

## Scotland: The Highlands

### Tour-Only Itinerary

While many walking tours of Scotland miss out on the magic of Glencoe, this Country Walkers adventure lets you experience this breathtaking corner of the Scottish Highlands in all its pristine glory. Here, you'll walk through emerald forests to the stony pinnacle of Signal Rock—admiring views of shimmering Loch Leven below. We've found an iconic hiker's inn in Glencoe to host you—serving its own traditional cask-conditioned ales. Explore the shores of Loch Tay and discover ancient Scottish dwellings, in the evening, returning to your opulent lakeside estate. Tread in the footsteps of Rob Roy McGregor in Glen Ogle and explore historic Blair Castle—once the haunt of Mary Queen of Scots. With included visits to Glasgow and Edinburgh, the rustic beauty of the Highlands is contrasted by cities at the height of Scottish sophistication.



### Highlights

- Taste the honey-smooth, smoky flavor of handmade single-malt whiskey at the Blair Athol Distillery, where water from the Grampian mountains blends with ancient Highland malt to create the mellow and deep, well-rounded signature taste.
- Cruise on beautiful Loch Katrine, the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's poem "Lady of the Lake" and the novel *Rob Roy*.
- Walk amid the splendor of Scotland's peaceful interior, hiking through forests of ancient pines, past verdant pastures, and alongside gentle brooks and shimmering lochs.
- Learn how the hard-working Highland cows have adapted to the extreme weather conditions in the Highlands during a visit with this ancient cattle breed.
- Enter a world of privilege and splendor at historic Blair Castle—once the center of the 17th-century

Jacobite rising, and home to the Atholl family for over seven centuries.

## On all Fully-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



**Air Packages** include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate with an average of 2 to 7 miles of walking daily. The trails are a combination of flat paved roads; uneven grassy, gravel, or dirt paths, often with protruding rocks and tree roots; damp, boggy areas; working pasture land; and some small stream crossings, which may be rocky and slippery when wet. There are one or two short steep sections and descents (some descents are longer and involve going down steps) with an average elevation gain of up to 500 feet. There are occasional wooden step stiles over fences. For those who are not interested in the

more challenging walks, there will often be easier (and equally scenic!) options with shorter mileages available, over similar terrain. Scottish history and traditions are framed by the breathtaking contrasting scenery of mountains and water— islands, lochs, glens, moorland, cliffs, and forest.

## DAY 1

### Your Country Walkers Vacation Begins

*Section of the West Highland Way and Loch Lomond; 4.5 miles, easy to moderate; 1.5 miles, easy*

Your leaders will meet you at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby of the Blythswood Square Hotel in Glasgow. They'll be wearing Country Walkers shirts for easy identification. Please be dressed for walking.

Once your group has gathered, you'll drive to the picturesque village of Drymen. Today's walk follows a section of the West Highland Way—Scotland's premier long-distance footpath, which stretches 96 miles from Milngavie, just north of Glasgow, to Fort William. This scenic route takes you through open countryside and wooded areas, offering rewarding views over Loch Lomond. You'll meet the coach in Milton of Buchanan and drive a short distance to Balmaha, a charming village nestled on the shores of Loch Lomond.

Enjoy lunch at the Oak Tree Inn, a family-run establishment built from local slate and full of traditional character. Throughout your journey, you'll find that Scottish cuisine has moved well beyond its former reputation for blandness. Today's chefs bring vibrant flavors to the table using fresh meats and produce from local farms, as well as fish from the nearby North Sea and Atlantic Ocean. Memorable meals will be a highlight of your experience, complemented by a wide selection of ales, malts, and whiskies.

Balmaha lies within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park—a spellbinding landscape where Scotland's Highlands meet the heather-covered Lowlands. After lunch, enjoy a gentle walk along the shoreline of Loch Lomond, taking in magnificent views of the lake and its nearby islands. This is Rob Roy country, where the legendary outlaw “Red Robert” MacGregor earned his reputation as a folk hero.

After your walk, travel just under an hour through the national park and scenic countryside to your hotel, located on the banks of Loch Ard. There will be time to relax before dinner at the hotel this evening.

**Included Meals:** Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 2

### Loch Ard Forest Walk. Loch Katrine Cruise

*6 miles, easy OR 7 miles, easy to moderate*

After breakfast, set off on today's walk directly from the hotel. This wide trail traces the banks of Loch Ard—one of the most picturesque in Scotland—through the peaceful Loch Ard Forest, all within Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Along the way, beautiful views emerge across the loch and toward the surrounding mountains. The Scottish outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor knew this area well. Born at Glengyle, at the head of nearby Loch Katrine, he is said to have used a small cave on the banks of Loch Ard as a hiding place during the Jacobite risings.

