



# Skye & the Western Isles

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Three Chimneys (p194)
- » Digby Chick (p205)
- » Café Arriba (p192)
- » Lochbay Seafood Restaurant (p194)
- » Bistro at the Bosville (p192)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Garenin Crofters' Hostel (p206)
- » Toravaig House Hotel (p187)
- » Ben Tianavaig B&B (p190)
- » Polochar Inn (p213)
- » Langass Lodge Hotel (p212)

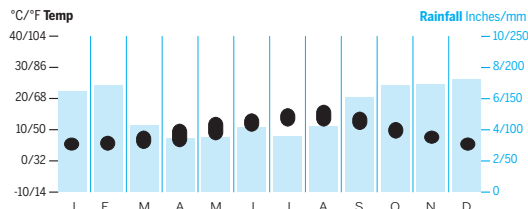
## Why Go?

The Isle of Skye is the distilled essence of the Highlands and Islands, where the jagged peaks of the Cuillin Hills tear at the mist and the ghosts of Bonnie Prince Charlie and Flora MacDonald haunt the hallways of Dunvegan Castle. This rugged island is a paradise for walkers, climbers and wildlife enthusiasts, with its dramatic mountains and lonely lochs, home to golden eagles, peregrine falcons, otters, deer and seals.

Skye points the way to the Western Isles – the ‘isles at the edge of the sea’ – with their landscapes of peat bog, lochan and bare, glaciated gneiss. These harsh landscapes are softened by glittering shell-sand beaches, wildflower-strewn machair, and buttercup meadows where the outlines of ruined crofts are visible in the turf like fossils in a stone. This necklace of remote islands is a last bastion of Gaelic culture, where the hardships of life in the old ‘blackhouses’ still remain within living memory.

## When to Go

### Portree



**May** The coastal grasslands of the Western Isles are alive with wildflowers and nesting birds.

**Jul** The Hebridean Celtic Festival is a top time to experience the Gaelic culture of the Isle of Lewis.

**Sep** Often the best month for hiking in Skye, with settled weather and fewer midges.



## Skye & the Western Isles Highlights

**1** Leave footprints in the sand along the beautiful beaches of **South Harris** (p209)

**2** Take on the challenge of the **Cuillin Hills** (p188), whose rugged ridges attract climbers from all over Britain

**3** Launch yourself in a **sea-kayak** to explore the wildlife-

rich waters of the Western Isles (p212)

**4** Soak up the stunning panorama from the summit of the **Sgurr of Eigg** (p197)

**5** Explore the weird and wonderful landscape features of the **Quiraing** (p194)

**6** Marvel at the self-indulgence that furnished the fabled halls of **Kinloch Castle** (p197)

**7** Ponder the mysteries of the ancient stones at **Callanish** (p206)

**8** Make the once-in-lifetime sea crossing to remote **St Kilda** (p214)