

# SCOTLAND'S EAST COAST

Castles, Gardens & Highland Games



This 11 day Scotland Tour; runs along the east coast, it can be done either with the company and local expertise of a driver/guide, or for the more adventurous, a self-driving tour, either way you're in control so each day is as flexible as you want it to be. Day's can be added on if you wish to spend time in Edinburgh/Glasgow at the beginning or end or both.

Accommodation can be anything from B&B's to 3, 4 & 5 Star Hotels; it can be inclusive of Dinner, but always Breakfast.

## DAY 1 ARRIVING

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Welcome to Scotland, first thing is your drive North, stopping near Inverness, you can make some stops enroute to enjoy the scenery and beauty, and get a great understanding of what the next few days has install for you. Once at your hotel, you can settle in and relax and get ready for your excursions around the Highlands.

**Hotel:** 4 Nights, 1 x Double Inclusive of Breakfast

## DAY 2 FORTROSE, DRUMNADROCHIT, CORRIMONY CAIRN AND VALLISCAULIAN PRIORY, BEAULY

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Today you head off and visit some great historical places, some dating back thousands of years, others fairly new and just a few hundred years old.

**Fortrose Cathedral** – Bishop Robert moved here from Rosemarkie between 1214 & 1249 and built the cathedral. The Cathedral was constructed of red sandstone. Today two sections still stand, the chapter house and the nave's south aisle. The outline of the remainder of the cathedral complex was revealed by excavations in 1873.

On the ceiling of the western chapel there are two heraldic bosses, representing Earl Alexander and Bishop John Bulloch.

Built some 4,000 years ago, **Corrimony Cairn** is a passage grave of the Clava type dating from the 3rd Millenium BC. Built by neolithic farmers, skilled in working stone, they were the first people to domesticate animals, till the land and clear the forests for farming, their society was cooperative. Corrimony Chambered Cairn was built for collective burials, the beliefs of the builders remain unknown, it is believed these people existed from 3,500BC-1,500BC. Each group had their own collective tomb, built with the help of other groups in the area, with feasts and gifts being given to the helpers.

Located in the village of Beaulay, the ruined church of a **Valliscaulian Priory**, is one of three founded by the order in 1230. Part of the building was later rebuilt.

It became a Cistercian home around 1510. The church was roofless in 1633, the stone is said to have been used by Cromwell to build a fort in Inverness in 1650.

It was the burial ground for the chiefs of Clan Lovat (Frasers) – "In 1544 Beaulay Priory saw a sad funeral procession enter the restored church, bearing the bodies



of Hugh Lord Lovat and his eldest son (by his first wife) Hugh Master of Lovat, killed in a clan fight. Lord Lovat's son (by his second wife) Alexander, who succeeded on his father's and elder half-brother's death, before 1555 married Janet, the daughter of Sir John Campbell of Cawdor. A plaque tells of Mary Queen of Scots' visit here in 1564 and her travels in the Highlands.

### DAY 3 CORNHILL HIGHLAND GAMES

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#### June 6th 2020

Part of the Scottish Highland Games Association and Grampian Games Association, Cornhill Highland Games is one of the highlights on the calendar for the local community, as well as the numerous visitors who attend from throughout North East Scotland and beyond.

Heavy Events

Light Events

Knock Hill Race, 10k, Road Race & Children's Races

Tug of War

Highland Dancing Competitions

Local Pipe Bands

Catering & Refreshments

Fully Licensed Bar (Over 18s Only)

Variety of Stalls

Children's Activities

### DAY 4 FORT GEORGE AND CAWDOR CASTLE

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Following the 1746 defeat at Culloden of Bonnie Prince Charlie, George II created the ultimate defence against further Jacobite unrest. The result, **Fort George**, is the mightiest artillery fortification in Britain, if not Europe. Its garrison buildings, artillery defences bristling with cannon, and superb collection of arms - including bayoneted muskets, pikes, swords and ammunition pouches - provide a fascinating insight into 18th century military life. One of the most magnificent and well-preserved strongholds in Scotland, **Cawdor Castle** incorporates a tall plain tower, dating from the 14th century, although the parapet and upper works were added in 1454. The castle has a deep ditch, and is reached by a drawbridge. Mainly three-storey ranges, gabled and crowned with bartizans and corbelled-out chambers, were built on all sides of the main tower in the 16th and 17th centuries. There is a pit prison.

### DAY 5 DELGATIE CASTLE

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Today you depart the region of Inverness and head for Aberdeenshire, just before leaving the area though make a stop at Culloden Battlefield Museum.

Visiting Culloden the last hand-to-hand battle fought on British soil takes on a whole new meaning with the opening of an exciting new visitor centre and interactive exhibition. The battlefield itself is now restored to as close as possible that marched on by the two sides on that fateful day.

#### History of Delgatie Castle

Most recently the home of the late Captain John Hay of Delgatie, Feudal Baron and built around 1049 the Castle has largely been in the Hay family for the last 650 years.

It was taken from the Earl of Buchan after the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, when Robert the Bruce routed the invading English army. Mary Queen of Scots stayed at Delgatie for three days after the Battle of Corrachie in 1562. Her bedchamber is on view to the visitor.

**Hotel:** 3 Nights, 1 x Double Inclusive of Breakfast

### DAY 6 CASTLE FRASER & CRATHES CASTLES GARDENS AND ESTATE

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Today head out once again to visit two great castles and estates.