At the end of your walk, meet the coach for a short drive along the valley to The Trossachs Pier Café. Take in the breathtaking views across Loch Katrine and enjoy lunch before embarking on your cruise.

For over 150 years, Loch Katrine has been a tranquil retreat for visitors from around the world and is famously featured in some of Sir Walter Scott's most beloved poetic works. After lunch, board the historic *Sir Walter Scott* steamship, first launched in 1899. Sit back, relax, and admire the magnificent scenery as it unfolds during your one-hour cruise, while listening to tales and legends of the loch.

Upon arrival at Stronachlachar Pier, meet the coach and return to your hotel. There will be time to unwind and enjoy the hotel's spa amenities before joining your leaders for a Scottish-themed dinner at the hotel's award-winning restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 3

### Rob Roy's Grave. Glen Ogle Trail. Tyndrum

*4 miles, easy. Afternoon options from 1 mile*

Check out of your hotel and embark on a scenic drive of approximately one hour, beginning with a visit to a historic churchyard that holds the graves of Rob Roy, his wife, and his two sons. Continue through

Lochearnhead to Glen Ogle, where today's walk begins. En route, you'll have the opportunity to visit a majestic herd of Highland cattle.

Glen Ogle is steeped in history and legend—druids, Jacobite rebels, ancient clans, royalty, famous authors, and Rob Roy MacGregor himself once walked these very paths. Today's waymarked trail follows an old railway line, now part of the long-distance Rob Roy Way. This scenic route offers sweeping views over the glen to Loch Earn and passes bubbling streams before crossing the impressive Glen Ogle Viaduct.

From here, continue west toward the "High Country," where the landscape transitions to open upland hills with rugged peaks, rocky outcrops, gullies, and scree-covered slopes. Stop in the scenic village of Tyndrum—Scottish Gaelic for "house on the ridge"—for lunch at a local café offering incomparable views of the surrounding glens.

After lunch, enjoy a short walk in the tranquil Loch Ba Valley before continuing to Glencoe, where you'll spend the next two nights. There will be time to unwind and relax at your inn before dinner.

This evening, enjoy a hearty Scottish meal at the Clachaig Inn.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4

### Glencoe

*Glencoe village; 4 miles, easy. Altnafeidh to Kinlochleven; 6 miles, moderate. Afternoon options from 1.5 miles*

Widely considered one of the most breathtakingly scenic corners of Scotland, the narrow, U-shaped Glencoe is part of the Ben Nevis and Glencoe National Scenic Area. Jagged, wild mountains—shaped by ancient volcanic activity over millions of years—surround the emerald-green valley floor. This dramatic landscape is matched by a rich and often tragic history. The Glencoe Massacre remains one of the most infamous events in Scottish history, and legend holds that it began with the lighting of a torch near the site where the Clachaig Inn now stands. In fiction, Glencoe is famously featured in *Skyfall* as the birthplace of James Bond's father in Ian Fleming's novels.

Today, you may choose from two walking options:

The easier option begins right at your inn. This invigorating walk follows a footpath uphill through An Tor woodland to the historic Signal Rock, said in legend to be a gathering point for the MacDonalds. You then descend through the valley to the village of Glencoe, enjoying sweeping views of Loch Leven and the surrounding mountains. Your group will gather for lunch at a local café.

The longer, more challenging option re-joins a section of the West Highland Way. A short 10-minute drive brings you to Altnafeadh, where you begin your walk up a steep, stony path onto the infamous Devil's Staircase—so named by the soldiers who built roads in the area. Legend has it that the devil claimed some of the laborers during a brutal winter night. The trail climbs into exposed moorland above Rannoch Moor, with stunning panoramic views. Continue down a rugged trail, at times following stepping-stones, before ascending again. To your right, you'll glimpse the Blackwater Reservoir, its dam constructed in the early 20th century to power the now-defunct aluminum smelter in Kinlochleven. As you descend, the footpath winds through forested slopes and along stone tracks, leading you into Kinlochleven. From there, travel to Glencoe for lunch in a local café.

Later, you may choose from several short walks directly from Glencoe village, meandering through woodlands home to pine martens, roe deer, and red squirrels. Or set off from Glencoe House on a scenic stroll with loch views over Glencoe Lochan and Loch Leven.

