

SCOTLAND

ESSENTIAL GUIDE 2020



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**ONLY IN SCOTLAND
CAN YOU GET AWAY
FROM IT ALL**



The Castle & Gardens of Mey, Caithness
Owned by HM Queen Elizabeth,
The Queen Mother from 1952 until 1996

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- Scottish langoustines
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- Golden eagle
- Golf at Gullane Golf Club, East Lothian
- Mountain biking at 7stanes, Innerleithen
- Caerlaverock Castle, near Dumfries



Book a distillery tour to uncover whisky-making secrets.

Soak up the unique atmosphere of Edinburgh's vibrant summer festivals.

Take a boat trip to spot incredible marine species and fantastic coastal scenery.

A red deer in Glen Coe. Discover mesmerising snow-capped mountains, wildlife and rugged landscapes. It doesn't get more Scottish than this!

Welcome to Scotland

The warmest of welcomes awaits you at every turn: at our historic castles, among the grand Highland scenery, and out on the white sandy beaches of our islands.

In winter, when snow dusts the mountains, the year begins with the revelry and cheer of a traditional Hogmanay. Celebrations continue in January in honour of Robert Burns at Burns' Suppers held across the country. It's the perfect opportunity to sample Scotland's national dish, haggis, alongside neeps and tatties (turnips and potatoes), and drink a warming dram of whisky to toast the Bard!

Scotland's landscapes come alive with wildlife during spring when delicate bluebells flower on woodland floors and soaring ospreys take to the skies. During the breeding season, coastal cliffs become bustling seabird colonies for species like puffins. Bottlenose dolphins, porpoises and seals can often be seen swimming in the waters from the shoreline, so don't forget to pack your binoculars!

Inland, explore our two stunning National Parks and be amazed by the glittering lochs, dramatic peaks and dense forests. You could bag a Munro, a mountain over 3,000 ft (914 m) high, paddle across a tranquil loch in a kayak or crank up the gears on a mountain biking trail.

Summer's long daylight hours lend themselves to outdoor events, such as our Highland games - real spectacles of colour, music and enthralling competition. Plan an island hopping adventure and experience vibrant cultures and untouched beaches.

Share your Scotland adventures with the world using **#ScotlandIsNow**



Get swept away on a romantic winter break to a dramatic castle.

Have a night to remember at a traditional Scottish ceilidh (Scottish country dance).

Explore Scotland's seven remarkable cities with world-class museums, historic ships and fascinating city tours.

Find a cosy pub to relax in and enjoy some fine Scotch malt whiskies, Scottish craft beers or Scottish gins.

Images shown to the right of the page - top to bottom

- Enjoy a dram next to a roaring fire
- Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire
- Bluebells on Inchcaillioch Island, Loch Lomond
- Troup Head gannet colony, Aberdeenshire
- Highland games held throughout Scotland



Discover more at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM

4 Scotland's cities

Scotland's cities are the perfect place for a city break. Whether you're after a romantic getaway, an active adventure or a night out on the town, you will find exactly what you're looking for in our cities.

Dundee

Scotland's sunniest city, Dundee is a magnificent modern beauty, perched on the banks of the River Tay. It prides itself in being a UNESCO City of Design, as well as being named one of 'Lonely Planet's Top 10 Best in Europe 2019' destinations. Dundee is full of innovative activities and attractions for all ages and interests, including Foxlake Dundee, The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, and Dundee Contemporary Arts. One of its most breathtaking attractions is the recently built V&A Dundee, which is Scotland's first design museum, and the world's only V&A museum outside of London. The city features a variety of beautiful landscapes, including Dundee Law, an extinct volcano, and Broughty Ferry, a scenic coastal town situated a short distance away from the city centre.

Aberdeen

Aberdeen is easily recognisable by its famous granite buildings and unique architecture, coastal vantage points and by the ancient Scots dialect, 'Doric', which you might hear spoken by locals as you explore. The city's beach is not only an idyllic setting for a relaxing day out, but it is also a prime location for wildlife spotting, as Aberdeen has been recognised as one of the best places in Europe to spot resident bottlenose dolphins during the summer months. There are also several scenic trails in the countryside surrounding Aberdeen including the Coastal, Castle and Victorian Heritage Trails where you can see some of Aberdeen's finest attractions. The city is also home to a gorgeous green space at Duthie Park, which has an array of beautiful plants, ponds and restored Victorian design features.

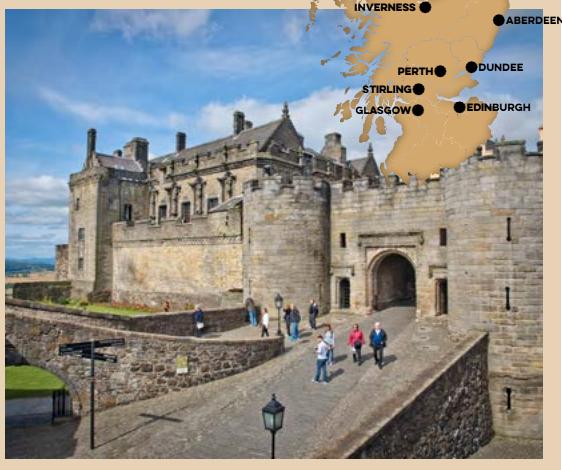
Stirling

It might be one of Scotland's smaller cities, but Stirling has more charm and history than you could possibly imagine. Some of the city's most prominent cultural attractions include Stirling Castle, the MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, and the Battle of Bannockburn Visitor Centre. Panoramic views of the city can be seen from the crown of the famous National Wallace Monument. Stirling also has an array of farmers' markets where there is a vast selection of fresh, local produce on offer. Nearby, Blair Drummond Safari Park is one of Scotland's top attractions.



Inverness

Come and discover the beauty, history and buzzing atmosphere of Inverness, a city set within amazing Highland scenery. The city is full of mystery with the famous monster ‘Nessie’ lurking nearby in the depths of Loch Ness. You can also view the River Ness up close or from the viewpoint at Inverness Castle that gives you breathtaking views over the area. Nearby, you can visit Culloden Moor, where the final Jacobite Uprising took place, as well as Fort George, which was created by George II following the defeat at Culloden. Or why not enjoy a peaceful, scenic stroll around the Inverness Botanic Gardens?



