Scotland: The Highlands

Tour-Only Itinerary

For centuries, Scotland's romantic highlands have inspired legends and lore. From your vantage point atop the Devil's Staircase on this Scotland walking tour, it's easy to see why. Windswept hillsides roll down towards distant lochs in all directions—the same dramatic landscapes that have fueled imaginations from Shakespeare to Sir Walter Scott, Harry Potter to Outlander. Walking these wild lands is also fueling your appreciation for Scotland's more settled charms: the village streets of Killin, Macbeth's ancestral castle at Glamis, learning the art of kilt-fitting, traditional music at a festive dinner on a local sheep farm, or sipping whiskey at trail's end. Hitting the Rob Roy Way again, you descend towards the green valley of Glencoe, where your inn's cozy trio of pubs promises another welcome dose of inspiration.



Highlights

Taste the honey-smooth, smoky flavor of handmade Scotch at the Dewar's Aberfeldy Distillery, home to one of America's top-selling Scotch whiskeys.

Learn about the exploits of Rob Roy MacGregor, a noted Highland outlaw (1 Feb. 1671–28 Dec. 1734).

Cruise on beautiful Loch Katrine, the inspiration for Sir Walter Scott's poem, "Lady of the Lake" and the novel "Rob Roy."

Meet a local family at Ledard Farm, where you will be offered a glimpse of traditional Scottish culture with music, stories, and a hearty meal.

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.

Enter a world of privileged splendor at Glamis Castle, the legendary setting for Shakespeare's Macbeth and the childhood home of The Queen Mother.



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 occasional wooden step stiles over fences. For those who do not want the more challenging walks, there will often be easier options (but equally scenic walks!) with shorter mileages available, although 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

Join your *Scotland: The Highlands* tour

Section of the West Highland Way and Loch Lomond; 4.5 miles, easy to moderate; 3.5 miles, easy

Your guide(s) will meet you at the Blythswood Square Hotel at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking. From Glasgow, transfer to Drymen in The Trossachs National Park. Hike along part of the famed West Highland Way, followed by an optional walk along the lake's shores.

Once your group has gathered in Glasgow, transfer to the picturesque village of Drymen. Your walk follows a section of the West Highland Way, Scotland's premier long-distance footpath covering 96 miles from Milngavie, just north of Glasgow, to Fort William. Today's route passes through open countryside and wooded areas, with rewarding views over Loch Lomond. Meet the coach in Milton of Buchanan and transfer a short distance to Balmaha, located on the banks of Loch Lomond.

Gather for lunch at the Oak Tree Inn, a family-run inn constructed of local slate on the shores of Loch Lomond. Throughout your journey, you'll find that Scottish cuisine has left its reputation for bland food in the past. Today, chefs infuse fresh meats and produce from local farming communities and fresh fish from the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean with creative flair and color. Memorable meals are sure to be a rewarding part of your experience, along with a wide range of ales, malts, and whiskeys.

Balmaha is home of the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park, a spellbinding canvas of hills, lochs and glens where Scotland's renowned Highlands converge with the heather-covered Lowlands. After lunch, you set out on your pleasant and easy walk along the shores of Loch Lomond, enjoying magnificent views over the lake and its nearby islands. This is Rob Roy country, where the outlaw "Red Robert" MacGregor gained status as a local folk hero.

Afterward, transfer just less than one hour, through the national park and lovely countryside to your hotel, located on the banks of Loch Ard. There will be time to relax before dinner tonight in the hotel.

Accommodation: Macdonald Forest Hills Hotel & Spa, Kinlochard
Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Loch Ard Forest walk. Loch Katrine cruise. Ledard Farm

6 miles, easy

This morning, hike a forest trail skirting picturesque Loch Ard before setting off on a boat cruise across Loch Katrine. Take in this magical landscape of verdant hills, blue waters, and towering mountain peaks. Return to your accommodation to unwind before joining your guides and fellow travelers on an exclusive evening visit to Ledard Farm, just steps from the hotel.

Walk directly from the hotel along Loch Ard before embarking on a cruise on Loch Katrine.

After breakfast, set off on your day's walk directly from the hotel. This wide trail skirts the banks of Loch Ard, one of the most picturesque in Scotland, through the peaceful Loch Ard Forest, all set within the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Beautiful views emerge across the loch and toward the surrounding mountains. The Scottish outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor knew this area well, having been born at Glengyle, at the head of Loch Katrine. He used a small cave on banks of this loch as a hiding place during the Jacobite risings.

