional Highland decor featuring fireplaces and tartan fabrics. Fine cuisine is served by candlelight in the wood-paneled dining room and the on-site bar offers a wide selection of whiskies, local ales, and traditional Scottish music.

DAY 2

The Cleared Coast: Boreraig and Suisnish; 7.5 miles, moderate, or the Marble Line and Cill Chriosd, 4 miles, easy

You begin the day with a copious breakfast. Today's longer walk offers magnificent views of Skye's rugged interior and coast—mountains in the distance, glistening water in the foreground. Beginning at the ruined 16th-century church of Cill Chriosd near Broadford, a gentle initial climb rises to the route of a narrow-gauge railway line that ran between Broadford pier and the Kilchrist marble quarries. Skye marble was highly prized, being used in Iona Abbey and Hamilton Palace, and this series of quarries had been worked for at least a century when they closed in 1912. Eventually the track becomes a path and begins to descend coastward to the abandoned village of Boreraig. Although one of the most beautiful settings on the island, in 1853 all the residents were evicted and their homes destroyed to make way for the more-profitable sheep farming; all that remains today are lichen-covered ruins surrounded by lush green pasture.

From Boreraig, the route hugs the coastline, passing below several waterfalls, with a chance of spotting seals and otters. A brief climb brings you to your picnic spot on a high promontory, and soon afterwards you come upon the ruins of the village of Suisnish, which suffered a similar fate to that of Boreraig. The final part of the walk follows a stony track down to the beach at Camas Malag, affording superb views of the southern end of the Cuillin, Bla Bheinn, and the Broadford Red Hills.

Alternatively, today's shorter option begins just north of Broadford. The first part of the walk follows a pleasant lane past the farms of Old Corry and the ruins of Coirechatachan (the Corrie of the Cat Lairs). The house belonged to the Chief of the Makinnons of Strath, and the famous literary friends James Boswell and Samuel Johnson stayed here as the chief's guests during their tour of the Hebrides in 1773. The path now crosses the Broadford River then climbs gently



up past a knoll known as An Sidhean (the Fairy Hill). These are the remains of a chambered cairn—the communal burial places of the first Neolithic settlers who farmed the fertile coastal areas of Skye.

After crossing the road, you join the Marble Line, the bed of the narrow-gauge railway. The route leads past the

lower quarry to the higher quarry, where the circular remains of a winding wheel used to pull wagons up the steep incline can be seen. From here, we turn down toward the valley, with outstanding views of Blaven, one of the Cuillin peaks. This section of the walk ends with a visit to the ruined 16th-century church of Cill Chriosd. You can now either opt for the short ride back to the hotel and a chance to relax, or transfer down to the beach at Camas Malag, where you can enjoy a pleasant walk up the track towards Suishish to meet up with the remainder of the group.

Eilean Iarmain, Sleat

DAY 3

Ferry to Isle of Raasay. Churchton Bay to Inverarish via the Emigrants Trail; 3-5 miles, easy

After breakfast you depart for the scenic Isle of Raasay, an island of the Inner Hebrides, lying in deep channels between the Isle of Skye and the Scottish mainland. The name Raasay is from the Norse for “red deer,” and its stark beauty and independent culture were portrayed in the 2006 novel *Calum’s Road* about a resolute crofter (farmer) in the island’s north.

The short ferry ride from Skye brings you into Churchton Bay, where you begin the day’s walk, closely observed by two huge, eroded stone sculptures of mermaids on the hillock just above the pier. A delightful path leads round Raasay Harbor and through a thick stand of rhododendrons to emerge above the beautiful North Bay, sandy at low tide, and with broad views towards Skye’s Trotternish coastline. A grassy path hugs the coast between beach and forest and then rises to cross a quiet lane and climb gently on a wide grassy path through a lovely pine wood. Soon you come to a gigantic stone wall—the wall of the old orchard of Raasay House, though the fruit trees are long since gone. A little

further is Loch a Mhuillinn and a choice of routes. The shorter route leads directly to your lunchtime destination at Raasay House, while the longer versions take you via a section of the so-called “Burma Road” and the Emigrants Trail on the outskirts of the village of Inverarish.



Many islanders from Raasay, evicted from their homes by landlords in the 19th century, set off for new lives across the oceans. The delightful short Emigrants Trail takes you to a series of plinths that chart the travels of these pioneering Ratharsairich (Raasay people). Lunch is at Raasay House, a completely refurbished and renovated historic clan mansion house, once the clan seat of the MacLeods of Raasay. Boswell and Johnson visited Raasay House in the 1770s and wrote, “We found nothing but civility, elegance, and plenty.”