Perth

Located in the heart of Scotland on the banks of the River Tay is the ‘Fair City’. This culturally diverse city combines beautiful rural landscapes with contemporary urban charm. Alongside its rich heritage, Perth features historic sites such as Scone Palace – where Scottish kings were crowned – to compliment modern architecture such as the Bell Tower and Perth Concert Hall. Kinnoull Hill, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, showcases spectacular views over the city and the River Tay, as well as a variety of woodland and wildlife. The city boasts a delicious choice of restaurants and coffee shops, and is home to Scotland’s first farmers’ market.



See more destinations

**[WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/
DESTINATION-MAPS](http://WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/DESTINATION-MAPS)**

Images

- V&A Dundee
- Stirling Castle
- Falcon Square, Inverness
- The River Tay, Perth
- The Mercat Cross in Castlegate, Aberdeen

Edinburgh and Glasgow

Both cities are incredibly enticing and offer a huge amount of variety. With only 51 miles between them, you can visit both cities easily, taking the time to explore their personalities and atmosphere.

Edinburgh

With its spires and battlements, crags and classical columns, it really is no wonder that Old Town's dramatic, medieval architecture and New Town's elegant Georgian architecture have been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In Scotland's vibrant capital city, every time you turn a corner you'll be surprised by historical treasures and breathtaking views. For starters, you can spot Edinburgh Castle from an incredible number of vantage points. This prominent stronghold can be seen from Princes Street, towering above the pretty Princes Street Gardens. Step inside its walls and uncover 900 years of fascinating history.

Edinburgh's Old Town is centred on the upper part of the Royal Mile. Though the castle heads a long list of heritage sites, museums and art galleries, Edinburgh is a compact city. It's easy to explore on foot or via the excellent bus and tram network.



Step into the past at Edinburgh Castle or in the underground streets of The Real Mary King's Close.

Make sure you bring your appetite! Taste the best of Scottish produce at one of the city's four Michelin-star restaurants, two of which can be found in the Port of Leith, with its attractive, historic waterfront.

Back in the city centre, August sees Edinburgh's cultural life at its most vibrant. The Edinburgh Festivals are renowned for being an immaculate display of performers, art, music and more which takes over the city every August. Out with the summer months, a year-round programme of events mean there is always plenty of fantastic things to experience.

Inspiration and creativity have always thrived in Edinburgh, UNESCO's first City of Literature. Its literary heritage stretches back to before the days of Sir Walter Scott and encompasses contemporary writers such as JK Rowling, who is said to have written the early *Harry Potter* novels in the Elephant House café.

Stroll to the top of Calton Hill to see the National Monument of Scotland and beautiful city skyline views.

Indulge in some retail therapy at the designer stores on Multrees Walk or shop for fine cashmere on the Royal Mile.



Discover more at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/EDINBURGH





Wander the streets of the Merchant City for great shopping and sophisticated restaurants and bars.

Watch talented musicians perform at Celtic Connections, a world-class winter music festival, in January.

Delve below the platforms of Central Station on a tour to uncover the secrets of Scotland's busiest train station.

Glasgow

Expect a warm welcome when you visit Glasgow – it's got a stellar reputation for being one of the friendliest places on the planet, you know! Scotland's biggest city is known for its style, design and architecture. It is upfront, fashionable, full of life and vitality, and shopaholics will tell you it's paradise when it comes to retail therapy.

Often called Britain's finest Victorian city, Glasgow's architecture reflects its bold character. The impressive City Chambers is at its very heart, while Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum houses important art collections that have made a major contribution to Glasgow's cultural life for over a century.

Glasgow-born designer and architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, was at the forefront of Art Nouveau in Scotland. Explore his incredible works of art at The Willow Tea Rooms or The Lighthouse right in the city centre.

Glasgow means 'dear green place' and boasts over 90 parks and green spaces, including the beautiful Botanic Gardens in the city's West End. With Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park just under an hour away, it's easy to find the perfect balance between city and nature when you visit Glasgow.

When it comes to retail, Glasgow is matched by few other British cities. Shop till you drop at chic Princes Square, as well as Sauchiehall Street, Buchanan Street and the Merchant City district which together make up Glasgow's 'Style Mile'.

In a typical week, a whopping 120 separate musical events take place here – so it's not surprising it's been given UNESCO City of Music status! This non-stop, all-year, high-energy music scene takes place in venues that include traditional Scottish pubs, clubs, world-class auditoriums and dedicated performance spaces cleverly converted from distinguished city buildings. The SSE Hydro and Óran Mór are just two of many.



Discover more at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/GLASGOW

Images

- Edinburgh viewed from Salisbury Crags, and Edinburgh Christmas rides
- Glasgow Science Centre and the SSE Hydro arena at the Scottish Events Campus

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Outside the cities

Out in the countryside you can visit the lush fields and rolling hills of the south, the deeply carved glens and mountainous peaks of the west, the wild spaces in the north and the jagged cliffs and wide beaches of the east.

From the Scottish mainland, it's a short hop across the water by plane or ferry to visit one of Scotland's beautiful islands. Walk through stunning island landscapes to jaw dropping viewpoints, visit paradise beaches, taste the freshest seafood, sample a dram of local whisky and much more.



Enjoy a picturesque beach stroll or explore one of Scotland's many historic castles.

Visit Elgin Cathedral in Moray Speyside and tick off some of the distilleries on the Speyside Malt Whisky Trail.

Board the Borders Railway in Edinburgh to be whisked through rolling countryside to the Scottish Borders, where you can visit Abbotsford House, Melrose Abbey and more.

National Parks and nature reserves

If you love visiting beautiful wild spaces, you'll be spoiled for choice in Scotland. The country is home to two National Parks – Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and the Cairngorms National Park – as well as a huge array of nature reserves and forest parks.

