Itinerary • Iconic Scotland Road-Trip in 2 Weeks.

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Shrouded in enchanting mystery, Scotland harkens to the hearts of travellers from far and wide with a never-ending treasure trove of captivating castles, windy beaches, jubilant cultural cities, and rolling fields of heather.

Following this itinerary, the true essence of Scotland will unveil day-by-day. From the cobblestone streets of Edinburgh, traverse the untamed wilds of the Highlands and the illustrious Isle of Skye via fairytale place and immense lochs, finishing off in the cultural heartland of Glasgow.

Edinburgh • East Neuk • Aberdeen • Inverness • Dunoon • Achmelvich • Skye • Loch Lomond • Glasgow

Resources.

ICONIC SCOTLAND 2 WEEK SELFIE DRIVE.

DOTS ON MAPS.

Price Guide.

14-day itinerary from £620 per person.

Edinburgh • 2 or 3 nights.

Above: *Colourful medieval* **Dean Village** *is a quaint historic haven in New Town.*

From **Hollyrood Palace** to **St. Giles Cathedral** and its crown steeple, **the Royal Mile** is acts as city's main vertrice, a bustling thoroughfare teeming with characterful outlets peddling tartan wares and the breads of homegrown Scottish whiskies, concluding at **Edinburgh Castle**, which overlooks New Town from an imposing rocky pedestal.

Due to an endless barrage of attacks, Edinburgh Castle was the most besieged stronghold in Britain, a little which gives reason to the now-if-hefty iconic castle's prowess peering down from the ramparts, alongside the suits of armour and weaponry on display in the **Great Hall**.

At the foot of the castle, **Princes Street Gardens** straddles the historic border where Old and New Edinburgh collide, and is an idyllic green space in the heart of the city.

Once a prosperous independent community, **Dean Village** is now a peaceful residential neighbourhood, nestling into newfound notoriety as a tourist hotspot. Leaping straight from the pages of a fantasy novel, the Water of Leith gently ramblies through the heart of the village, lined by colourful medieval homes and historic watermills.

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Castle Rock Hostel.
Rooms from £18.00 per night.

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Nira Caledonia.
Rooms from £88.00 per night.

Following the course of the river, you are led to affluent Stockbridge, a delightfully quaint quarter of Edinburgh that strikes a harmonious balance between sleepiness and liveliness. Slightly sloping streets give way to a smattering of upbeat gastropubs, sophisticated restaurants, and boutique stores, converging on the centrepiece of **Circus Lane**, a leafy cobblestone alley encased by ivy-clad brick houses and the commanding clocktower of St. Stephen's church.

Edinburgh holds a convincing claim to the crown of *'most haunted city in the world'*, backed by numerous alleged instances of unexplained paranormal activity. Perhaps the Gothic architecture and tiny winding alleyways conjure up fantasies of the supernatural, but given a deeper chequered history, there may be some validity to these superstitions.

Our ***Edinburgh pocket guide*** **sheds light on an incredible nightlife and gastronomy.**

St Andrew's + the East Neuk • 1 or 2 nights.

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Murray Library Hostel.
Rooms from £60.00 per night.

Boasting a rich heritage, **Anstruther** was about with fishermen who called this stretch of coast home. Bringing their boats to dock on the windswept shores, fishermen would reel in the spoils of the sea to share among the tight-knit community.

Today, the town is a thriving tourist centre, renowned for the **Anstruther Fish Bar**, a takeaway spot that has perfected the local delicacy of fish and chips. A constantly changing menu is informed by the catch of the day, which is coated in crispy golden batter for a cheap and fulfilling lunch, best enjoyed from one of the benches on the seafront promenade, with enviable views out to the bay.

Nearby, picturesque **Pittenweem** retains the traditional industry of fishing to this day, carrying on momentum from centuries as one of the most prominent fishing ports in Scotland. Hustle and bustle arrives early at the harbour-front, as locals dock their boats to bring in fresh fish from the Firth of Forth to be sold at the village market. Uphill, a cluster of cottages are painted in a plethora of colours; an endearing addition to an already whimsical hideaway.

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the Old Course Hotel.
Rooms from £300.00 per night.

Once the largest church in Scotland, the baron ruins of **St Andrew's Cathedral** inspire awe and wonderment. Ravaged by a Protestant mob, the church was whittled away over centuries, subject to neglect and pilaged for raw materials. Regardless of the efforts to diminish it, a deeply spiritual atmosphere still presides over the site.

