



# Scotland's Highlands & Islands



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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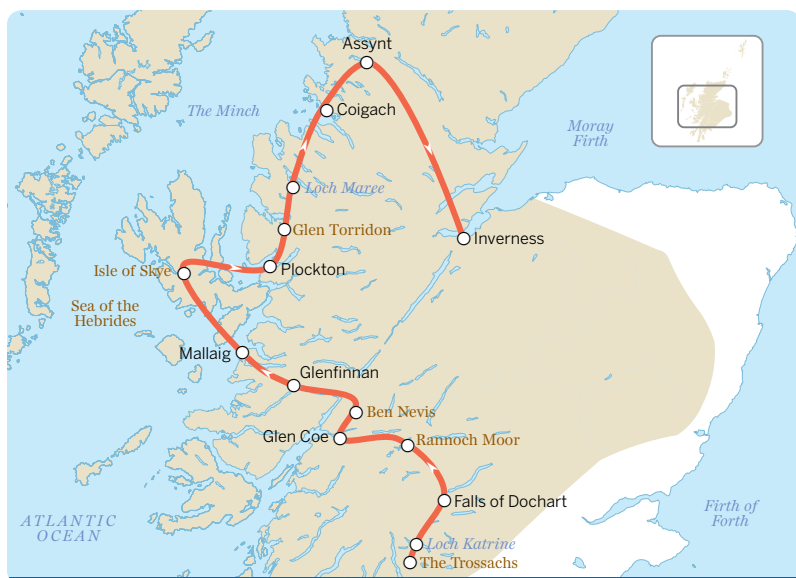
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# Itineraries



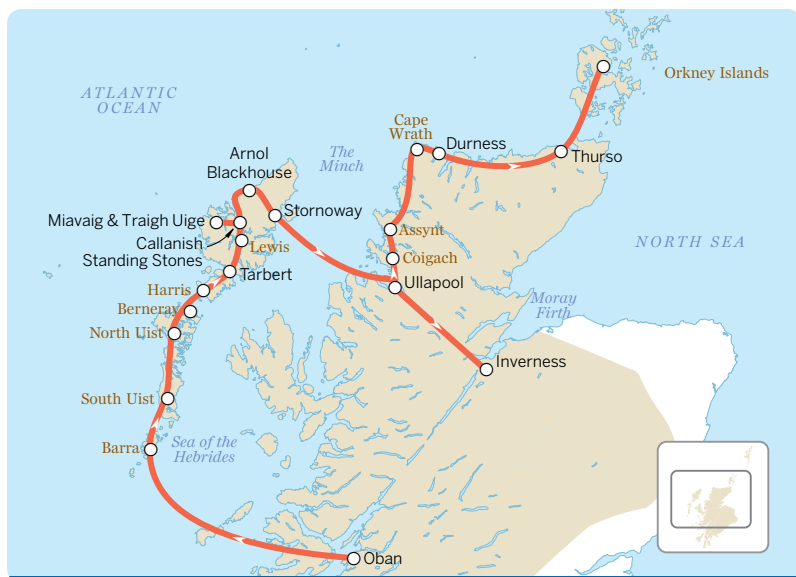
**2**  
WEEKS

## A Highland Fling

Begin this tour with a visit to the **Trossachs** for your first taste of Highland scenery; take a cruise on **Loch Katrine** and spend the night in Callander. Continue north via the Falls of Dochart at Killin and the fringes of Rannoch Moor.

The mountain scenery becomes more impressive, culminating in the grandeur of **Glen Coe**. Keen hill walkers will pause for a day at Fort William to climb **Ben Nevis** (plus another day to recover!) before taking the Road to the Isles past glorious Glenfinnan and the Silver Sands of Morar to **Mallaig**. Overnight here and dine at one of its seafood restaurants.

Take the ferry to the **Isle of Skye**, spending a day or two exploring Scotland's most famous island, before crossing the Skye Bridge back to the mainland, then head north via the pretty village of Plockton to the magnificent mountain scenery of **Glen Torridon**. Spend a day or two hiking here, then follow the A832 alongside lovely Loch Maree and continue north into the big-sky wilderness of **Coigach** and **Assynt**, before making your way back south with an overnight in **Inverness**.



2  
WEEKS

## Island Hopscotch

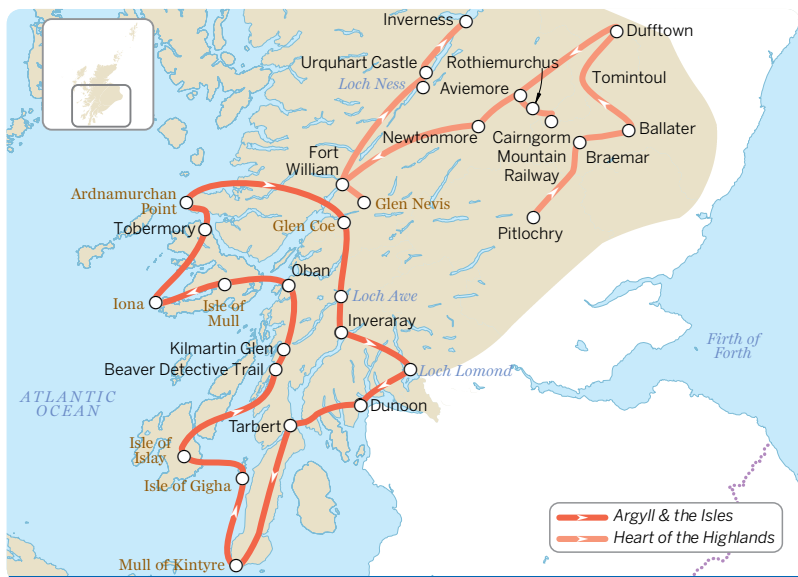
This route is usually done by car, but the Oban–Barra–Stornoway–Ullapool–Inverness loop also makes a brilliant cycle tour (around 270 miles, including the 60 miles from Ullapool ferry terminal to Inverness train station, making both start and finish accessible by rail). CalMac's Island Hopscotch ticket No 8 includes all the ferries needed for the Outer Hebrides part of this route.