Go hiking amongst the towering trees of the Tay Forest Park in Perthshire, see a dazzling canopy of stars in the Galloway Forest Park (a designated Dark Sky Park) and see huge colonies of birds at RSPB reserves, including Marwick Head on Orkney and Lochwinnoch near Paisley.



Head to Clatteringshaws Loch in Dumfries & Galloway for a chance to spot a magical array of stars, galaxies and maybe even a shooting star or two.

Islands

Scotland is home to around 90 inhabited islands – plenty to fill even the longest island-hopping holiday! In the south west you can visit Arran, where you can tour the Isle of Arran Distillery or Lagg Distillery, and taste delicious local produce. Or visit Cumbrae, where you can cycle round the coasts of this enchanting little island.

In the west lies the beautiful island groups of the Inner Hebrides and Outer Hebrides. On the inner Hebridean islands of Islay and Jura you can taste local whisky, while further north, in the Outer Hebrides, you can follow the Hebridean Way long-distance walking and cycling route to roam from island to island.

In the north lies Orkney and Shetland: two beautiful archipelagos with their own distinct cultures. On Orkney, you can visit the ancient attractions that make up the Heart of Neolithic Orkney UNESCO World Heritage Site, whilst on Shetland you can explore the islands' Viking heritage and shop for unique arts and crafts.



See more destinations

WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/ISLANDS



Images left to right

- Duncansby Head, Caithness
- Mousa Broch, Shetland



See one of the finest stone circles in the world.
The Ring of Brodgar in the Heart of Neolithic
Orkney dating from 2,500 to 2,000 BC!

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A sense of space



Take a trip to the beautiful Calgary Bay on the Isle of Mull, discover unique pieces of nature inspired art on the way.



Our lochs and lochans come in many shapes and sizes, each set to impress with stunning surroundings, tranquil atmospheres, and peaceful shore-side walks to wander on. Many of Scotland's lochs are great for watersports, fishing, wildlife watching and more and are within easy reach of our major cities. Some of our other sparkling gems are nestled into all the nooks and crannies of the country, making it the perfect opportunity to get out and explore the landscape.

Explore the dunes at Rattray Head, in Buchan, Aberdeenshire. These dunes can be up to 75 feet high and stretch 17 miles from St Combs to Peterhead.

Mountain, hill, forest, loch, river and glen - Scotland's beautiful, wide open countryside begs to be explored, whether on foot, bike, or boat.

In Scotland, everyone is entitled to the right to roam so you are free to explore the amazing landscapes, as long as you follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. Visit www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot

If you want to experience the wonders of Scotland's great outdoors, our National Parks really do have it all. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is home to the spectacular Loch Lomond, while the Cairngorms National Park is the largest and is home to 25 percent of the UK's endangered wildlife species.

Scotland is a walker's delight. The country has an excellent range of signposted paths and nature trails through a variety of landscapes. There are a number of official long distance footpaths which can be sampled in short sections over one day. Most popular is the West Highland Way between the outskirts of Glasgow and Fort William.

Fancy exploring Scotland on two wheels? There are plenty of gentle paths and long distance routes, as well as dedicated mountain biking centres. The Nevis Range

by Fort William has a great reputation for mountain biking and hosts the annual UCI Mountain Bike World Cup. Head to one of the 7stanes Mountain Biking Centres across the south of Scotland where you can spend hours shredding the slopes and trails of the regions' woodlands or exploring the stunning nature that surrounds you on foot.

A wonderful part of enjoying the outdoors is that you might encounter Scotland's wildlife! Even on short walks in the Highlands, at places like Glen Muick in Royal Deeside for example, you can expect to see red deer. Many rare animal species have been reintroduced to their natural habitats, such as majestic sea eagles which can be spotted from the Isle of Mull.

Book a boat trip to admire Scotland's beautiful coastline and spot seals, puffins and other seabirds. Near Oban you can enjoy an excursion to the famous Corryvreckan Whirlpool at the north end of Jura – look out for whales and dolphins on the way!



Check out our Islands at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/ISLANDS



Images left to right

- Harbour Light, Isle of Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway
- Yachting on the Firth of Forth
- Practising yoga in Faskally Woods, Perthshire



Plan a hike through the beautiful Glen Clova in Angus.

Take a boat trip to spot the resident dolphins of the Moray Firth.

See thousands of seabirds on a boat trip around Shetland's dramatic Noss cliffs.

Pedal along the causeways and coastal roads of the Outer Hebrides on the Hebridean Way.

Explore the lanes and wynds of quaint fishing villages such as Crail in the East Neuk of Fife.

Sail at a gentle pace across Loch Katrine on the steamship SS Sir Walter Scott.

Visit mighty strongholds and fine baronial mansions as you follow Scotland's Castle Trail through Aberdeenshire.

The sheer variety of landscapes, towns and cities across Scotland makes touring especially rewarding. Along your journey you could encounter castles, standing stones, distilleries, gardens and, of course, miles and miles of breathtaking scenery.

Lowland to Highland, east to west, travelling around Scotland is simple. In addition to motorways and good main roads, there is an excellent network of lightly trafficked rural roads – notably in the Borders, Galloway, Fife, Angus, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

If you are staying in cities, or are without your own transport, then several operators offer guided tours – both day trips or longer excursions – to some of Scotland's finest landscapes. It's a great way to experience the sublime beauty of Loch Lomond or the rugged grandeur of Glen Coe.

There are many ways to explore Scotland. How about on one of our canals? The Crinan Canal in Argyll and the Isles is known as 'Britain's most beautiful shortcut' and offers magnificent scenery and wildlife, and more than a few surprises.



Public transport, with its train, ferry and bus timetables, offers plenty of options. For example, the unforgettable rail journey from Fort William to Mallaig boasts stunning island views.

Then you can take the ferry to Armadale on Skye and travel by bus, enjoying views of island attractions like the awesome Cuillin mountain range on your journey. Make the return journey to Glasgow or Edinburgh by coach via the Skye Bridge. Altogether, it's a straightforward itinerary with incredible rewards.

