

HIGHLAND EXPLORER - SKYE & THE FAR NORTH

Tour Code: 11EE/5R



Depart: Edinburgh

Finish: Edinburgh

Full Details & Itinerary

A grand round-tour of breathtaking views and fascinating places throughout the Highlands of Scotland, from the ancient forests of the Cairngorms, vibrant Inverness - capital of the Highlands, to the majestic splendour of the mountains of Assynt, the romantic beauty of the Isle of Skye and the awe inspiring Glen Coe.

Day 1 takes you north over the Forth Road Bridge to the charming highland village of Dunkeld on the banks of the river Tay. From here you head into the Cairngorm national park and the ancient pine forests of the Rothiemurchus estate. Lunchtime will be spent on the beautiful shores of Loch Insh before a short forest walk takes you to the ruins of Loch an Eilean castle. Panoramic views of Loch Ness follow as you travel down to the banks of the famous loch and the village of Dores where you can do some "Nessie" spotting! Then it's on to the "Capital of the Highlands", Inverness, where you will spend two nights.

Day 2 visits the far northwest highlands and the grandeur, expanse and wildness of the mountains of Assynt. Leaving Inverness you take in the drama of the River Droma as it plunges 60m down into the Corrieshalloch Gorge followed by a visit to the fishing village of Ullapool. With visits to the 15th century ruins of Ardvreck Castle, amazing views of some of Europe's oldest landscapes and the chance of seeing wildlife such as whales and red deer this is sure to be a memorable day.

Day 3 leaves Inverness heading west past the mountains of the Beinn Eighe national nature reserve and along the picturesque coastline of Loch Torridon. The tranquil setting of Applecross is your destination for lunch before taking one of the highest roads in Scotland, Bealach nam Bo (meaning the Cattle Pass), with its jaw-dropping views, hairpin bends and precipitous cliffs. In the afternoon you stop in "tropical" Plockton where you can see palm trees growing alongside Loch Carron and take time to enjoy its sheltered serenity. Then it's over the sea to Skye and the delightful harbour town of Portree with its friendly welcome.

Day 4 is a very flexible day on Skye. There are many possibilities depending on the weather and your driver/guide's knowledge will come to the fore in developing the best day out for you. For example: travel north to the stunning Quiraing mountain pass and enjoy a spectacular walk through some of Skye's extraordinary geological scenery. Kilt Rock, composed of basalt columns (reminiscent of the pleats in a kilt) with its waterfall cascading over the cliffs and down into the sea below. After lunch you can travel to Neist Point for a walk out to the lighthouse that is the furthest point west on Skye. Or a visit to Dunvegan Castle, ancient ancestral seat of the Clan McLeod. Talisker Distillery is also on Skye, as are the famous Cuillin Hills. We return you to your accommodation in Portree in the early evening for you to enjoy a free evening in the village.

Day 5 takes us south from Skye stopping first at the famous stronghold Eilean Donan Castle, used in the film "Highlander", set at the head of 3 lochs as protection against Viking raiders. Continuing east through the rugged mountains of Kintail including the splendour of the Five Sisters, you drive down through Glen Garry past Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis, then onto Fort William for lunch. In the afternoon you will explore spectacular Glencoe, scene of the infamous massacre of the Clan Macdonald in 1692, before stopping in Killin for refreshments beside the Falls of Dochart, arriving into Edinburgh at 1900 approx.