

**ORKNEY AND SCOTLAND'S NORTHERN COAST**

Tour Code: 13EE/5R



**Depart: Edinburgh**  
**Drop off: Edinburgh**

**Full Details & Itinerary**

**Day 1.** Depart Edinburgh at 09.00 heading west towards Stirling, passing Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument. You also pass Doune Castle (set of Monty Python's "Holy Grail") before stopping in the small town of Callander for a refreshment stop.

You now cross over the fault line into the magnificent Highlands taking in the splendour of Loch Luibnaig, Loch Earn, Glen Ogle and Glen Dochart, as you travel north over the wild and remote Rannoch Moor into Glencoe. The stunning views and spectacular landscapes of our own super (extinct) volcano and scene of the infamous massacre of the Clan Macdonald in 1692, where many of the Clan Macdonald were slaughtered. You stop in this imposing mountain Glen so you can enjoy the spectacular views.

You continue north up the Great Glen to the mysterious beauty of Loch Ness, travelling the whole 23 miles of the famous Loch - plenty of time to try and spot "Nessie!" You arrive at your destination of Inverness at approx 18.30 where you will be dropped off at your booked accommodation. The evening is free for you to explore the 'Capital of the Highlands'.

**Day 2** is an early start, leaving behind the 'Capital of the Highlands', crossing over the Black Isle, and past Andrew Carnegie's Skibo Castle. From here you drive through the northeast Highland coastline, travelling into some of Scotland's most dramatic scenery, and enjoy amazing views of some of Europe's oldest landscapes and the chance to see wildlife such as Golden Eagles and red deer. Onwards through Scotland's most northerly mainland village, John o' Groats, and then to Gills Bay, where you board the ferry, crossing the Pentland Firth into the Orkney Archipelago. From here you have a short drive to the Viking stronghold of Kirkwall, Capital of Orkney, where you can visit Kirkwall's magnificent Viking Cathedral, and where you shall stay for 2 nights.

**Day 3** is your chance to explore this fantastic, ancient island; a land of contrasts where fertile green pastures are fringed by shores of golden sands washed by waters of the North Sea and Atlantic ocean. You will visit the 5000 year old village of Skara Brae (older than the Pyramids of Egypt!), the mystical prehistoric stone circle at Brodgar and the Druidic standing stones of Stenness. You stop in Stromness - one of Scotland's most picturesque seaboard villages and then travel onto Maeshowe, where in the 12th century the Vikings left one of the largest collections of Norse runic inscriptions. Then its back to Kirkwall for your 2nd night after what is sure to be a memorable day.

**Day 4** is a relaxed start to the day, as you leave Orkney and sail the Viking waters back to the mainland. From here you travel the old road right across the very top of Scotland, driving past the stunning Ben Loyal and Ben Hope mountains following the rocky cliffs and stunning golden sand beaches of our northern coastline. You then visit the far northwest highlands and the grandeur, expanse and wilderness of the mountains of Assynt before stopping to view the 15th century ruins of Ardvreck Castle. From here you travel to Ullapool, situated at the mouth of Loch Broom, a beautiful whitewashed fishing village where you spent your last night's stay on tour.

**Day 5** Leaving Ullapool behind you, you take in the drama of the River Droma as it plunges 60m down into Corrieshalloch Gorge, before taking in the beautiful Loch Glascarnoch, on the way past the 'Capital of the Highlands' Inverness. You can then visit Culloden Moor, the site of The Battle of Culloden in 1746, one of the bloodiest events in our history and the last battle to have been fought on the British mainland, before taking a short drive to the ancient standing stones at Clava Cairns.

This prehistoric and stunning Bronze Age burial ground is one of the oldest in Scotland. From here you travel through the ancient Caledonian Pine Forest, hugging the Cairngorm mountain range. Lunch will be spent in these beautiful surroundings before travelling through big tree country of Perthshire, through the Kingdom of Fife, and back to Edinburgh around 19.00