Independent travellers with their own transport might want to consider following a signposted National Tourist Route or themed itinerary. The Galloway Tourist Route takes in the places associated with Robert Burns, Scotland's famous poet, as well as historic properties such as Threave Castle.

If you're visiting several historic sites on your tour, check for special discounts available through schemes such as Historic Environment Scotland's Explorer Pass.

Wherever you tour, look out for the brown 'Thistle Signs' by the road that point the way to all kinds of walks, trails, attractions and adventures.



Plan a tour of Scotland
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/TOURS

Get in touch with your adventurous side and try some of the adrenaline-pumping activities that Scotland has to offer. Why not head to the hills and surf the slopes on our fluffy white snow, take to the water and find your sea legs, explore our rugged terrain on a mountain biking expedition, or conquer a Munro or a Corbett? And no matter where you go, you won't be disappointed by the spectacular scenery that surrounds you.



Images top to bottom

- 'The Borders Railway Steam Train Experience' connecting Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders
- CalMac Ferries connecting you to our islands
- Caledonian Canal at Fort Augustus
- City buses, in front of the stunning architecture of Marischal College, Aberdeen

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Hit the road in Scotland

A holiday in Scotland is going to be packed with scenic splendour and awesome things to see and do. Discover Scotland's diverse landscapes, towns and villages and take in a few regional highlights on the way. Here are just some of the routes which are easy to follow, vary in length and are well signposted with distinctive brown and white signs.

For more spectacular driving routes and to help you plan your ultimate Scottish road trip visit roadtrips.visitscotland.com



Argyll Coastal Route

129 miles (208 km)

Tarbet – Fort William

If you're a fan of seafood, sea air, and stunning sunsets, you're in the right place! Explore Scotland's west coast with an adventure through some incredibly diverse landscapes. Don't forget to stop along the way to taste some delicious local delicacies too.

Borders Historic Route

89 miles (143 km)

Gretna Green – Edinburgh

Discover the magic of the Scottish Borders as you travel through an area which has been at the heart of Scottish history and culture for centuries.

Fife 191

191 miles (307 km)

Forth Bridges

Follow this circular route through the beautiful Kingdom of Fife which takes in quaint towns and villages, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a brilliant variety of attractions, as well as stunning coastline and wonderful countryside.

North Coast 500

500 miles (805 km)

Featuring ancient castles, glistening sandy beaches and spellbinding heritage, this circular route brings together magical coastal scenery from around the edges of the north Highlands.

Highland cows can often be seen on the coastal road between Applecross and Shieldaig on the NC500.



North East 250

250 miles (402 km)

Ballindalloch – Glenshee

Boasting the perfect combination of Speyside, the Cairngorms National Park, Royal Deeside and Aberdeenshire, explore this route for enchanting castles, captivating coastal views, fascinating history and more.

SnowRoads

90 miles (144 km)

Blairgowrie – Grantown-On-Spey

Taking in snow-capped mountains, towering Munros, picturesque market towns, rugged glens and lots more, this route manages to capture the true essence of the Scottish Highlands. Head along and explore some of the most scenic parts of Scotland.

South West Coastal 300

300 miles (482 km)

Head off on this circular route through some of south Scotland's most stunning locations. Picture quiet country roads, dozens of hidden gems, charming coastal towns, beautiful landscapes, a wealth of history, and so much more along this unique route.

Itineraries

So how will your trip shape up? Make the most of a weekend in Edinburgh, get your fix of castles on the Castle Trail, or go island hopping along Scotland's west coast – these are just a few of the many itineraries designed to help you plan an unforgettable break in Scotland.



Discover our itineraries on

**WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/ITINERARIES**



Find out more about driving routes in Scotland

WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/DRIVINGROUTES

Images top to bottom

- Loch Restil, Argyll
- The Devil's Elbow, Glenshee

Places to stay

When it comes to accommodation, you name it, we've got it. Everything from 5-star hotels and exclusive lodges to bed and breakfasts, backpacker hostels and camping grounds by mountain streams. What about a castle, a lighthouse, a farm, or even a wooden wigwam? Let your imagination go wild!

Hotels and B&Bs

From sleek and sophisticated modern hotels to the grand setting of a fine country house, Scotland has a broad variety of accommodation options on offer. Wherever you go, enjoy our world-famous Scottish hospitality.

Inns and restaurants with rooms

Enjoy a traditional stay in a cosy inn, where you can relax with a drink in the bar and tuck into a home-cooked meal. Restaurants with rooms provide accommodation along with wonderful dining options.

Self-catering

When it comes to self-catering, there's a huge choice on offer. Scotland has charming traditional cottages, spacious modern chalets and trendy city apartments. The rental is arranged in advance and is normally on a weekly basis. Serviced apartments are essentially self-catering apartments where other services (such as cleaning) are available.



Castles and stately homes

It is possible to stay in a castle or historic house in Scotland. Choose from a range of high quality serviced or self-catering properties.

Camping and caravanning

Camping, caravanning and campervan enthusiasts will appreciate Scotland's wide range of well-equipped caravan and camping parks. Hire a holiday home or arrive with your own touring caravan, campervan or tent.

Images top to bottom

- Crieff Hydro - offering accommodation for over 150 years
- Edinburgh canal accommodation
- Hobbit-style holiday homes by Loch Ness
- Buchan Ness Lighthouse, near Aberdeen

Wild camping

Please camp responsibly, by taking away all your litter, removing all traces of your tent pitch and not causing any pollution – for further information see the Scottish Outdoor Access Code

www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot.

Take extra care and follow any local advice when parking cars or campervans.

Please note, these wild camping access rights do not extend to motorised vehicles. If you're planning to travel in a motorhome or campervan check with the landowner before you stop or book a pitch in a nearby camping park.

Hostels

Scotland has an extensive network of hostels, some of which are owned by Hostelling Scotland and some of which are independent.

Unusual places to stay

Did you know you can stay in a lighthouse? You can spend the night in a range of unusual and unique places in Scotland, including yurts, tipis, churches, camping pods, boats, a farm and much more.



