

Welcome to Scotland

Despite its small size, Scotland has many treasures crammed into its compact territory – big skies, lonely landscapes, spectacular wildlife, superb seafood and hospitable, down-to-earth people.

Outdoor Adventure

Scotland harbours some of the largest areas of wilderness left in Western Europe, a wildlife haven where you can see golden eagles soar above the lochs and mountains of the northern Highlands, spot otters tumbling in the kelp along the shores of the Outer Hebrides, and watch minke whales breach through shoals of mackerel off the coast of Mull. It's also an adventure playground where you can tramp the tundra plateaus of the Cairngorms, balance along tightrope ridges strung between the rocky peaks of the Cuillin, sea-kayak among the seal-haunted isles of the Outer Hebrides, and take a speed-boat ride into the surging white water of the Corryvreckan whirlpool.

Turbulent History

Scotland is a land with a rich, multilayered history, a place where every corner of the landscape is steeped in the past – a deserted croft on an island shore, a moor that was once a battlefield, a cave that sheltered Bonnie Prince Charlie. Hundreds of castles – from the plain but forbidding tower houses of Hermitage and Smailholm to the elaborate machicolated fortresses of Caerlaverock and Craigmillar – testify to the country's often turbulent past. And battles that played a pivotal part in the building of a nation are remembered and brought to life at sites such as Bannockburn and Culloden.

A Taste of Scotland

An increasing number of visitors have discovered that Scotland's restaurants have shaken off their old reputation for deep-fried food and unsmiling service and can now compete with the best in Europe. A newfound respect for top-quality local produce means that you can feast on fresh seafood mere hours after it was caught, beef and venison that was raised just a few miles away from your table, and vegetables that were grown in your hotel's own organic garden. Top it all off with a dram of single malt whisky – rich, evocative and complex, it's the true taste of Scotland.

The Culture

Be it the poetry of Robert Burns, the crime fiction of Ian Rankin or the songs of Emeli Sandé, Scotland's cultural exports are appreciated around the world every bit as much as whisky, tweed and tartan. But you can't beat reading Burns' poems in the village where he was born, enjoying an Inspector Rebus novel in Rankin's own Edinburgh, or catching the latest Scottish bands at the T in the Park festival. And museums such as Glasgow's Kelvingrove, Dundee's Discovery Point and Aberdeen's Maritime Museum recall the influence of Scottish artists, engineers, explorers, writers and inventors in shaping the modern world.



Why I Love Scotland

By Neil Wilson, Writer

It's the weather. Yes, seriously. We get four proper seasons here (sometimes all of them in one day) and that means that you get to enjoy the same landscapes over and over again in a range of different garbs – August hills clad in purple heather, native woodlands gilded with autumn colours, snowpatched winter mountains, and Hebridean machair sprinkled with a confetti of spring wildflowers. The unpredictability of the weather means that even the wettest day can be suddenly transformed by parting clouds and slanting shafts of golden light. Sheer magic.

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