After your own plentiful lunch you stroll down to the pier to take the mid-afternoon ferry back to the mainland and settle into your home for the next two nights—a hotel in a magnificent setting popular with walkers and lovers of wild Highland scenery for over 180 years.

Sligachan Hotel, Sligachan

Originally built as an inn in the 1830s, the Sligachan Hotel now has a great blend of modern comforts and friendly informality, a favorite among walkers and climbers. Please note that the rooms in this hotel are simpler than those of the other hotels on this tour; however, the location and local ownership enhance the authenticity of the tour and access to walking opportunities.

DAY 4

Sligachan Hotel to the Fairy Pools; 5 miles, moderate (with some wet sections)
OR Talisker Bay and the Fiskavaig Peninsula; 3 miles easy to moderate

A magnificent traverse over the Cuillin Hills from Glen Sligachan to Glen Brittle, today’s walk begins right from your hotel. A well-marked trail ascends gradually into the heart of the Cuillins where you may be lucky enough to sight a golden eagle soaring over the hilltops and valleys. After approximately 1½ hours, you arrive at a peaceful lochan on Bruach na Frithe, from where, on a clear day, you have extensive views over the whole of the northern part of the island and

down into Glen Brittle. To the west is the imposing Coire na Creiche, in 1601 the site of the last clan battle fought on the island between the MacDonalds and the MacLeods. On leaving this dramatic viewpoint, one option traverses the lower slopes of the mountain (this can be muddy and wet), following the trail alongside the Fairy Pools—a series of translucent aquamarine pools linked by small waterfalls and rapids, tempting for a dip on a hot day and enchanting whatever the weather. Alternatively you can continue on the quieter, higher trail.

The morning's gentler alternative takes you past stately Talisker House, which greatly impressed the diarist Boswell during his stay there in 1773. You then proceed to the wide sweep of Talisker Bay, spectacularly sandwiched between impressive high cliffs at the foot of Glen Oraid and with a huge sea stack and waterfalls adding to the magnificent scene. Retracing your steps back to the vehicle, you may opt to continue your walk on a pleasant upland track, which climbs gently from Talisker Farm over the Fiskavaig peninsula to the crofting settlement of Fiskavaig near Carbost. (The name Fiskavaig originally comes from the Norse, meaning "fish bay.") This afternoon, you have the opportunity to visit the famous Talisker distillery—the Isle of Skye's only whisky distillery.

Sligachan Hotel, Sligachan

DAY 5

Ramasaig, the Hoe and Waterstein Cliffs; 6 miles, mainly moderate. Or Coral Beaches and Two Churches; 5 miles mainly easy. Afternoon visit to Dunvegan Castle.

Today, after a wholesome Scottish breakfast, you visit the most westerly part of the island. The longer walk takes you to the imposing high cliffs of Waterstein Head and offers unsurpassed coastal views. Beginning from the isolated farmstead of Ramasaig, your route follows the old cart track heading south towards Lorgill Bay. Below you in the sheltered and fertile valley lie heaps of grass and moss-covered stones, the remains of the homes of the crofters evicted in 1830 and sent to Nova Scotia on board the ship *Midlothian*. You then traverse open terrain to reach a spectacularly located promontory high above Hoe Point. This affords magnificent views of the dramatic Duirinish coast and, in the distance, the three impressive sea stacks known as MacLeod's Maidens. The tallest stack—the mother—rises over 200 feet out of the sea, accompanied by her two daughters. Finding the perfect picnic spot, you parallel the side of The Hoe and then climb gradually to the cliff edge at Gob na Hoe with tremendous views of Waterstein Head and Moonen Bay ahead. From this point

the path follows the edge of the cliffs, habitat of nesting seabirds, and you are accompanied by their calls as you make your way down to Ramasaig Bay, close to where the Ramasaig Burn drops an impressive 60 feet into the sea. You return to the walk's start point through the low stone walls of the once thriving crofting settlement.



A less challenging alternative are two low level short walks near Dunvegan Castle. The first walk is to the spectacular Coral Beaches—one of the most beautiful coastal locations on Skye. The walk affords views across Loch Dunvegan to Borreraig and Dunvegan Head, with the chance of seeing inquisitive seals popping up out of the water. A beautiful sight, the Coral Beaches appear almost tropical on a sunny day. The “sand,” however, is actually dried, calcified sea weed known as maerl, mixed with thousands of tiny, delicate snail shells. Before retracing your steps you can climb a little flat-topped hill known as “Cnoc Mor a Ghrobain” directly behind the beach to enjoy the extensive views.