Our Grading Scheme

VisitScotland, under the Scottish Tourist Board brand, runs the star grading schemes. We visit thousands of different properties every year and grade them on the things we know matter to you, like the standard of hospitality, service, and customer care to help you make a more informed choice. Look out for establishments carrying the VisitScotland quality award.



Our Welcome Schemes

These tell you about establishments which pay particular attention to the specific needs of visitors. As well as our Walkers Welcome and Cyclists Welcome schemes, there are schemes for anglers, bikers, classic cars, golfers, children, field sports, groups, pets, visiting golfers, experiencing Gaelic, and ancestral tourism.



Because we care

The Green Tourism Business Scheme

Run by GBUK, the scheme looks at the level of sustainability businesses are achieving and grades them bronze, silver or gold.

WWW.GREEN-TOURISM.COM



Access all areas

Specific details on businesses that have accessible facilities and features can be found on our website

**[WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/ACCOMMODATION/ACCESSIBLE](http://WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/ACCOMMODATION/ACCESSIBLE)**



Find out more about our range of accommodation at
**[WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
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The chance to explore your ancestral ties to ancient Scots and learn about your clan name and ancestral stories. Head to a Highland gathering or find a professional genealogist to delve even deeper.

The former home of Scotland's National Bard, Robert Burns, which is now the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire, housing his fascinating life's work.



History – Scotland through the ages

Scotland is bursting at the seams with fantastic historical events throughout our fascinating and turbulent past. From tribal Celts, ancient Picts, and red-headed Vikings, to great explorers, inventors, and philosophers, Scotland's history is never anything short of exciting and adventurous.

Jacobites

From the deposition of James II in the revolution of 1688, to the death of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1788, the era of the Jacobites was a bleak affair marked by bloody and divisive rebellions and battles.

Explore the fascinating Jacobite story at sites across Scotland, including the Glenfinnan Monument and Culloden Battlefield in the Highlands, Callendar House near Falkirk, and Braemar Castle in Aberdeenshire.

Standing stones

These incredible monuments mark when the first settlers arrived in Scotland over 10,000 years ago. They are a puzzling piece of history that has archaeologists debating their purpose to this day. See them at sites across Scotland including the Ring of Brodgar in Orkney, the Calanais Standing Stones in the Outer Hebrides and Machrie Moor on the Isle of Arran to take a trip back in time to prehistoric Scotland.

Castles

Think towering spires, thick stone walls and often a dramatic, brooding setting. Castles are a key part of Scottish history and can be found at numerous sites across the country, from the heart of cities to coastal locations. From the ruins of Dunnottar Castle in Aberdeenshire, along Scotland's Castle Trail,

to the iconic Edinburgh Castle, or Urquhart Castle beside the mysterious Loch Ness, each castle has a unique past. Built to withstand enemy attacks and as a stronghold for protection, you can also learn about the battles and their own captivating stories.

Historic attractions

Explore ancient abbeys, prehistoric sites, former battlegrounds, and centuries of fascinating history at many attractions throughout Scotland. Explore the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae in Orkney, the Real Mary King's Close in Edinburgh, or The Battle of Bannockburn Experience near Stirling to learn all about Scotland's past and the importance of these sites today.

Famous Scots

From sporting heroes and inspiring writers, to legendary warriors and tragic queens, Scotland's people have left their mark on history and their legacies continue centuries later. Explore the dramatic life of Mary Queen of Scots; the legacy of Scotland's most successful monarch, Robert the Bruce; or the medieval, sword-wielding hero, William Wallace. Why not learn about James Braid, one of the finest golfers and golf course designers of all time, whose creations live on in over 200 courses in Scotland?

Images top and bottom

- Linlithgow Palace, Edinburgh & The Lothians
- Glasgow Cathedral



Find out more

**WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/HISTORY**

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Walk in the footsteps of your ancestors

A visit to Scotland is particularly special if you have Scottish ancestry. Visiting the land of your Scottish ancestors is a personal and fascinating journey. For many people, the moment they set foot on Scottish soil, they experience a feeling of ‘coming home’ and belonging.

The past is so accessible in Scotland. If you have a Scottish surname, you can visit areas specifically associated with that name, and feel the sense of connection with the landscapes where your ancestors would have lived hundreds of years ago. You may even have the opportunity to visit your clan or family castle.

Right across Scotland there are fascinating museums where you can explore what life was like for your ancestors, how they lived and worked. Gain a fascinating insight into how Scots of the past worked in industries such as farming, fishing, mining, weaving or in domestic services, and discover the local customs and lifestyles in different areas of Scotland.

At attractions such as the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore, you can explore the emotive story of the Highland Clearances, when many Scots were forced from their homes. Many headed for new lives in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, giving rise to the rich Scottish diaspora which exists today.

Meet your kin

While in Scotland, there are many ways to meet the locals. Attend events such as Highland games, cultural events and ceilidhs, which take you right to the heart of Scottish culture. Many local bars have regular music sessions where you’ll be welcomed and feel right at home. Other fun ways to experience true Scottish culture include touring a whisky distillery, trying outdoor activities and exploring Scotland’s stunning landscapes and islands.

Research your family tree

If you want to take things a step further and trace your family tree, a visit to Scotland is the perfect time to start: our records are acknowledged to be among the best in the world. Visit the two biggest archives at the ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh and Glasgow’s Mitchell Library, or one of the many local family history centres, registrars’ offices and libraries throughout Scotland. So many records have now been digitised, so getting started couldn’t be easier. You can enlist the services of a professional genealogist to help you research your roots. Some will even take you on a tailored tour of your ancestral homelands.



A gravestone on the Culloden Battlefield, near Inverness. Visit Culloden's ancestry hub where you can discover the origins of your name in even more detail.

Start your ancestral journey

To help you plan your own personal journey to Scotland, visit our website, where you can download our free ancestry eBook and discover information on clans, surnames, past professions and how to research.

We also have a range of businesses, including accommodation providers, listed on our site who are part of our Ancestral Welcome Scheme, giving you the assurance that they can guide you in terms of local sites related to your clan, events taking place, and genealogical resources for those undertaking ancestral research.



