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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions
to help you put together your perfect trip

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**14
TOP
EXPERIENCES**

**month
by
month**

Golf

When to Play

Scotland is a golfers' paradise, with over 1,500 courses and a rich history of the sport. The best time to visit is during the summer months, when the weather is warm and the grass is green. However, the golf season is open year-round, and many courses offer discounted rates during the winter months.

Resources

For more information on golf in Scotland, visit the Scottish Golf Federation website or contact the Scottish Golf Federation.

Costs

Golf in Scotland is a popular activity, and many courses offer discounted rates for visitors. The cost of a round of golf can range from £10 to £50, depending on the course and the time of year.

What are Links?

Links golf is a unique form of golf that is played on coastal courses. It is characterized by its rugged terrain, which includes dunes, cliffs, and links. Links golf is a challenging and exciting sport, and it is a must-try for any golfer visiting Scotland.

February

The winter months are the best time to visit Scotland, when the weather is cool and the scenery is beautiful. February is a great time to visit, as the weather is just beginning to warm up, and the snow has melted. The winter months are also a great time to visit, as the weather is cool and the scenery is beautiful.

April

The spring months are the best time to visit Scotland, when the weather is warm and the scenery is beautiful. April is a great time to visit, as the weather is just beginning to warm up, and the snow has melted. The spring months are also a great time to visit, as the weather is cool and the scenery is beautiful.

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UNDERSTAND SCOTLAND

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP

Learn about the big picture, so you
can make sense of what you see

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Scotland Today

Scottish Politics

Scotland has a long and rich history of self-governance, and it is a key part of the country's identity. The Scottish Parliament is the main body responsible for the governance of Scotland, and it has a wide range of powers, including the ability to pass laws and allocate funds. The Scottish Government is the executive branch of the Scottish Parliament, and it is responsible for implementing the laws and policies of the Scottish Parliament.

Scottish Culture

Arts

Scotland has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, and it is a key part of the country's identity. The Scottish arts scene is vibrant and growing, with a wide range of opportunities for artists to showcase their work. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting the arts, and it provides a range of funding and resources to help artists develop their careers.

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Neil Wilson
Andy Symington

Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first.

Look out for these icons:



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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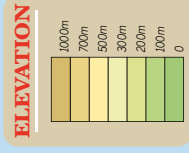
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Jaw-dropping vistas (p377)

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Famous for world-class festivals (p42)

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St Andrews invented the game (p206)

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Lochs, woodlands and majestic glens (p215)

Climbing Ben Nevis
The highest Munro of them all (p351)

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Minke whales, porpoises and dolphins (p306)

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Dramatic scenery meets deep history (p345)

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Bluebell woods and bonnie banks (p272)

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Edgy and contemporary with great live music (p102)

Belfast

NORTHERN IRELAND

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

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Northumberland National Park

Carlisle

Dumfries

Newcastle

Douglas

Kirkcubright

Stranraer

Portpatrick

Larne

Coleraine

Derry

Letterkenny

Strabane

Buncrana

Campbeltown

Mill of Kintyre

Mill of Galloway

Burrow Head

Wigtown

Luce Peninsula

Machars

St John's Town of Dalry

Galloway Forest Park

Merrick (Peebles)

Castle Douglas

Greenock

Dumbarton

Blantyre

Motherwell

Lanark

Biggart

Peebles

Galashiels

Selkirk

Kelso

Melrose

Wodfoot Hills

Lammermoor Hills

Coldingham

St Abbs

Eyemouth

Cockburnspath

Dunbar

Haddington

Falkland

Kirkcaldy

Dunfermline

Atterdoun

Culross

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OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Neil Wilson

Coordinating Author; Edinburgh, Northeast Scotland, Southern Highlands & Islands, Inverness & the Central Highlands, Northern Highlands & Islands

Neil was born in Scotland and, save for a few years spent abroad, has lived here most of his life. A lifelong enthusiasm for the great outdoors has inspired hiking, biking and sailing expeditions to every corner of the country. On his latest research trip he mountain-biked at Laggan Wolftrax, went canoeing on Loch Lomond, hiked

up Eaval on Uist and Carnan Eoin on Colonsay, and drank too many BrewDog beers. Neil has been a full-time author since 1988 and has written about 60 guidebooks for various publishers, including Lonely Planet's guide to his home town of Edinburgh. Neil also wrote Plan Your Trip, the Walking in Scotland, Scotland Today, Scottish Larder and Scottish Culture chapters, and the Skye and Outer Hebrides sections of the Northern Highlands & Islands chapter.

Read more about Neil at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/neilwilson



Andy Symington

Glasgow, Southern Scotland, Central Scotland, Northern Highlands & Islands, Orkney & Shetland Islands

Andy's Scottish forebears make their presence felt in a love of malt, a debatable ginger colour to his facial hair and a love of wild places. From childhood slogs up the M1 he graduated to making dubious road trips around the firths in a disintegrating Mini Metro and thence to peddling whisky in darkest Leith. While living there, he travelled widely around the country in search

of the perfect dram, and, now resident in Spain, continues to visit very regularly. Andy also wrote the Golf, History, Wild Scotland, Directory and Transport chapters, and the East Coast, Caithness and North & West Coast sections of the Northern Highlands & Islands chapter.