From Oban it's a five-hour ferry crossing to **Barra**; you'll arrive in the evening so plan to spend the night there (book ahead). In the morning, after a visit to romantic Kisimul Castle and a tour around the island, take the ferry to **South Uist**. Walk along the wild beaches of the west coast, sample the local seafood and, if you've brought your fishing rod, look forward to a bit of sport on the island's many trout lochs. There are good places to stay at Polochar, Lochboisdale and Lochmaddy (two nights should be enough).

Keep your binoculars handy as you follow the road north through Benbecula and North Uist, as this is prime birdwatching country. If you're camping or hostelling, a night at **Berneray** is a must before taking the ferry to **Harris**. Pray for sun, as the road along Harris' west coast has some of the most spectacular beaches in Scotland. The main road continues north from Tarbert (good hotels) through the rugged Harris hills to Lewis.

Don't go directly to Stornoway, but take a turn west to the **Callanish Standing Stones** and **Arnol Blackhouse** museum – the highlights of the Western Isles. If you have time (two days is ideal), detour west to the beautiful beaches around **Miavaig** and **Traigh Uige**; there's plenty of wild and semiwild camping.

Spend your final night in the Hebrides in **Stornoway** (eat at Digby Chick), then take the ferry to **Ullapool**, where you have the choice of heading straight to Inverness, or continuing north around the mainland coast through the jaw-dropping wilderness of **Coigach** and **Assynt**, and on via Cape Wrath and Durness to Thurso, where the ferry to the **Orkney Islands** awaits.

10  
DAYS

## Argyll & the Isles

Begin with a scenic drive across the Cowal peninsula from Dunoon to Portavadie, via Benmore Botanic Garden and Tighnabruich, then take the ferry to the pretty fishing village of **Tarbert**. Devote a day to exploring the Kintyre peninsula, taking in Campbeltown, the Mull of Kintyre and a trip to the Isle of Gigha. Then allow at least two days for touring **Islay** and its famous distilleries.

Back on the mainland, head north through Knapdale – visit the **Beaver Detective Trail** – to the prehistoric sites of **Kilmartin Glen** and then on to the bustling ferry port of **Oban**. Take the ferry to Craignure for a tour of the **Isle of Mull**, making sure to visit Duart Castle and Iona, before spending a night at **Tobermory**. Then take another ferry to Kilchoan, allowing a trip to **Ardnamurchan Point**, the most westerly point of the British mainland, before the scenic drive along the shores of Loch Sunart to Corran Ferry.

Head back south via the splendour of Glen Coe and the minor road through Glen Orchy to reach **Loch Awe**. From here you can return to your starting point by way of Inveraray and Loch Lomond.

1  
WEEK

## Heart of the Highlands

Beginning in **Pitlochry**, abandon the main A9 road to the north and enjoy a day's scenic drive east across the hills on the A924, and then north on the A93 through the ski area of Glenshee to the remote **Braemar**. Spend a night here, then either hike in the Cairngorm hills nearby or visit Balmoral Castle before spending your second night at **Ballater**.

From here the rollercoaster A939 takes you north to Tomintoul; then it's back roads via Glenlivet to **Dufftown**, the capital of Speyside whisky. Next day, take your time visiting distilleries along the Spey valley to Aviemore, in the heart of Cairngorm National Park. Take at least two nights here to explore the ancient pine forests of **Rothiemurchus** and to take a trip on the **Cairngorm Mountain Railway**.

Then head west, stopping to discover the Highland Folk Museum at **Newtonmore** before continuing to **Fort William**. Overnight here, then spend a morning exploring **Glen Nevis** and head north along the Great Glen to see **Urquhart Castle** and **Loch Ness** – leave time for a monster-spotting cruise – and finish up in **Inverness**.



## 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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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, *Walking the West Highland Way, 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. Researching this edition took him from the country's most westerly point at Ardnamurchan Lighthouse to its most easterly at Fraserburgh,

and to every corner of beautiful Perthshire where he now lives. Neil has been a full-time author since 1988 and has written around 65 guidebooks for various publishers, including the Lonely Planet guides to Edinburgh and Scotland.



### Andy Symington

***Southern Highlands & Islands, Northern Highlands & Islands, Orkney & Shetland*** 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 treks 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. Whilst living there, he travelled widely around the country in search of the perfect dram, and,

now resident in Spain, continues to visit very regularly.

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