Find out more
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/ANCESTRY

Images top and bottom

- Bannockburn Visitor Centre
- Gearrannan Blackhouse Village, Isle of Lewis



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Scotland's cultural spirit

It's hard to put your finger on what makes Scotland so distinctive. There are some things that are uniquely Scottish but, in truth, there's no single element that defines the country. Rather, it's a subtle blend of our many different ingredients that combine to make what can only be described as a unique and vibrant spirit. How will you experience it?

Scotland's culture certainly embodies openness. That's why, for instance, Glasgow's Celtic Connections showcases both native talent and performers from across the globe. Elsewhere, the city becomes the centre of the world of piping during the Piping Live! International Piping Festival.

While high profile events such as the Edinburgh International Festival, the Art, Jazz and Science festivals, and the stirring Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, inevitably draw in eager audiences, other parts of Scotland also stage alluring cultural events.

The annual Braemar Highland Gathering in September is Scotland's premier Highland games because of the attendance of Britain's royalty, but it is only one event in a games programme right across Scotland. During the summer months, don't miss the chance to see traditional sports like tug-o-war and caber tossing at a Highland games.

Catch one of the many friendly summer music festivals. At Tiree Music Festival in the Inner Hebrides and the Hebridean Celtic Festival on the Isle of Lewis you can see exciting traditional and contemporary artists perform against stunning island backdrops.



Get a taste of traditional Scottish dance at a ceilidh - try dancing the Dashing White Sergeant or the Gay Gordons to the sound of a traditional ceilidh band.

Enjoy a week-long festival celebrating the best of the Gaelic language and culture at the Royal National Mòd in Inverness.



In winter, things can really heat up. Be part of one of the traditional fire festivals, such as Shetland's famous Up Helly Aa in January which celebrates the islands' Norse heritage in fiery glory.

It's easy to dip into Scotland's traditional music in informal settings. Musical get-togethers called ceilidhs are often advertised locally in advance, especially in smaller places. Ask your accommodation provider or check with your local iCentre.

You might catch a spontaneous folk music session in a local pub, or check out the diverse music programmes at city venues such as Hootananny in Inverness or Ghillie Dhu in Edinburgh.



Uncover the longest running professional windsurfing event in the world - the BWA Tiree Wave Classic - held on the stunning Isle of Tiree off the west coast, as well as many cosy winter festivities including Hogmanay and a torchlight procession.

Celebrate the patron saint of Scotland on St Andrew's Day with a national holiday and fantastic events showcasing the very best of Scottish culture.

Immerse yourself in traditional Scottish folk music at live music nights. From the evocative sound of the bagpipes to the lively music of the fiddle.



Find out more

**WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/UNIQUELYSCOTTISH**

The shot put is a popular Highland games track and field event. Watch participants 'putting' (pushing rather than throwing) heavy objects as far as possible.



Images top to bottom

- PyroCeltica leading Edinburgh's Torchlight Procession
- Celebrating St Andrew's Day on the streets of St Andrews
- The Foot Stompin Ceilidh Band at the Royal Highland Show
- Vikings at Lerwick's Up Helly Aa

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Take in the views of Ailsa Craig as you play a round on Girvan Golf Course – a popular links and parkland course.

Scotland – The Home of Golf

Scotland is The Home of Golf, boasting an unparalleled golfing history which dates back over 600 years. With high profile, nail-biting tournaments, attractive courses available for all abilities, and a range of discount passes, Scotland offers the ultimate golfing experience, whether you come to play or watch the sport.

With over 550 courses including historic championship links courses like the Old Course at St Andrews and Royal Troon, as well as local 9-hole greens, classic parklands and challenging heathland, Scotland offers diverse play for all standards of golfer.

Book a tee time on courses designed by golfing legend James Braid, including Carnoustie in Angus and the King's and Queen's courses at Gleneagles, or head to East Lothian where a wealth of golfing opportunities await you. There are 21 courses to choose from, including Gullane, Luffness, and Muirfield, to name a few.



Find out more about golf in Scotland at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/GOLF

Watch the Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open and Aberdeen Standard Investments Ladies Scottish Open at the Renaissance Golf Club in North Berwick.



SCOTLAND
Proudly Hosts
SolheimCup2019

1

394 Yds
360 Mts
Par 4

The first hole of the Gleneagles PGA Centenary Course, venue of the 2019 Solheim Cup.



Book an organised golf tour in Scotland to play some of the country's most prestigious courses and golfing gems. Tee times, tuition, transfers and accommodation are all organised by experienced, friendly operators, meaning all you need to worry about is who is getting the first round in at the 19th hole!

There are golfing gems to be discovered in all corners of the country. Play a round on the lush links course of Machrie on the Isle of Islay before enjoying a dram at a nearby distillery, or put your game to the test on the esteemed championship course at Royal Dornoch, set amidst breathtaking Highland scenery.



Enjoy stunning views at coastal links such as Machrihanish and watch out for natural obstacles including the grazing sheep that act as green keepers! The Carrick, on the banks of Loch Lomond, has excellent waterside views, whilst on the Banchory course, watch out for the River Dee which comes into play as a water hazard.



In 2020, there are a number of unmissable events on the Scottish golfing calendar. Catch top players at the Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open in July and the Aberdeen Standard Investments Ladies Scottish Open in August. Both will play out at The Renaissance Club at Archerfield in East Lothian. In July 2021, the greatest golf championship in the world, The Open, will return to Scotland and take place in St Andrews.



Images top to bottom

- Kingsbarns Golf Course near St Andrews
- Swilcan Bridge at The Old Course, St Andrews
- Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club, Campbeltown
- Carnoustie Golf Links, Carnoustie



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A flavour of Scotland

Scotland is truly a feast for the senses, so indulge your taste buds and sample our world-class produce.

Grass-fed beef from Aberdeenshire, venison from the Highlands, shellfish from the west coast – these are just some of the many delights you'll find in Scotland's natural larder. Tuck into the best of Scottish produce and enjoy our many great eateries and delightful foodie experiences.