Meet the coach at the end of your walk and transfer a short distance along the valley to The Pier Café in Stronachlachar. Take in breathtaking views across Loch Katrine as you enjoy lunch in this isolated café.

For over 150 years, Loch Katrine has offered a serene and tranquil spot for visitors from all over the world and is recognized as the favored and much-loved setting of some of Sir Walter Scott's most famous poetic works. Once you've finished lunch, you'll board the *Lady of the Lake*, named after Sir Walter Scott's classic poem. Sit back, relax, and admire the magnificent scenery unfold while listening to the tales and legends of the loch during your one-hour cruise. Meet the coach at the far end of the loch and transfer back to your hotel. There is time to unwind and relax before meeting your guides for a short stroll to nearby Ledard Farm.

At the farm you take time to visit with a local family and gain a better understanding of the authentic Scottish way of life. Father and son, Fergus and Gregor, will take you on a tour of their 16th-century working farm where you will be greeted by sheep, lambs, goats, and sheepdogs. Tonight, you'll gather for a hearty dinner in the MacGregor Barn, for a meal complete with Scot's Lamb and local produce. Sip on a dram of whiskey and enjoy stories of days gone by while listening to traditional Scottish music and song.

Please note: Hiking shoes are recommended for your visit to Ledard Farm.

Accommodation: Macdonald Forest Hills Hotel & Spa, Kinlochard
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

Rob Roy's Grave. Glen Ogle Trail. Tyndrum

3 miles, easy. Afternoon options from 1 mile

Check out of your hotel and embark on a scenic drive (around one hour) and a visit to the churchyard, which holds the graves of Rob Roy, his wife, and his two sons. Continue through Lochearnhead to Glen Ogle and the start of today's walk. Glen Ogle evokes emotions that are heightened in the knowledge that druids, Jacobite rebels, ancient clans, ancient Royals, famous authors, and Rob Roy McGregor, have tread the path before us. The waymarked trail follows an old railway line, which is part of the famous long-distance path, the Rob Roy Way. The walk features views extending over the vast glen to Loch Earn and passes charming streams before eventually crossing the impressive Glen Ogle Viaduct.

Continue westward toward the "High Country" and notice as the landscape begins to reveal open upland hills with peaks, rocky outcrops, gullies, and screes. Visit the scenic village of Tyndrum—Scottish Gaelic for "house on the ridge"—where lunch at a local café offers both incomparable views of the surrounding glens and award-winning fish and chips! After lunch, you will have a chance to stop for a short walk in the Loch Ba Valley before continuing to Glencoe and your accommodation for the next two nights. There is time to unwind and relax at your next inn before dinner.

Enjoy dinner this evening in the Clachaig Inn.

Accommodation: Clachaig Inn, Glencoe

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

Glencoe

Glencoe village; 4 miles, easy. Altnafeidh to Kinlochleven; 7 miles, moderate. Afternoon options from 1.5 miles

Widely considered one of the most breathtaking scenic corners of Scotland, the narrow, U-shaped Glencoe is part of the National Scenic Area of Ben Nevis and Glencoe. Wild and jagged mountains, shaped by volcanic activity over millions of years, surround the emerald-green valley floor. Drama also permeates the history, both real and imagined, of this magical, mysterious place. The Glencoe Massacre was one of the most infamous events in Scottish history, and one legend says that it began with the lighting of a torch near where the Clachaig Inn now stands. In fiction, Glencoe is the setting for Skyfall, the birthplace of the father of James Bond in Ian Fleming's novels.

Today's easier option starts at your inn. During this invigorating walk, you follow a footpath upward through An Tor woodland to the historic Signal Rock. Continue down the valley to the village of Glencoe. Admire sweeping views across Loch Leven and grand vistas of surrounding mountains. Later, meet in a local café for lunch.

Alternatively, choose a longer and more challenging hike, rejoining a section of the West Highland Way. You transfer 10 minutes to Altnafeadh and begin walking along a stony path up a steep hill, joining The Devil's Staircase, so named by the soldiers who helped build the local roads. The workers not only had great difficulty transporting materials up this incline; it's said that the devil claimed some of them for himself as they made the journey one cold winter night.

The path soon rises into undulating exposed moorland above the plain of Rannoch Moor. The views from here are stunning. Continue on a downward trail, sometimes along stepping-stones, before ascending again. To your right, the Blackwater reservoir appears. Its dam was built in the early 20th century to run the now-defunct aluminum smelter at Kinlochleven. As you lose elevation, your footpath leads through a long, wooded slope on stone tracks, delivering you to Kinlochleven. Transfer to Glencoe for lunch in a local café.

