

Scotland – Scottish Highlands



Trip Summary

Scotland, a country brimming with stunning landscapes, diverse wildlife, in-your-face mountains, world class whisky distilleries, and friendly locals, is begging to be explored. Listen to the local legends of lore involving “Nessie,” the infamous Loch Ness Monster. Cycle down quiet gravel forest trails, climb the highest peak on a community-owned island, and enjoy afternoon tea at an exclusive castle! Hike amongst the stunning mountain, glen, and forest scenery of Cairngorms National Park. Discover what life is like on a Highland Estate, visit a picturesque nature reserve and develop a taste for single malt whisky. This circular journey through the Scottish Highlands is sure to not only give you a chance to experience Scotland’s contrasting scenery and its wealth of opportunity for adventure but also to gain an insight into Scottish culture and Highland life.

Itinerary

Day 1: Wildlife of the Cairngorms

Early afternoon, meet your guide in Inverness for a short transfer to Cairngorms National Park • Visit a nature reserve known for its ospreys, red squirrels, and many other birds • After you’ve had your fill of exploring, we’ll head to our nearby hotel with plenty of time to freshen up before dinner • *Overnight The Dalrachney Lodge Hotel*

Day 2: Biking in the Cairngorms

The Cairngorms offers fantastic cycling on quiet roads, cycle paths and gravel forest trails • We’ll combine these to explore the local area • A free evening allows you the opportunity to choose where to dine • *Overnight The Dalrachney Lodge Hotel (B, L)*

Day 3: High Level Hiking in the Cairngorms

We venture high with a hike up one of the beautiful Cairngorms mountains - there are many to choose from and your guide will select a route which will fit the group’s energy levels • On the descent, a surprise is waiting and you can be sure that a snack is involved! • *Overnight The Dalrachney Lodge Hotel (B, L)*

Day 4: West to Fort William

We start the day by getting to meet some characterful Highland Cows, and take a behind the scenes tour of a working Highland Estate • Afterwards, enjoy lunch in a cozy café before visiting a local whisky distillery for a wee dram! • Transfer westwards to the small town of Fort William in the West Highlands, arriving at the hotel early evening • *Overnight The Moorings Hotel (B, L)*

Day 5: Hiking in Glen Nevis

Today we hike what has been called ‘the best short hike in Britain’ • Fortunately for us, this accolade has not brought many extra hikers so it retains a wild feel • We hike through a spectacular chasm to a meadow, where a waterfall tumbles over 328 feet from a high mountain • This stunning Valley is featured in *Braveheart* • Early afternoon, we provide a silver-tray moment, literally, when we visit an exclusive castle to enjoy afternoon tea! • *Overnight The Moorings Hotel (B, L)*



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Day 6: The Isle of Eigg

We step well off the beaten track as we take a day trip to visit this community-owned island, located just off the west coast • With a population of around 100 permanent residents, Eigg has a fascinating social history • It also is home to one of the most distinctive mountains in Scotland - An Sgurr • Translating simply as 'The Peak', this 1,309 ft peak offers an easy but rewarding hike to its airy summit • The 360 degree views from its summit are some of the finest in Scotland • We return to the mainland after a cake in the island's café, arriving back in the early evening • *Overnight The Moorings Hotel (B, L)*

Day 7: Loch Ness Adventure / Transfer to Inverness, Depart

We transfer north to the village of Fort Augustus (45 minutes) • We step on board a zodiac and enjoy journey by water on Loch Ness • Finish at the ruins of Urquhart Castle and explore with your guide • From here, a 20 minute transfer takes us back to Inverness, arriving around 1pm • *No overnight (B)*

**This trip is operated in partnership with Wilderness Scotland.*

***Trip itineraries are subject to change without notice due to road, weather and other factors outside of our control, for the safety and enjoyment of our guests, as deemed necessary and appropriate by Austin Adventures and Wilderness Scotland.*

Our Partner – Wilderness Scotland

Austin Adventures is proudly offering this trip in conjunction with Wilderness Scotland, the only adventure travel company in Scotland to be awarded a 5-star grading by the national tourist agency. Wilderness Scotland is an active travel company focusing on eco-tourism, adventure, wildlife and the rich heritage of this ancient nation. With a professional team of guides who know the wild places of Scotland better than anyone, you can be sure that you are travelling with the local experts. At the core of the business is a spirit and enthusiasm to explore and journey through the wild places of Scotland; a willingness to share such experiences with others; and to realize the positive socio-economic and environmental benefits of sustainable tourism.