Haggis is the best known of Scotland's traditional dishes and sometimes appears as a starter or as part of a main dish. Oatmeal, a traditional Scottish staple, is used in porridge, oatcakes and desserts including cranachan (toasted oats, honey, whisky, cream and berries).

Other examples of authentic tastes include Scottish cheeses, such as Lanark Blue and Ross-shire Caboc; smoked fish, most notably the Arbroath Smokie or delectable smoked salmon; clootie dumpling (made with dried fruit and spices); and a range of bakery goods, including the buttery, close relative of the French croissant!



Taste the best produce that Scotland has to offer such as a delicious choice of Scotch beef.



Taste one of Scotland's many flavoursome gins, did you know that 70% of gin produced in the UK is actually made in Scotland?

Taste your way around either Edinburgh or Glasgow on a foodie walking tour and get a flavour of the local culinary scene.



Whisky

You can't visit Scotland without trying whisky – why not head to a distillery to see how this amber-coloured spirit is made, and sample fine malts at the source?

Farmers' Markets

From Kelso in the Scottish Borders to Lerwick on Shetland, you'll find farmers' markets throughout Scotland. Shop for fresh local produce, such as fruit, game and cheese.

Eating Out

Try one of Scotland's award-winning restaurants for an exclusive culinary experience. With nine Michelin-star restaurants across the country, you'll be spoilt for choice.

Grab some succulent seafood from the Lobster Shack in North Berwick or try fresh oysters straight from the shell at Loch Fyne Restaurant & Oyster Bar.

Craft Breweries

Whisky is big business in Scotland, but did you know the country's craft breweries are thriving too? From traditional heather ale to pioneering new beer hybrids, there are plenty of local delights to taste as you travel!

Taste Our Best – Make sure you enjoy Scottish food and drink of exceptional quality by looking for places that are part of Taste Our Best, our quality assurance scheme.



Discover more at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/TASTEOURBEST



Book a table at Restaurant Andrew Fairlie at Gleneagles, Scotland's only two Michelin-star restaurant, for the ultimate indulgence.

Enjoy a delicious and decadent afternoon tea, complete with sandwiches, scones and cakes, in an elegant country house hotel.

Whet your appetite and follow one of the many tasty food and drink trails. You can discover the flavours of the sea as you follow the Seafood Trail through Scotland's west coast, or satisfy your sweet tooth on Scotland's Chocolate Trail.

Throughout the year there are some great food and drink events, such as the Crail Food Festival in Fife or the Tarbert Seafood Festival in Argyll. In the spring, try Scotland's national drink at the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival, or enjoy other Whisky Month events in May.



Discover more about Scotland's delightful food and drink at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/FOOD-DRINK

Images left to right

- The Balgove Larder farm shop, St Andrews
- Ee-Usk; Seafood Restaurant, Oban

Scotland's spectacular landscapes, quality of light, its people and its stories, have long been immortalised on the silver screen.

For many, it's been the next best thing to being here – but the only way to really appreciate the magic and beauty is to see it for yourself.

The dramatic hills of Glen Nevis and Glen Coe were the setting for *Braveheart*. This portrayal of one of the country's most iconic figures featured Mel Gibson as William Wallace and detailed the struggle against English occupation in the 13th century.

Highlander, starring Christopher Lambert and Sean Connery, featured these same landscapes alongside romantic Eilean Donan Castle, which is also recognisable for its appearance in the James Bond movie *The World Is Not Enough*. More recently Glen Coe provided the backdrop to tense scenes in *Skyfall*.

The breathtaking train chase scene from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* features the Hogwarts Express and a flying Ford Anglia car crossing the historic Glenfinnan Viaduct in the west Highlands. Experience the same magical

journey with a trip on the Jacobite steam train between Fort William and Mallaig.

Whizzpopping and snozzcumbers were not the only things that left an impression on audiences of 2016's *The BFG*, adapted from the classic children's novel by Roald Dahl. The dramatic landscapes of Orkney and Skye became the magical realm of Giants' Land in the blockbuster fantasy, directed by Steven Spielberg.

The Quiraing on the Isle of Skye has been used as the setting for dark tragedy, when Michael Fassbender took the title role in 2015's feature length film version of Shakespeare's classic play *Macbeth*.

Scotland's sparkling coastline has also been featured in well-loved films such as *Chariots of Fire* (1981), filmed on the West Sands beach at St Andrews, and *Local Hero* (1983), filmed at both Camusdarach Beach in Morar and in the pretty north east village of Pennan. The Oscar-winning biopic *The Queen* (2006) was filmed at the Balmoral Estate in Royal Deeside while *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) showcased Rosslyn Chapel, just outside Edinburgh.

The small coastal village of Pennan is only about an hour's drive from Aberdeen and is famed for being the location of the film 'Local Hero'.





Still on the historical theme, the hit TV series *Outlander* has been taking Scotland by storm, with our impressive locations attracting fans from across the globe. Now in its fourth series, there are more than 40 locations for fans to visit - from castles and stately homes to gardens and historic railways. And did you know - much of Scotland appears as Paris, North America and even Jamaica?



Find out more about outlander at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM
/OUTLANDER



Courtesy of Sony Pictures



Find out more

WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/FILM

Images top to bottom

- Drummond Castle and Gardens, Perthshire
- Drummond Castle as used in *Outlander*, Perthshire
- Eilean Donan Castle, on Loch Duich, Dornie

30 Events 2020

JANUARY

25 December and 1 January

The Ba'

Kirkwall

www.bagame.com

16 January - 2 February

Celtic Connections

Glasgow

www.celticconnections.com

25 January

Burns An' A' That!