Relax at the hotel this evening and enjoy dinner on your own at a time of your choosing.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 5

### Loch Tay and Independent Exploration of Killin. Scottish Crannog Centre

*Loch Tulla; 4 miles, easy. Afternoon; 1.5 miles, easy*

Check out of your hotel and travel 30 minutes to the start of your morning walk along the picturesque northern shore of Loch Tulla. Enjoy sweeping views of the water set against the backdrop of the Central Highlands to the west. Following the morning's walk, continue to the larger Loch Tay and the small village



of Killin. Nestled at the confluence of the Rivers Lochay and Dochart, Killin is steeped in history and features an Old Market Square and the scenic Falls of Dochart—both central to the region's industrial past.

Enjoy lunch at the Capercaillie Restaurant in the center of town before embarking on an optional short walk. Beginning at the northern edge of town, this route leads through woodland along the River Lochay to the outflow of Loch Tay. From here, take in expansive views to the east, across Loch Tay and toward the Tarmachan Ridge to the north. Alternatively, you may choose to explore Killin's shops and cafés before rejoining the group.

Your loch-side adventure continues as you drive east along the northern shore of Loch Tay. Along the way, your leaders will share the fascinating history of *crannogs*—circular, stilted dwellings dating back to the Iron Age. In a time before roads, Scots often built their homes on the water, using boats for travel and relying on lochs for protection from animals and enemies. Researchers have found evidence of 18 crannogs on Loch Tay alone. One has been reconstructed using traditional methods and now houses the Scottish Crannog Centre—a museum that brings the past to life through demonstrations of essential skills such as fire-making, textile weaving, and traditional cooking.

Walk in the footsteps of ancient crannog dwellers and immerse yourself in village life with original artifacts and engaging exhibits.

A final one-hour drive from the Crannog Centre brings you to your accommodation for the next two nights in Kinclaven. There will be time to relax and settle in before rejoining your group for dinner at the hotel's elegant restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 6

### Blair Castle and Pitlochry. Loch Faskally and Blair Athol Distillery

*Loch Faskally; 3 miles, easy. Morning stroll around Blair Castle Gardens; 1.5 miles, easy*

You awaken to magnificent scenery and an ample breakfast, then embark on a scenic drive through the agricultural lands of Angus to the town of Pitlochry—often referred to as the heart of Scotland. Nestled

below Ben Vrackie along the beautiful River Tummel, Pitlochry has been welcoming visitors for more than 170 years. Its name derives from the Gaelic *Pit Cloich Aire*, meaning “place of the Sentinel Stone,” and the town was originally an ancient Pictish settlement. Stone circles, standing stones, and other ancient sites still dot the surrounding landscape.

This morning begins with a visit to historic Blair Castle, home to the Atholl family for over seven centuries. The castle has witnessed both turbulent and peaceful times, including occupation during the 17th-century Jacobite rising and royal visits in the 19th century. Discover the story of Mary, Queen of Scots, and how Queen Victoria’s love affair with the Scottish Highlands was nurtured during her visits with Prince Albert. Following your guided tour, enjoy a short walk through the estate’s elegant grounds and gardens, which are listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland.

Continue on to the small village of Killiecrankie to begin a scenic walk tracing the River Garry south toward Loch Faskally and Pitlochry. Along the way, visit the historic landmark known as the Soldier’s Leap and learn about the nearby Jacobite battles of the 17th century. This peaceful route takes you through woodlands, across viaduct bridges, and past waterfalls before reaching the confluence of the Rivers Garry and Tummel. Meet your coach along the shores of Loch Faskally for a short transfer into downtown Pitlochry.

Venture out for lunch on your own before visiting the Blair Athol Distillery. Here, water from the Grampian Mountains blends with Highland malt to create a signature single malt whisky known for its mellow, honeyed richness. Enjoy a guided tour to learn about the whisky-making process, followed by a tasting.

Afterward, return to your hotel and unwind—perhaps relax with views of the river or stroll through the grounds. Later, gather for a final celebratory dinner at the hotel’s excellent restaurant.

**Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 7

### Travel to Edinburgh. Your Country Walkers Vacation Ends

After a sumptuous included breakfast, enjoy some time to relax before departing on a 1.25-hour drive to Edinburgh. You’ll arrive around 11:00 a.m. at our Post-Tour hotel, the Radisson Blu Hotel, Edinburgh, where your tour concludes.



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## What's Included

### Air Package

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓	✓
15 on-tour meals: 6 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners	✓	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓	✓
Telescopic walking sticks provided on tour	✓	✓
Roundtrip airfare	✓	
Extra night in Glasgow & Edinburgh	✓	
Airport car service for arrival and departure	✓	
Pre- and post-tour breakfasts	✓	
Business-class upgrades available	✓	