Meals

The hallmark of an Austin Adventures vacation is our exceptional dining. Meals are included as indicated in the daily itinerary. (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner). Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities are not included in the trip price.

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Activities

Hiking: Easy to moderately strenuous hikes ranging from 5 to 10 miles.

Biking: Moderate fairly flat, gravel trails and quiet country roads, up to 25 miles. Guests will utilize mountain bikes on this itinerary although the type of biking done on this trip is not considered actual mountain biking (i.e. biking done on single track trails). Mountain bikes are easier to use on the type of terrain biked on this trip rather than road or hybrid bikes (e.g. fairly flat gravel trails).

Boating: Zodiac tour on Loch Ness – enjoy the ride!

Discovery: Scotland, a country of stunning landscapes, wildlife and wonderful local produce, combined with a thriving arts and culture scene, and topped off with a colorful history of epic battles and historic castles, is just begging to be explored. Scotland boasts over 600 square miles of freshwater lakes, known as lochs, of which the most famous one is Loch Ness, best known for its sightings of the crypto zoological Loch Ness Monster, known affectionately as "Nessie". Did you know that Scots have their own terms for lakes, hills, forests, and other natural formations? A small stream is called a "burn"; an estuary in the sea is called a "firth"; a valley is called a "glen"; a meadow or island is called an "inch"; a lake is called a "loch"; a large tract of open land is called a "moor"; heaps of stones at the bottom of a hill are called "scree"; and a large, flat river valley is a "strath". Explore the Island of Eigg with its 8,000 years of human history, leaving marks all over the island: ancient forts, burial mounds, early Christian crosses, shielings and Clearance ruins, an 18th century watermill and historic farm houses. Visit Cairngorms National Park, displaying the most extensive tracts of Caledonian forest in Britain and calling itself home to 25 percent of the UK's threatened bird, animal and plant species. Come discover the exciting country of Scotland with the leaders in adventure travel!

Distinctive Accommodations

Nights 1 – 3: The Dalrachney Lodge Hotel

Dalrachney Lodge Hotel is situated in the village of Carrbridge near Aviemore, within the Cairngorms National Park. Set in its own grounds at the end of a drive lined by Scots Pines and bordered by the Dulnain River, Dalrachney offers amazing views with wildlife in abundance. Formerly a Sporting Lodge and Country House, the building retains its original Victorian and Edwardian features. Its Bistro specializes in local produce in the friendly and informal setting of a family-owned and run hotel. The village itself makes a great base, with woodland and riverside trails, an excellent local pub, several cafes and the famous 'Packhorse Bridge', which dates back to 1717, making it the oldest bridge in the Highlands.

Nights 4 – 6: The Moorings Hotel

Situated on the banks of the Caledonian Canal at the famous Neptune's staircase, the location of this hotel is perfect for a short stroll along the canal-side or enjoying a more strenuous walk along the Great Glen Way! The hotel offers spectacular views of Britain's highest Mountain, Ben Nevis, with stunning views from the executive rooms over the canal to the Nevis mountain range. The Moorings always strives to give guests that little bit extra - from the warmest of Scottish hospitality welcomes to the finest dining experience, using the best of local produce wherever possible, with salmon, venison, seafood and game featuring daily on their menus.



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Arrivals and Departures

Day 1 Arrival / Pickup

You will be met at 1:00 pm at Inverness Railway Station. Your guide will have an Austin Adventures signboard and will be waiting underneath the electronic departures board. It is a small railway station so your guide will be easy to find. For guests arriving into Inverness for a pre-night stay, your guide will collect you from the reception area in Kingsmills Hotel at 1:30 pm.