Acknowledged as the oldest golf course in the world, the Old course invites golfers to tee-off on hallowed ground. One-hard golfers should consider splashing out for a stay at **the Old Course Hotel**, as preferential rates for the course are given to their guests.

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Blessed by twin sandy beaches, a gracious stretch of coast lines the fringes of St Andrews, and is the cherry atop this charming town. **East Sands** is a stretch, throw from traditional ice-cream shops and the historic sights. Meanwhile, undertake a brief 5-minute walk to **West Sands** and feel far removed from the hustle and bustle. Wander barefoot across an expansive stretch of fluffy golden sand in search of your own piece of this idyllic beach to relax on.

East Neuk villages of ***St Monans*** *and* ***Crail*** *are noteworthy for adorable harbourside homes.*

Aberdeen • 1 night.

Nicknamed "Granite City" in ode to countless historic buildings carved from dense grey stone, Aberdeen is a vivaly important financial and industrial hub. A flourishing offshore oil industry draws international crowd; as such, the town is thriving with cosmopolitan bars and restaurants tied together by a jovial care-free vibe.

An exhilarating drive beckons as you venture forth towards Aberdeen. Rugged volcanic cliffs adorned with biodiverse plant life backdrop the beach at **St Cyrus National Nature Reserve**, a lush oasis teeming replete with fascinating flora and fauna. On land, seals are often found frolicking upon these sandy shores, much to the amusement and joy of spectators. Out at sea, enjoy the opportunity to see dolphins and whales, numerous species of which have been spotted over the years.

Continue north to Aberdeen, but make sure to squeeze in one last stop en-route. Steeped in fascinating history, the crumbling remnants of **Dunnottar Castle** are perched atop a rocky headland that juts out high above the roaring sea. Connected to mainland only by a small natural causeway, the castle was fought over intensely due to its strategic location; a trait which has now garnered the castle a reputation as a prime filming location and tourist attraction.

On the outskirts of Aberdeen, **Footdee** — colloquially known as "Fittie" — is a little village nestled at the easternmost point of the harbour. Formerly the stomping ground of fishermen, Footdee retains charming seaside cottages within its dainty lampost-lined alleys and colourful courtyards.

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Residence Inn.
Rooms from £88.00 per night.

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Atholl Hotel.
Rooms from £118.00 per night.

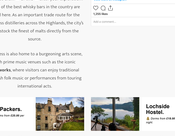
Distinctly separate, Old Aberdeen is a lively historic area to the north of the city centre. Encircling the market square, a network of picturesque streets are paved with granite setts; the same materials used to construct many buildings here. Noteworthy landmarks include **St Machar's Cathedral**, a place of worship for thousands of years that has undergone numerous reconstructions and changes in denomination.

An unassuming stone bridge with pertinent history, **Brig o' Balgownie** spans the River Don at a once impassable stretch of Aberdeenshire coast. No longer an invaluable defensive advantage, the structure now serves a far more placid purpose as the subject of adulation from snap-happy photographers.

Tranquil ***Johnston Gardens*** *has received countless accolades for its breath-taking beauty.*

Inverness + Loch Ness • 1 or 2 nights.

Mystique precedes Loch Ness like few other places on Earth. For centuries, a mythical pre-historic creature has been fabled to exist somewhere within the depths.



Above: *Morning dew overhangs* ***Loch Ness*** *, a mystical lake steeped in folklore.*

To this day, the existence of the so-called **Loch Ness Monster** has spurred speculation and intense investigation. Droves of skeptics flock to the lech with hopes of catching a glimpse of the beast, affectionately known as 'Nessie'.

Turn to shrieks in the late 17th century in an attempt to quash spec-rebellion, the skeptical ruins of **Urquhart Castle** stink a rocky inlet on the edge of the water overlooking the wide expanse of Loch Ness, from the scant relics of the castle, Grant Tower is the largest intact structure, climbing five storeys above the shore for inspiring panoramic views.

Declared as the cultural capital of the Highlands, **Inverness** is a great base to return home to (again) for a wee dram — or two — after your exploration! Some of the best whisky bars in the country are found here. As an important trade route for the countless distilleries across the Highlands, the city's bars stock the finest of drams directly from the source.

