



Inverness & the Northern Highlands & Islands

Includes ➔

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Orkney	941
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Café 1 (p891)
- ➔ Lime Tree (p911)
- ➔ The Albannach (p922)
- ➔ Three Chimneys (p933)
- ➔ Foveran (p946)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Grange (p911)
- ➔ The Torridon (p925)
- ➔ Milton Eonan (p909)
- ➔ Hillstone Lodge (p933)
- ➔ Albert Hotel (p945)

Why Go?

Scotland's vast and melancholy soul is here, in an epic landscape whose stark beauty imprints the hearts of those who journey through it. Mist, peat, rock, heather...and long, sun-blessed summer evenings that repay the occasional days of horizontal rain.

The hills and glens of Highland Perthshire offer a memorable first taste. The region's capital, Inverness, is backed by the craggy Cairngorms, which draw hikers and skiers to their slopes. Further north, ancient stones stand testament to prehistoric builders on the magical islands of Orkney and Shetland, where squadrons of seabirds wheel above huge nesting colonies.

The most epic mountain scenery – you really need an orchestra to do it justice – is in the northwest Highlands, and it continues into Skye, where the mighty Cuillin Hills tower jaggedly in the setting sun. Beyond, on the Atlantic fringe, the Outer Hebrides offer the nation's most beautiful beaches and a glimpse of traditional island life.

When to Go

- ➔ Hit the Cairngorms for skiing or the Shetland Islands for Up Helly Aa, a fiery Viking festival in January.
- ➔ June's long evenings see the Highlands at their most romantic, while Fort William hosts the Mountain Bike World Cup.
- ➔ September is the ideal time for hiking and hill walking – midges are dying off, and the weather is still reasonably good.

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1 Glen Lyon

(p909) Exploring the woods and mountains around this gorgeous glen.

2 South Harris

(p938) Dipping your toes in the water at the beautiful beaches in the Western Isles.

3 Cuillin Hills

(p931) Shouldering the challenge of these hills, brooding over the skyscape of Skye.

4 Far northwest

(p920) Picking your jaw up off the floor as you marvel at the epic Highland scenery.

5 Skye (p929)

Launching yourself in a sea kayak to explore the otter-rich waters of the Isle of Skye.

6 Skara Brae

(p949) Shaking your head in astonishment at prehistoric perfection that predates the pyramids.

7 Royal Deeside

(p903) Exploring the villages, hills and forests around Balmoral Castle.

8 Bird-watching

(p960) Capering with puffins and dodging skuas at Hermaness nature reserve.

9 Glen Coe

(p908) Soaking up the moody but magnificent scenery.

10 Ben Nevis

(p913) Making it to the summit of the UK's highest mountain.