South Ayrshire

www.burnsfestival.com

28 January

Up Helly Aa

Lerwick

www.uphellyaa.org

FEBRUARY

February - March

Guinness Six Nations

Edinburgh (& Europe)

www.sixnationsrugby.com

20 February - 3 March

Glasgow Film Festival

Glasgow

www.glasgowfilm.org

MARCH

March - April

Ferry Tales

Outer Hebrides, Argyll & Bute

www.nationaltheatrescotland.com

3 - 8 March

StAnza Poetry Festival

St Andrews

www.stanzapoetry.org

28 March - 5 April

World Men's Curling Championships

Glasgow

www.wmcc2020.com

APRIL

1 - 30 April

DolphinFest

Aberdeen

www.rspb.org.uk

4 - 19 April

Edinburgh Science Festival

Edinburgh

www.sciencefestival.co.uk

12 April

Easter Eggstravaganza

Innerleithen

www.traquair.co.uk

29 April - 4 May

Spirit of Speyside

Whisky Festival

Moray Speyside

www.spiritofspeyside.com



UCI Mountain Bike
World Cup, a unique
weekend of adrenaline
pumping gravity action
for the whole family.

MAY

1 - 3 May

Scapa Yoga & Adventure Festival

Loch Fyne

www.scapafest.com

1 - 11 May

TradFest

Edinburgh

www.edinburghtradfest.com

15 - 18 May

Isle of Arran Mountain Festival

Isle of Arran

www.arranmountainfestival.co.uk

21 - 30 May

Perth Festival of the Arts

Perth

www.perthfestival.co.uk

22 - 30 May

Feis Ìle

Islay Festival of Music & Malt

Isle of Islay

www.islayfestival.com

23 - 24 May

Edinburgh Marathon Festival

Edinburgh

www.edinburghmarathon.com

JUNE

4 - 11 June

The Fife Regatta

North Ayrshire

www.fiferegatta.com

6 - 7 June

UCI Mountain Bike World Cup

Fort William

www.fortwilliamworldcup.co.uk

12 June - 12 July

UEFA EURO 2020

Glasgow (& Europe)

www.euro2020.scottishfa.co.uk

17 - 28 June

Edinburgh International

Film Festival

Edinburgh

www.edfilmfest.org.uk

19 - 25 June

St Magnus International Festival

Orkney

www.stmagnusfestival.com

20 - 21 June

Scottish Traditional Boat

Festival

Portsoy, Aberdeenshire

www.stbfporthsoy.org



For more events throughout the country
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM/EVENTS

JULY

1 - 5 July
East Neuk Festival
Fife
www.eastneukfestival.com

9 - 12 July
Aberdeen Standard Investments
Scottish Open
North Berwick
www.asiscottishopen.com

10 - 12 July
Trad Music Festival
Newton Stewart & Minnigaff
www.tradmusic.com

15 - 18 July
Hebridean Celtic Festival
Stornoway
www.hebceltfest.com

23 - 26 July
Aberdeen Standard Investments
Ladies Scottish Open
North Berwick
www.ladiesscottishopen.com

AUGUST

August
World Pipe Band Championships
Glasgow
www.theworlds.co.uk

27 - 29 August
Cowal Highland Gathering
Dunoon
www.cowalgathering.com

August - September
Largs Viking Festival
Largs
www.largsvikingfestival.org

SEPTEMBER

September
Doors Open Days
Across Scotland
www.doorsopendays.org.uk

4 - 6 September
Clydebuilt Festival
Glasgow
www.clydebuiltfestival.com

September
Stranraer Oyster Festival
Stranraer
www.stranraeroysterfestival.com

OCTOBER

6 October
Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running
Loch Ness
www.lochnessmarathon.com

9 - 17 October
Royal National Mòd
Inverness
www.ancomunn.co.uk

10 October
River of Light
Inverclyde
www.scotlandsboatshow.co.uk

31 October
Samhuinn Fire Festival
Edinburgh
www.beltane.org

October - November
The Enchanted Forest
Pitlochry
www.enchantedforest.org.uk

NOVEMBER

30 November
St Andrew's Day
Across Scotland
www.visitscotland.com/st-andrews-day

November - December
Glasgow Christmas Markets
Glasgow
www.glasgowloveschristmas.com

DECEMBER

30 December - 1 January
Hogmanay
Across Scotland
www.visitscotland.com/hogmanay

31 December
Stonehaven Fireballs
Stonehaven
www.stonehavenfireballs.co.uk



In 2020, Scotland celebrates the Year of Coasts and Waters. This year-long programme of events, activities and ideas will shine a spotlight on the impact water has had on Scotland, from the formation of beautiful natural features – including coasts, lochs and rivers – to innovations such as canals and the creation of our national drink, whisky.



Images right top to bottom -

- Knockengorroch World Ceilidh Music festival, Dumfries & Galloway
- UEFA EURO, Glasgow
- Edinburgh International Film Festival



Scotland's train network extends to all major cities and towns. Below is The Mamore Viaduct which takes you from Mallaig to Fort William.



Discover Scotland by road with the perfect road trip - beautiful, ever-changing scenery along with welcoming towns and villages. Above is the road to Mull of Galloway lighthouse.

Getting around Scotland

Travelling around the country is straightforward, thanks to an extensive road network, excellent rail links and comprehensive bus system. There's also an efficient ferry service, taking passengers to and from Scotland's many island networks, as well as flights to a number of islands.



Getting to Scotland is pretty simple and once you get here, some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes are within easy reach. What are you waiting for?

Getting to Scotland

Depending on where you are coming from you can choose from a selection of direct non-stop flights, or a wide range of connections through hub airports within the Middle East or Europe including London, Amsterdam, Paris, Frankfurt and Dublin. There are also a number of ferry route options to the United Kingdom if you are travelling from mainland Europe or from Ireland.



London is around an hour's flight from Edinburgh or Glasgow, and Scotland's other main airports enjoy regular service from London and other UK cities. Onward travel from Scotland's airports to the nearby city centres is quick and well co-ordinated.

The journey from London by train takes around 4 hours 30 minutes to Edinburgh and 5 hours to Glasgow and takes you directly into the city centres, and there are also regular coach services too.



Find out more about travel to and around Scotland at
WWW.VISITSCOTLAND.COM /TRAVEL

Images top to bottom

- The view from the plane to Benbecula
- Cycling for all ages
- Ferry at the Isle of Raasay slipway