Later, you may choose from several shorter walks directly from Glencoe village through the woodlands, home to pine martens, roe deer, and red squirrels. Or, begin a scenic stroll from Glencoe House, admiring spectacular scenery and loch views over Glencoe Lochan and Loch Leven.

Enjoy dinner this evening in the Clachaig Inn.

Accommodation: Clachaig Inn, Glencoe
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5

Loch Tulla, Loch Tay. Scottish Crannog Centre

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

Nestled at the convergence of River Lochay and River Dochart, the picturesque village of Killin is steeped in history and offers a variety of shops, restaurants, and cafés to explore. Venture out for lunch on your own, and discover the Old Market Square and the beautiful Falls of Dochart, both central to the region's industrial past.

Rejoin your guides and fellow travelers for a short walk beginning on the northern edge of town that takes you through woodland alongside the River Lochay to the outflow of Loch Tay. From here, take in views to the east, far across Loch Tay and the Tarmachan Ridge to the north.

Your loch-side adventure continues as continue you transfer east along the northern shore of Loch Tay. Listen to your guides as they share the history of crannogs—circular houses on stilts that date back to the Iron Age. All across the country, in an age before roads, Scots built on the water not only because people traveled by boat, but because waterways offered protection against threatening animals and enemies. Scientists have found evidence of 18 such crannogs on Loch Tay alone. One has been rebuilt, using mostly traditional methods, and now houses the Scottish Crannog Centre, a museum dedicated to demonstrating the skills every crannog homeowner needed, such as making fire by rubbing sticks. Walk the footsteps of the original Crannog dwellers and immerse yourself in village life with original artifacts and demonstrations of textiles and traditional cooking techniques.

A final one-hour transfer from the Crannog Centre will bring you to your accommodation for the next two

nights in Kinclaven. There will be time to relax and settle in at the hotel before rejoining your group for dinner at the hotel's elegant restaurant.

Accommodation: Ballathie Country House Hotel, Kinclaven
Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6

Glamis Castle and Hermitage. Braan Walk to Dunkeld

Morning stroll around Glamis Castle gardens; 1.5 miles, easy. Afternoon 5 miles, easy to moderate

You awaken to magnificent scenery and an ample breakfast, then embark on a short transfer through the Angus agricultural lands to Glamis Castle. Home to the Lyon family since the 14th century, the castle is currently the home to the Earl and Countess of Strathmore and Kinghorne. Glamis was the childhood home of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, wife of King George VI, and their second daughter, Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon. It's also the legendary setting for Shakespeare's Macbeth. Steeped in history, it's impossible not to be impressed by the Castle's turrets and towers at the end of the mile-long entrance drive. A guided tour will reveal its legendary tales and secrets–this is not a museum, but an incredible family home.

Take lunch in a café following a walk through the castle's gardens, which includes the formal Italian Gardens, mixed woodland, and pinetum.

Continue on a short drive to the Hermitage car park. Here, your walk begins through the beautiful wooded glen of the Hermitage, originally designed as a pleasure ground in the 18th century for the Dukes of Atholl, complete with picturesque folly Ossian's Hall and attractive Black Linn waterfalls. The giant Douglas firs here are among the tallest trees in Britain. The route continues to the dramatic Rumbling Bridge before returning through more open countryside with attractive views of surrounding Perthshire. The walk finishes in the small historical town of Dunkeld, where you have free time to explore the independent shops and galleries, visit the imposing Dunkeld Cathedral, and view the brightly colored "little houses" of Dunkeld which were built in the early 1700s.

Later this afternoon, visit the Dewar's Whisky Distillery in Aberfeldy, the spiritual home of one of America's top-selling Scotch whiskeys. During a tour of the distillery, see how the distinctive honeyed richness of the

spirit is created. And no tour is complete without a tasting!

Afterward, return to your hotel and relax overlooking the river or maybe stroll through the grounds. Later, enjoy a final celebratory dinner at the hotel's excellent restaurant.

Accommodation: Ballathie Country House Hotel, Kinclaven
Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7

Your *Scotland: The Highlands* tour concludes

After a sumptuous breakfast, you have time to relax before departing for your 1 ¾ hour transfer to Glasgow. You arrive around 12:00 p.m. at Glasgow's Blythswood Square Hotel, where your tour concludes.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

	Tour Only
Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 lunch	✓
Local (expert!) guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