The second walk, known as the “Two Churches,” begins from the Castle parking lot. The path climbs to the edge of the woods and then onto the open moor, with views of Macleods Tables, and the distant Cuillin. As you begin to descend, you see a prominent Standing Stone on the hill to the right. Although the height and shape of a prehistoric monument, the stone was erected on midsummer’s day 2000 by the local villagers, using only hand power and ropes. A brief detour takes you to the ruined St. Mary’s Church, dating back to 1694 and burial place of some of the Macleod chiefs, as well as generations of MacCrimmons, hereditary pipers to the Macleods. A short walk along the road brings you to the current parish church built in the 19th century before ending in a forest with some interesting geological formations. After lunch in the Castle café you have the chance to visit Dunvegan Castle, the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland. It has been the stronghold of the chiefs of the Clan MacLeod for 800 years and is still the home of the present Chief. On display are many clan treasures, the most famous of which is the Fairy Flag, a sacred banner dating back at least 14 centuries, which, according to legend, has miraculous powers. Surrounding the castle are magnificent gardens, originally laid out in the 18th century and consisting of both formal gardens and woodland glades. Your final

accommodation is a luxurious hotel on the outskirts of Portree, the capital of the Isle of Skye.

Cuillin Hills Hotel, Portree

A 19th-century hunting lodge once belonging to the MacDonald clan, this renovated, elegant hotel is in a stunning location overlooking Portree Bay and the majestic Cuillin Hills. Guest rooms blend classic decor with contemporary comfort. Inviting public spaces include a Victorian-style fireside drawing room. Both the fine dining room and more casual brasserie overlook the lovely gardens and harbor.



DAY 6

Flora Macdonald's Grave and Skye Museum of Island Life. Rubha Hunish; 4 miles, easy to moderate with shorter, easier option available. Or Quirang, 4 miles, moderate. Optional afternoon free time in Portree

You awaken to magnificent scenery and an ample breakfast then embark on a scenic drive north along the coast of the Trotternish peninsula. In the tiny settlement of Kilmuir, you first visit the grave of the famed 18th-century heroine Flora Macdonald, who assisted Bonnie Prince Charlie in his flight through the Highlands after the Battle of Culloden. Nearby is the Skye Museum of Island Life, a privately owned outdoor museum housed in original traditional thatched cottages. The collection of tools and artifacts depicts the simple lives of local crofters in the 19th century and emphasizes the tenacity required in their daily struggle to survive in this inhospitable environment.

You then embark on the morning's walk to the tip of Skye's most northerly point, Rubha Hunish. The walk begins near a red telephone booth, incongruous in this remote area. The ruins of the abandoned village of Erisco soon come into view as you ascend gently northwards onto Meall Tuath, eventually reaching a former coastguard lookout overlooking the Little Minch, an important shipping channel. A volunteer-maintained hut offers shelter from the wind if needed and from this spectacular location the north cliffs plunge down hundreds of feet, with magnificent views across the sea to the mountains on the Isle of Harris. The headland's northernmost tip is the best place on Skye for spotting dolphins, porpoise, and whales. The trail circles back along the coast with views of the

melancholy ruins of 13th-century Duntulm Castle, once the seat of the chiefs of Clan MacDonald of Sleat, and for several centuries an important clan stronghold.

A more challenging option for this morning, weather conditions permitting, is a walk over the Quirang—a journey through an elevated wild landscape of fantastic rock formations, pinnacles, and buttresses. From the starting point, a narrow path traverses a grassy ridge then crosses a rocky gully before ascending a rough path among the scattered rocks. Magnificent views of Kilmaluag Bay open up as you reach the highest point of the walk. Further ahead is a valley of austere rocky shapes, but here you begin your descent on a well trodden trail through the heather-filled valley to Loch Langaig. From here it is a short walk along the quiet road to the lunch spot.

After lunch, you may choose to explore the pleasant harbor of Portree, the largest town on the Isle of Skye—its cultural center and an active fishing and pleasure port. Or, you may take a short coastal walk near your hotel. Later, you regroup and enjoy a final evening's celebratory dinner at your hotel's excellent restaurant.