Day 7 Departure / Return Flight

After breakfast, we visit the village of Fort Augustus, take a zodiac tour on Loch Ness and explore the ruins of Urquhart Castle, before our transfer back to Inverness, arriving at the railway station at around 1:00 pm. If you are departing by plane, your guides will then transfer you to Inverness airport, where you will arrive by 2:00 pm.

Trip Price

From \$3,898 per person

Trip Length

7 days/6 nights

2020 Dates

Departs weekly

Host City

Inverness, Scotland
Airport code: INV

Reservations & Availability

1.800.575.1540

The hike in Glen Nevis has been deemed one of the “best in Britain”

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Trip Reservations

Reservations, Deposits and Balances Due. To make a reservation, contact Austin Adventures with your choice of trip and dates. A nonrefundable 25% deposit is required to confirm your reservation. **Some Custom programs may require additional deposits.** Full payment is required at the time of booking if your trip departs within 90 days. Choose one of the following contact methods:

Toll free: 800-575-1540

Phone: 406-655-4591

Online: austinadventures.com

Email: reservations@austinadventures.com

Mail: Austin Adventures, P.O. Box 81025, Billings, MT 59108

* You may also book your Austin Adventure with your preferred travel professional.

** We accept most major credit cards and personal checks (U.S. funds made payable to Austin Adventures). Please do not send cash.

Included in the Trip Price

- Double occupancy rooms with private baths.
- Meals as indicated by daily detailed itinerary (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner).
- Fully trained, first-aid certified, professional guides and knowledgeable local partners.
- Vehicle support and land transportation during the trip.
- All ferry fares, mountain bike hires, entrance fees and private tours as described in the itinerary.
- Austin Adventures T-shirt & luggage tags.
- Pre-departure and packing information.

Not Included in the Trip Price

- Gratuities to Austin Adventures/Wilderness Scotland guides.
- Meals as not included in detailed itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages and related gratuities.
- Pre-and post-trip accommodations and associated expenses.
- Air and land transportation to/from host cities.
- Airport transfers (except to Inverness Airport on Day 7 if required).
- Extras in hotels (laundry, phone calls, room service, etc.)
- All types of personal insurance.
- Personal expenses.

Pre-departure Information

After receiving your reservation and deposit, we'll send you a pre-trip planner with general information about the area you'll be visiting, a packing list, exercise guidelines, a guest information questionnaire and a liability release agreement for you to sign and return within 10 days.



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Private Custom Trips

Maybe your vacation schedule doesn't fit our list of trips and dates. Or perhaps you'd prefer a slightly different itinerary or level of luxury and activity. A Custom Adventure is the perfect answer. You pick the date and destination and brief us on the size of your group, what activities you want, your "must haves" and just how you like to relax and unwind. No detail is too small, no idea too outrageous. Our staff of experts will help create a tailor-made vacation that's just right for you and your group. In short, if you can dream it, we can make it happen.

Room Occupancy, Single Supplements, and Shared Room Assignments

All trip prices are based on double occupancy. Single rooms are available for an additional charge, referred to as a "single supplement." If you're traveling alone and wish to share a room, make the request at the time of booking. Austin Adventures will attempt to find a suitable roommate for you.

Minimum Age

The minimum age on our non-family designated adult and teen adventures is sixteen years old. The minimum age on our family departures is seven years old.

Cancellations and Refunds

The following cancellation policies and cancellation fees are in effect:

***As with deposits on some international and custom programs, refund schedule may vary, speak with your Adventure Consultant for details.

Cancellation 56+ days or more before trip departure – Full trip payment refunded less 25% nonrefundable deposit

Cancellation 30-55 days before trip departure – 50% of the trip payment is refunded

Cancellation 0-29 days before trip departure – No refund is given

Our Guarantee

Exceeding your expectations is our number one priority. In the unlikely event that you are dissatisfied with something during your trip, immediately notify your guide(s). If he or she is unable to resolve the issue, call our main office and give us the details of the problem, and a chance to correct it. We will do our best to find a resolution. If we are unable to do so during your trip, we will work with you upon your return home to arrive at a fair and equitable solution, including up to a full refund.