With a core that possibly dates back to the 1450s,

**Castle Fraser** is a fabulous place to soak up the atmosphere of old Scotland. Later additions made the building into a huge fortified structure, one of the largest tower houses in the country.

Home of the Fraser family for more than 400 years, the castle is filled with family portraits, ornaments and mementos - all of which have their own colourful stories to tell about the lairds.

The traditional walled garden includes specimen trees, herbaceous borders, a medicinal border and organically grown fruit and vegetables.

The designed landscape you see today at Castle Fraser was established in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Walking the trails in this attractive parkland setting, you can see how the estate's design combined practical functionality with impressive vistas.

Standing against a backdrop of rolling hills and set within its own glorious gardens, Crathes Castle is every inch the classic Scottish tower house - and a fantastic day out for all the family.

The Burnett family, who lived in the castle for over 350 years, had roots in the area dating back to 1323 when Robert the Bruce granted them nearby land. Alexander Burnett built the castle in the 16th century, an intricate maze of turrets, towers, oak panels and painted ceilings, many of which survive beautifully to this day.

Inside you'll find a labyrinth of cultural history, from family portraits to fine antique furniture. The walled garden is a wonderful jungle of history, split into eight sections that encompass every green delight imaginable a sculpted topiary, soft herbaceous colours and modern exotic blooms. The massive yew hedges are thought to have been planted as early as 1702.

Crathes Castle Estate was once part of the Royal Forest of Drum. Today there are a range of waymarked and clearly signposted trails. Look out for wildlife along the way - you may see red squirrels, woodpeckers and herons.

### DAY 7 BRAEMAR AND BALMORAL CASTLE

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Heading into the heart of The Cairngorm Mountains and National Park are two iconic castles.

Braemar Castle is a 17th Century Castle with an exciting story. Built in 1628 by the Earl of Mar as his Highland hunting lodge, burned in the first Jacobite uprising, home to the leader of the 1715 rebellion and garrison for government troops after the final defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden.

**Balmoral Castle** has been the Scottish home of the Royal

Family since it was purchased for Queen Victoria by Prince Albert in 1852, having been first leased in 1848. In the autumn of 1842, two and a half years after her marriage to Prince Albert, Queen Victoria paid her first visit to Scotland. They were so struck with the Highlands that they resolved to return. A further visit to Perthshire and then Ardverikie encouraged them to seize the opportunity to purchase Balmoral.

After searching enquiries they bought the estate on the February 17th 1848 and on September 8th 1848 they arrived to take possession of a property they had never seen, but to which they had committed themselves for many years to come. They were not disappointed and when they returned South they opened negotiations for the purchase of the land on which Balmoral stood.

## DAY 8

### GLAMIS CASTLE AND FINISH IN PERTH

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Today you depart Aberdeenshire and head for the city of Perth, this is about a 100 mile drive and enroute you will have a lovely stop at a stunning Castle and Garden.

**Glamis Castle** has been witness to over 1000 years of history sitting in the heart of Angus is the stunning and historic Castle. Ancestral seat to the Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne, inspiration for Shakespeare's Macbeth and childhood home of H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. (There is the option of going on a Photo Safari with the game keepers of the estate)

**Hotel:** 3 Nights, 1 x Double Inclusive of Breakfast

## DAY 9

### HUNTINGTOWER AND BALHOUSIE CASTLE

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Today head out to visit two wonderful castles, departing after breakfast.

**Huntingtower Castle** has hosted some notable visitors, and been party to some dramatic events. Most famously, Mary Queen of Scots stayed here in 1565, while on honeymoon with Lord Darnley.

A lordly residence for 300 years - from the 1400s to the 1700s - the castle is linked to both the Ruthvens (later earls of Gowrie) and the Murrays (earls of Tullibardine and later dukes of Atholl). Before 1600, Huntingtower was known as the Place of Ruthven.

In a famous episode known as the 'Ruthven Raid', the 1st Earl of Gowrie held James VI, Mary's son, here against his will in 1582. An equally bizarre event called the 'Gowrie Conspiracy' led to the downfall of the 3rd Earl of Gowrie in 1600. The Ruthvens were disinherited and their forfeited castle was renamed Huntingtower.

**Balhousie Castle** sits on the edge of the North Inch in Perth. The origins of the Castle are to date back to the 12th century.

The Five Star museum tells the story of the iconic Black Watch Regiment from 1725. The museum has a gift shop that sells a wide range of product from regimental memorabilia.

## DAY 10

### SCONE PALACE

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**Scone Palace** has an exciting and colourful history as one of Scotland's most important stately homes. Fifteen hundred years ago it was the capital of the Picts.

In the intervening centuries, it has been the seat of parliaments and the crowning place of the Kings of Scots, including Macbeth and Robert the Bruce. The Palace houses an outstanding collection of antiques, paintings and rare artefacts and the grounds are renowned throughout the world, making the stately home one of the most popular tourist attractions in both Perth and Scotland.

The history of **Dunkeld** can be traced to the ninth century when it emerged as an important religious centre for the early Celtic Church. No building of this period survives, the present Cathedral dates from 1318. Partly destroyed during the Reformation (1560), the choir is roofed and now serves as the parish church for regular Sunday worship.

The rest of the cathedral is ruinous, but is preserved as an Ancient Monument in the care of Historic Scotland, who are also responsible for the grounds.

## DAY 11

### DEPARTURE DAY

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Sadly today is departure day; you will either return your car to the rental depot or your driver will make sure you get to the airport in plenty of time for your check-in and flight home.