Cuillin Hills Hotel, Portree

DAY 7

Departure from Edinburgh

After a sumptuous breakfast, you depart for Edinburgh, an approximate six-hour drive. En route, you stop for lunch at the popular House of Bruar near Pitlochry. You arrive in Edinburgh in the mid- to late afternoon.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments (lobby), Inverness, Scotland, 9:00 a.m.

8-16 Ness Bank
Inverness IV2 4SG, Scotland
Tel 011 44 1463 234308

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Eilean Iarmain

Sleat, Isle of Skye
Tel 011 44 1470 833 332
Email hotel@eileaniarmain.co.uk
Eileaniarmain.co.uk
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 3 & 4

Sligachan Hotel

Sligachan, Isle of Skye
Tel 011 44 1478 650 204
Email reservations@sligachan.co.uk
Sligachan.co.uk
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 5 & 6

Cuillin Hills Hotel

Portree, Isle of Skye
Tel 011 44 1478 612 003
Email info@cuillinhills-hotel-skye.co.uk
Cuillinhills-hotel-skye.co.uk
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

The George Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

One Call International

Email mail@oncallinternational.com

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.838.3169

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

7 days, 6 nights

DEPARTURE DATES (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

June 12-18, 2016

July 10-16, 2016

July 17-23, 2016

August 7-13, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY

\$4,598 (Single +\$848)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions **for our scheduled group departures**, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

PRIVATE TOUR-ONLY PRICE FROM

6–9 guests: \$4,798 (Single +\$848)

10+ guests: \$4,598 (Single +\$848)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from April 15 through September 30.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments (lobby), Inverness, Scotland, 9:00 a.m.

TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

The George Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with an average of 3 to 8 miles of walking daily. The trails are a combination of flat paved roads; grassy, gravel, or smooth dirt paths; damp, boggy areas; working pasture land; and some small stream crossings, which may be rocky and slippery when wet. Heavy-duty waterproof hiking boots are a must for the wet and muddy terrain that can be encountered throughout. It will also be vital to bring a

good waterproof jacket and pants, in case of inclement weather. Elevation gain and loss is not significant, with only one or two short steep sections. For those who do not want the more challenging walks, there will often be easier options (but equally scenic walks!) with shorter mileages available. Scottish history and traditions are framed by the breathtaking contrasting scenery of mountains and water—islands, lochs, cliffs, and forest.

INCLUSIONS

- » Two expert, local guides (for groups of 8 or more), with you 24/7
- » All meals except for one lunch; wine and local beer included with dinners
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

GRATUITIES

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

If you are interested in reserving the **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments (lobby), Inverness, Scotland, 9:00 a.m.

Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Inverness Airport (INV), Inverness, Scotland

hial.co.uk/inverness-airport/

There are no direct flights from the U.S. to Inverness. However, there are daily flights via London's Gatwick, Manchester, Amsterdam, and other European cities to Inverness. A common airline flying from all three of the cities listed is EasyJet (easyjet.com).

Should you wish to fly into Edinburgh or Glasgow, there are train services from both of these cities to Inverness. These journeys take 3 to 4 hours, depending on the number of stops. More information on timetables and train schedules may be found at scotrail.co.uk.

GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT

Inverness Airport is approximately 7 miles from The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments. A taxi to The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments from the airport costs approximately 25 GBPs.

If you are arriving by train, a taxi from Inverness Train Station to the The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments costs around 5 GBPs. (All taxi prices are approximate and vary depending on the time of day you arrive and the traffic.) If you wish to walk from the train station to The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments, it takes around 15 minutes.

Here are the directions:

Exit the railway station and turn down Union Street (opposite the station). At the end of Union Street, turn left onto Church Street and walk to the end

(Oliver's Coffee Shop). Then turn to your right so you are walking down to the river. Once you get to the river, follow it along to the left below the castle; the road will split into two. Take the road along the river and after a few minutes you will come to the hotel, which is on the left overlooking the river on Ness Bank.

PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments, your meeting-point hotel.

The Glen Mhor Hotel and Apartments

8-16 Ness Bank

Inverness IV2 4SG, Scotland

Tel 011 44 1463 234308

Email enquiries@glen-mhor.com

theinvernesshotel.co.uk

Rates from 229 GBPs per double/twin (includes breakfast).

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

The George Hotel, Edinburgh, Scotland, 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or

bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

Scotland at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.



Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some pounds in small denominations.

CURRENCY

The United Kingdom uses the pound (GBP). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards).

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

Scotland is in the Greenwich Mean Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus five hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Scotland country code: +44

Cell phone coverage throughout Scotland is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.



ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in Scotland. Plugs have three flat blades arranged in a triangular formation. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

Scotland's geographic location—on the edge of the European continent and surrounded on three sides by the sea—results in weather that is quite varied. In summer, the prevailing westerly and northwesterly winds have a cooling effect. Although the British Isles are known for rainy weather, most of the rain falls between October and January, with the driest weather from April to August. The pleasant summer days are long, with daylight on sunny days lasting until 10 p.m.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

In addition to a wide range of international cuisine, menus in Scotland often feature its fresh fish and other seafood. From local bakeries, you can enjoy a delicious range of oatcakes and scones. Scotland's cheeses, notably Islay and Orkney, are becoming increasingly well known. Traditional Scottish dishes include haggis (a type of lamb sausage), Scotch broth (a vegetable soup), salted or smoked haddock, trout, salmon, or game, and porridge oats. Scotland is also famous for its excellent Aberdeen Angus beef, succulent lamb, and fresh fruit-and-custard-type desserts, such as cream crowdie and cloutie dumplings.

LIFE IN SCOTLAND



Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Most department stores and supermarkets are open from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (with some branches open on Saturday mornings).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:30 to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants and pubs, lunch is served from noon to 2:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (but verify locally). Afternoon Tea is usually taken around 4:00 p.m.

Travel Tip

Scotch

While there is no lack of delicious locally brewed beers and ales in Scottish pubs, whisky (it takes an “e” in Ireland and the U.S.) is clearly Scotland’s national drink. The word whisky, in fact, is derived from the Gaelic for “water of life” (*uisge beatha*). Like wine, Scotch single malts are classified according to region for both historical reasons and the drink’s properties. Officially, Scotch whisky must be produced in a distillery from water and malted barley in Scotland. A single malt is a whisky produced only at a single distillery by batch distillation, whereas a blended whisky indicates a blend from different distilleries. A wealth of information on Scotch—its history, production, and distillery tours—(and all of Scotland’s food and drink) is available at eatscotland.com, the official eating and drinking site of Scotland’s national tourism organization.

Tipping

If service is not included at a restaurant or pub (check your bill), it is customary to leave 10 to 20 percent of the total. Taxi drivers receive 10 to 15 percent of the fare. For luggage assistance, a small tip is appropriate, at your discretion.

Cultural Events

Edinburgh’s International Festivals

Cultural activity in Edinburgh reaches its peak during the month of August. All art forms are presented during the prestigious Edinburgh International Festival. Please visit the following website for information and dates: eif.co.uk. There is also the annual Military Tattoo—an event rich in tradition and pageantry. Information on the Tattoo can be found at edintattoo.co.uk. Because of the popularity of these festivals, it is recommended that you make travel arrangements, including hotel reservations, as far in advance as possible.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Scottish tourist board official site
visitscotland.com

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Scottish public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Scottish government's website, scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/bank-holidays, for a list of public holidays. A list of festivals and an event finder by region is available on visitscotland.com/en-us/see-do/events/.



TRAVEL IN SCOTLAND

Airports

The majority of international flights arrive at Edinburgh and Glasgow airports. Information on these airports and domestic flights is also available at visitscotland.com under “Travel”.

Train

ScotRail: scotrail.co.uk, the national railway company site with schedules, fares, and pass options.

Raileurope: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600: a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel).

Other local transportation

In addition to rail and airlines, Scotland also has an extensive bus or coach network that, for some towns and cities, may be more convenient and affordable than the train, see the Scottish Citylink website at www.citylink.co.uk.

Most major car rentals agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide assistance). For more information go to visitscotland.com, and then to the “Travel” tab.

Travel Tip

If you rent a car in Scotland, remember to drive on the left side of the road and to pass on the outside right lane—also important to keep in mind when crossing busy city streets! Here are the official rules of the road for all of Great Britain: direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Waterproof hiking boots or walking shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 3-5 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Wool or synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants or zip-off pants
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Medium-to heavyweight polar fleece or wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)

- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual.

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood. This gear must be of good quality and not just water resistant, but properly waterproof. It would also be a good idea to bring gaiters as this may keep your legs dry when walking through wet bracken or heather.
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Fleece or wool hat and gloves

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Telescopic walking stick(s). (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Midge repellent (can be purchased in pharmacies in Scotland) or insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel.
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original containers)

OPTIONAL

- » Binoculars
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen

- » Field guides
- » Bandana
- » Alarm clock
- » Folding umbrella
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not have them)