Inverness is also home to a burgeoning arts scene, with prime music venues such as the iconic **Ironworks**, where visitors can enjoy traditional Scottish folk music or performances from touring international acts.

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BazPackers.
Rooms from £21.00 per night.

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Lochside Hostel.
Rooms from £18.00 per night.

Tucked away far off the beaten track, the isolated **Poolewe Falls** offer a better day-trippers and reward those who embrace them with breathtaking beauty. Based at the foot of the falls and admire the dramatic drop of over 150 feet, as the water disseminates in a cloud of

Several gorgeous hiking trails allure wayfaring wanderers to far-flung corners of the region with dramatic waterfalls nestled in the depths of Ness forests, which also serve as prime habitat for an abundance of wildlife such as deer, owls, golden eagles, and squirrels.

*Write up to 6pp for the double-tail of **Elgin Cathedral** and **Duffus Castle**.*

Durness • 1 night.

A place of astounding rugged beauty, Durness occupies the extreme northwestern point of Great Britain. Vast sandy shores, crystalline coves sheltered by cliffs rising dunes, and magical grottoes are on the sightseeing agenda in this little slice of Scottish paradise.

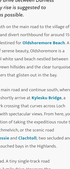
Above: *Inner chamber of **Smoo Cave**, a magical cavern on the fringes of the sea.*

Absolutely worth the ever-so-slight detour, a visit to the lavish **Durvedon Castle** is highly recommended. Limited access of the interior is permitted as member of Lord Sutherland — its historic owners — still reside here. Regardless, it is the immaculately maintained gardens that are the true attraction, with immaculate lawns and floral patches looking onward to the fairytale facades of the castle itself.

Entwined with land and sea, the majestic **Smoo Cave** is a unique oddity. Free-ended of charge, the Alt Smoo river interrupts the caverns and plummets through a sinkhole in the roof of the cave, forming freshwater falls that run with the saline waters of the North Sea.

Unanimously adored by all who have set eyes upon it, **Kylesku Beach** beguiles with its fine white sand and glistening blue waters. Far from the crowds, the beach is backed by towering dunes, affording unobstructed views of the stunning pastures that surround you. Sunset-gazers have been admitted from Kylesku pier, gratis.

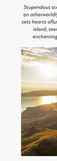
Durness dazzles yet again at **Cocreabolene Beach** to the east of town. A sweeping sandy cove surrounded by granite cliffs with a distinct pink hue, the heart skips a beat when the paradisical vista unveils before you. Scots poet Sir Walter Scott ventured to Cocreabolene during his lifetime, an inspirational visit likely seeped into his work.



Lazy Crofter Bunkhouse.
Starting from **£18.00** per night

Achmelvich • 1 night.

Equal parts relaxing, and adrenaline pumping, the drive between Durness and Achmelvich is strewn with jewels. An early rise is suggested to experience as many of these gems as possible.



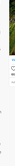
Travel south on the main road to the village of Rhiconich, and divert northbound for around 15-minutes, destined for **Oldshoreness Beach**. A place of serene beauty, Oldshoreness is a wonderful white sand beach nestled between heather-strewn hillsides and the clear turquoise waters that glisten out in the bay.

Re-join the main road and continue south, where you will shortly arrive at **Kylesku Bridge**, a landmark crossing that curves across Loch Cardhaven with spectacular views. From here, you have the option of taking the expeditious route to Achmelvich, or the scenic road via **Clashnessie** and **Clachtoll**, two secluded and untouched bays in the Highlands.

Pack your patience and concentration for the drive ahead. A tiny single-track road leading to Achmelvich, it signals a somewhat strenuous 3-mile drive. However, the exertion couldn't be any more worthwhile. As you emerge from the road, the magnificence of **Achmelvich Beach** unfolds like a vivid dream.

A pristine pearl painted upon the Scottish coast, a sweep of white sandy crescent interweaves through a chain of rocky headlands, burrowed between shimmering sapphire waters, lush green hillsides, and the low-lying machair.

Achmelvich Beach Hostel.
Starting from **£20.00** per night



the Isle of Skye • 3 nights.

Stupendous scenery overwhelms visitors at every turn on the Isle of Skye; an otherworldly dreamscape laden with spell-binding natural beauty that sets hearts ablaze. Rugged mountainous terrain dominates the core of the island, teeming with monumental lochs whose waterways lead to enchanting fairy-tale glens and rolling hills of thistle and heather.

