

# Scotland the Brave

## Day 1: Fly out from USA

Your Celtic adventure begins today with an overnight flight from the USA to Scotland.

## Day 2: Welcome to Edinburgh

After a late morning arrival into Edinburgh or Glasgow airport you'll travel the short distance into the heart of Scotland's capital Edinburgh, our gateway to Scotland.

Our sightseeing begins today after lunch, with an afternoon city tour in the company of a local 'Blue Badge' guide. Among the many sights we'll see are the new Scottish Parliament building, the Queen's Edinburgh residence Holyrood House, & famous Princes Street, the city's main shopping street. We'll also visit some of the oldest parts of Edinburgh on foot, taking a walk along 'the Royal Mile' & discovering its historic buildings, quaint shops, narrow lanes & hidden courtyards.

Later this afternoon we'll check-in for a 2-night stay & enjoy our first Scottish dinner.

## Day 3: Scotland's Capital City

Today we return to the Royal Mile to visit mighty Edinburgh Castle.

Built on a volcanic outcrop, the castle has served at times as a prison, royal home, army garrison & even Scottish parliament. Amongst the sights we'll see inside are the Scottish crown jewels & the famous Stone of Scone.

The remainder of the day is yours to explore the city some more: visit the Scottish National Gallery, the impressive National Museum of Scotland where you can 'hike' through Scotland's history, really stretch your legs to the top of 'Arthur's Seat' for views over the entire city, or perhaps shop for a kilt on Princess Street or the Royal Mile!

This evening we rendezvous once more to venture out for dinner in the atmospheric Old Town.

## Day 4: Through the Cairngorms to Inverness

We begin a circular tour of Scotland today as we journey north from Edinburgh, traveling towards Inverness, known as the Capital of the Highlands.

This morning, after a late departure from Edinburgh, we travel to the picturesque town of Pitlochry, renowned for its whiskey & a popular mountain resort since Victorian times.

There will be time to stroll through the town, or perhaps just enjoy a relaxed lunch.

In the mid-afternoon our journey takes us through scenic Cairngorms National Park as we travel onwards to our next stop, a visit to a working sheep farm. Everybody is sure to enjoy the demonstration by the farm's talented sheep dogs as we learn the background to Scotland's wool industry.

Arrival in Inverness will be late afternoon, followed by check-in for 2 nights & a stroll alongside the scenic Ness River to dinner in a local restaurant.

### **Day 5: Exploring the Highlands**

Today we will tour the scenic & cultural attractions of the Highlands region around Inverness.

Our first visit will be to the Clava Cairns, a mysterious but impressive collection of prehistoric burial chambers, typical of many that dot the country.

Later this morning we visit nearby Culloden Battlefield. It was here, in 1746, that the Scottish 'pretender' to the throne, Bonnie Prince Charlie, was finally defeated by the British, ending decades of Scottish rebellion against British rule. The battlefield's new visitor center brings the battle & its background to life & the nearby fields are home to monuments commemorating the clansmen who died here fighting for an independent Scotland.

From Culloden we continue to Cawdor Castle. The title of the local rulers, the Thanes of Cawdor, is known around the world due to their mention in Shakespeare's Macbeth. As we tour the 14th century castle & its extensive gardens we will discover the true history of this aristocratic line.

After a mid-late afternoon arrival back in Inverness, spend the rest of the day exploring (perhaps taking one of the scenic walks that stretch in all directions) before dinner.

### **Day 6: Monster hunting at Loch Ness & Glencoe**

Our journey from Inverness to Glencoe today is just 88 miles. But along the way we have lots of great sightseeing, & perhaps even some monster-spotting, as we will be driving along the western shore of Loch Ness, keeping our eyes out for the elusive monster.

Our first stop will be in the town of Drumnadrochit, where we will make a leisurely stop to visit the official Loch Ness Monster Exhibition & an early lunch.

Just a few miles south is our second stop, the evocative & historic ruins of Urquhart Castle, perched atop a rock overlooking the loch, with panoramic views all round.

After touring the castle we continue our journey south, to beautiful, haunting Glencoe, the site of Scotland's most infamous massacre but also to some of its most stunning countryside. At the visitor center we can learn the notorious story of the Massacre of Glencoe, then stretch our legs outside in the shadow of Scotland's highest mountain, Ben Nevis.

Finally we'll end our busy day at our nearby hotel, located on the shoreline with superb views of both Loch Linnhe & Loch Leven. We'll arrive in time for dinner & to check-in for an overnight stay.

### **Day 7: The Road to Edinburgh: Loch Lomond & Stirling Castle**

We depart Glencoe this morning heading for Edinburgh once more, but stopping along the way to enjoy more of Scotland's spectacular scenery & its colorful history.

Our first stop will be on "the bonny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond". The lake, at the heart of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, has a special place in Scottish hearts & has been immortalized in song. We'll be able to appreciate it's beauty as we take a cruise across its waters.

Later we continue on to Stirling Castle, one of Scotland's largest & most important castles, home to royal Stuarts, & scene of William Wallace's famous victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge.

After crossing the famous Firth of Forth this afternoon we'll arrive at our overnight hotel in time to change for dinner before we share memories of Scotland & enjoy a toast at our final dinner together. *Sláinte!*

### **Day 8: Farewell to Scotland**

Sadly it is time to say goodbye to Scotland today. A morning transfer will take you to the airport for your daytime flight to the USA, arriving home this evening.