Read more about Andy at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/andy_symington

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itineraries

Whether you've got five days or 15, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



Five Days Border Raid

From **Edinburgh** your first objective should be a visit to Sir Walter Scott's former home at **Abbotsford**, followed by a trapeze around the beautiful Border abbeys of **Melrose** and nearby Dryburgh; Melrose is a charming place to stay the night, with a choice of good hotels and eating places.

Next morning head west along the A708 to **Moffat**, passing through glorious scenery around St Mary's Loch. Continue to **Dumfries** (and stop for the night), where you can visit the first of several sights related to Scotland's national poet Robert Burns, and make a short side trip to see spectacular **Caerlaverock Castle**.

Take the A76 northwest towards Ayr, and spend the rest of day three in **Alloway** visiting the birthplace of Robert Burns (and other Burns-related sites); nearby **Ayr** has plenty of accommodation options.

North now to **Wemyss Bay** and the ferry to **Rothesay** on the Isle of Bute, where you can visit stunning Mount Stuart, one of Scotland's most impressive stately homes. Spend the night on the island, then return to the mainland and head east to **Glasgow**.



Two Weeks Best of Scotland

From **Edinburgh** head north across the Forth Road Bridge to Fife and turn east along the coastal road through the delightful fishing villages of the **East Neuk** (pause for a seafood lunch at Anstruther or St Monans) to the home of golf, **St Andrews**. Stay a night or two – heck, play a round of golf – before continuing north across the Tay Bridge to **Dundee** and **Glamis Castle**, with its royal associations. From here the A93 leads through the Grampian Mountains to reach **Braemar**, a good place to spend the night.

A feast of castles lies ahead as you make your way east along Royal Deeside – take your time and visit (at the very least) the royal residence of **Balmoral Castle** and the fairy-tale **Crathes Castle** on your way to the granite city of **Aberdeen**. Plan to overnight here.

Now strike west again along the A944, making small detours to visit **Castle Fraser** and **Craigievar Castle** before turning north to **Dufftown** in the heart of Speyside. Base yourself here for at least a day while you explore the many **whisky distilleries** nearby – there are two excellent restaurants to try, plus the Quaich whisky bar at the nearby Craigellachie Hotel.

Head northwest to **Elgin** and its magnificent ruined cathedral, then west on the A96 visiting **Fort George** and **Culloden** on the way to Inverness (you'll probably need a stopover in Nairn). **Inverness** itself is worth a night or two – there are some excellent hotels and restaurants, and the opportunity for a side trip to **Loch Ness** (Drumadrochit for monster-spotters, Dores Inn for foodies).

Now for a glorious drive from Inverness to **Torridon** via **Kinlochewe** through some of the country's finest mountain scenery; try to spend a night at the Torridon hotel. Then head south via Applecross and the pretty village of **Plockton** to Kyle of Lochalsh and the bridge to **Skye**.

Spend two days exploring Scotland's most famous island before taking the ferry from Armadale to Mallaig, and follow the **Road to the Isles** in reverse, stopping to visit **Glenfinnan**, where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised his Highland army in 1745. Overnight at Fort William, and drive back to Edinburgh via the scenic road through **Glen Coe** and along the bonnie banks of **Loch Lomond**.



- » (above) Autumn in the Trossachs (p198)
- » (left) Melrose Abbey (p146)



One Week A Highland Fling

No trip to Scotland would be complete without a visit to **Edinburgh**, and even if your Scottish trip lasts only a week the capital is worth two days of your time. On day three, head northwest to **Stirling** to see Scotland's other great castle, then on to the **Trossachs** for your first taste of Highland scenery (overnight in Callander).

Day four starts with a scenic drive north via Crianlarich, **Glen Coe** and **Fort William**, then along the Great Glen to **Loch Ness** in time for an afternoon visiting Urquhart Castle and the Loch Ness Centre & Exhibition. An evening cruise on Loch Ness rounds off the day before spending the night in **Inverness** on picturesque River Ness.

On day five, spend the morning visiting **Culloden Battlefield**, then drive west via **Achnasheen** and **Plockton** to **Kyle of Lochalsh** and cross the bridge to the **Isle of Skye**. Devote day six to exploring Skye – there will be time for a visit to Dunvegan Castle and a tour of the Trotternish peninsula.

Day seven is the long drive back south – the scenic route goes via **Glen Shiel**, **Invergarry**, **Spean Bridge** (pause at the Commando Monument), **Laggan** and then south on the A9 to Edinburgh, with a stop in **Pitlochry**.

One Week Island Hopscotch

This route is usually done by car, but it also makes a brilliant cycling tour (270 miles, including the 60 miles from Ullapool to Inverness train station, making both start and finish accessible by rail).

From **Oban** it's a five-hour ferry crossing to **Barra**; plan to spend the night here (book ahead). On day two, after a visit to Kimsimul Castle and a tour around the island, take the ferry to **South Uist**. Walk the wild beaches of the west coast, sample the local seafood and perhaps go fishing on the island's trout lochs.

Overnight at Lochmaddy on North Uist then continue through **North Uist** and **Benbecula**, prime birdwatching country. If you're camping or hostelling, a night at **Berneray** is a must before taking the ferry to **Harris**, whose west coast has some of the most spectacular beaches in Scotland. The road continues north from **Tarbert** (good hotels) through rugged hills to **Lewis**.

Don't go directly to Stornoway, but loop west via the **Callanish Standing Stones** and **Arnol Blackhouse** museum. Spend your final night in **Stornoway** (eat at Digby Chick), then take the ferry to **Ullapool** for a scenic drive to **Inverness**.

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