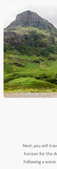
Above: *Sun rising over the **Old Man of Storr**, an iconic landmark on the Isle of Skye.*

Etched into our imaginations through film, TV, art, and literature, an alluring magic pervades the Isle of Skye, reflected in the names of its most famous attractions.

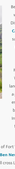
Brisk mountain streams meander through Glenfinlin, cascading down into **the Fairy Pools**, a cluster of crystal blue pools fed by delicate waterfalls. These sublime swimming holes are so enchanting that one can almost envision sylvan creatures bathing in the mesmerizing translucent waters.

Close by, **Loch Coruisk** is the crown jewel of the Cuillins. Towering peaks encircle the lake, mirrored in its clear waters. In Celtic mythology, a shape-shifting water spirit — known as a 'kelpie' — lurks in the depths of the loch, entrancing voyagers by manifesting a human form. And hikers lower the wayering weather and untamed trails to summit peaks on the surrounding ridge for life-affirming panoramas.

A world-unto itself, the Trotternish Peninsula occupies the northernmost reaches of the island. In a constant state of flux, the dramatic peaks and valleys of **Quiraing** are situated on a perpetually shifting landslip. The terrain has been transformed much, the road coursing through undergoes yearly maintenance to coalesce with the new shape of the land.



Skyewalker Hostel.
Starting from **£18.00** per night



Cowshed Bunkhouse.
Starting from **£18.00** per night

Perhaps the most definitive landmark on the Isle of Skye, the Storr is a colossal rocky crag that dominates the skyline. Here you will find the formation known as the **Old Man of Storr**, a surreal pyramid-shaped set of monumental pinnacles that fan out in jagged spikes.

Leaping waters and lashes of rain have scarred countless lines in the massive basalt columns of **Kilt Rock**, so named for its uncanny resemblance to the traditional Scottish garment. Further back, a waterfall streaks the cliff face and tumbles to the roaring sea. When battered by high winds, ethereal sounds echo out from the rock, inspired to sound akin to an eerie church organ wailing out into the wilderness.

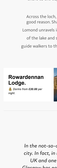
A lush, verdant utopia, **Fairy Glen** is shrouded in mystery. Regaled in thick moss, Castle Town acts as the focal point of the glen, though contrary to its name, it is not a man-made structure at all, rather it is a unique basalt topping. At the foot of the formation, what appear to be ritualistic rock circles are found, although, these are composed by visitors who believe it to awaken slumbering spirits.

An enduring symbol of Skye's rich history, **Dunvegan Castle** is easily the most visited cultural site on the Island. Dating back to the 13th century, the interior is chock-full of antiquated heirlooms, passed down through generations of the Dunvegan family. Well-known for its iron gates that encompass the castle, a stroll through the grounds is an excellent way to unwind from more adventurous outings.

*Striking **Eilean Donan Castle** floats elegantly atop the waters near the Skye Bridge. Surely one of the most symbolic castles in all of Scotland, it is an essential stop-off on your journey.*

An action-packed adventure to Loch Lomond.

Rise and shine! An early start is on order as we chase the final lengthy drive of your Scottish road-trip is necessary, as the route passes through some of the country's most iconic sights.



Begin by driving to Armadale in the south of Skye, where a brief car ferry connects you to Mallaig. Disembark the ferry and carry on south, bound for **Camusdarach Beach**. An immaculate crescent of sugar-white sand, the beach was immortalised in the cult classic coral West. Take some time to recuperate before continuing on.

Moving inland towards the regional hub of Fort William, you will encounter another prominent landmark that has garnered even more attention as a pilgrimage site for film buffs. A staggering feat of engineering, **Glenfinnan Viaduct** spans the valley below across a succession of twenty-one arches. Instantly recognisable to fans of the Harry Potter franchise, the iconic bridge was crossed by the Hogwarts Express in several of the films.

Next, you will traverse through the town of Fort William, keeping a watchful eye on the horizon for the dominating presence of **Ben Nevis** — the highest mountain in the UK. Following a scenic 20-minute drive, you will cross Loch Leven and arrive at the final stop of this epic escapade — **Glen Coe**.

Deservedly so, Glen Coe has earned a reputation as one of the most beautiful places in Scotland. Highland cows roam the misty heath, grazing on grass with their shaggy coats of red fur. Carved out by gargantuan glaciers, this awe-inspiring valley is flanked by dramatic verdant slopes, with a tiny winding road that carresses through the heart of the glen. A calming atmosphere befalls those who find themselves here, as you inhale crisp mountain air and observe the soul-soothing scenery.

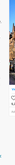
Loch Lomond • 1 night.

Riding high, you will arrive at your destination brimming with joy. Drop off your bags and settle down on the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond, where you can marvel at the serene waters as you stretch your legs.

Situated at the Fault line whereupon the Highlands descend to the Lowlands, the landscape surrounding **Loch Lomond** is strikingly beautiful and varied. As the largest lake on the Island of Great Britain, Loch Lomond lends itself to waterborne activities, with visitors indulging in the common pastimes of kayaking, canoeing, jet-skiing, and fly-fishing.

Chosen as the setting of a homegrown Scottish soap about idyllic countryside life, **Luss** emits more than enough charm to warrant its prestige. A patchwork of sandstone cottages clad with floral arrangements adorn the tiny thoroughfare from the shore to the edge of town.

Rowardennan Lodge.
Starting from **£18.00** per night



Glenview Luss.
Starting from **£18.00** per night

Across the loch, **Conic Hill** is a firm favourite among visitors to the area — and for any good reason. Sharply rising to pierce the sky at over 1,000 feet above sea level, Loch Lomond stretches out in its splendour from its peak, awarding possibly the best viewpoint of the lake and surrounding Trossachs. Although makeshift staircases and dirt trails guide walkers to the summit, the hike is rather accessible and frequented by people of all ages.

Glasgow • 2 nights.

In the not-so-distant past, Glasgow was primarily known as an industrial city. In fact, in many respects, Glasgow was an industrial heartland of the UK and one of the most important port cities in Europe. Nowadays, Glasgow has earned a name for itself as a flourishing epicentre for nightlife and the arts.

Above: *Illuminated **Clyde Arch** and the iconic **Finnieston Crane**.*

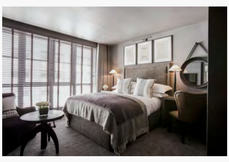
effrontery at risk of falling into disrepute, Glasgow's West End is thriving, and at the heart of the city's cultural movement. Emanating an eccentric bohemian vibe, the area is home to a high density of students, many of whom attend **Glasgow University**, one of the oldest higher learning institutions in the English-speaking world. Seemingly no end in sight to the rejuvenation of the West End, countless corner-shop delicatessens and trendy bars continue to surface at an alarming rate.

An attribute that plays into the West End's breezy, laid back pace is the abundance of urban parks peppered throughout the area. Sprawling **Kelvingrove Park** acts as the pulsating core of the West End, with a network of criss-crossing cycle paths and tree-lined thoroughfares, alongside a newly renovated open-air bandstand that hosts performances from international and global artists. Within the park, the world-class **Kelvingrove Art Gallery** is a definitive highlight of the city, exhibiting everything from classical paintings and sculptures to ancient Egyptian relics and animals embalmed by taxidermy. Best of all, admission is free!

On the banks of the River Kelvin, **Glasgow Botanic Gardens** is cherished by locals. Access is free year-round, and visitors can opt to peruse blossoming tropical plants and tree ferns inside Kibble Palace, or chill-out on the grass in front.

Dakota Deluxe.

💰 *Rooms from **£90.00** per night.*



Glasgow Youth Hostel.

💰 *Dorms from **£17.00** per night.*

Beloved for its architecture, Glasgow is brimming with beautiful Victorian-era buildings, none more prevalent and eye-catching than Glasgow City Chambers, which dominates **George Square**, the centrepiece of the town centre. Behind its extravagant exterior, the City Chambers quietly conceal an equally opulent interior with gold-leaf embellishments and a grandiose staircase.

Rising above the city, Glasgow itself was built around **Glasgow Cathedral** (📷). A stunning medieval masterpiece, the cathedral was the sole survivor of the Restoration period, a tumultuous time in Scottish history when Catholic cathedrals were decimated by the arrival of Protestantism. As such, the structure we see today is largely unchanged from its initial unveiling. Behind its gorgeous Gothic façade, the interior is a peaceful sanctuary, adorned with intricate stained-glass windows and massive stone arches.

Held in high esteem, nightlife in Glasgow is indisputably among the best in Europe. No matter what your idea of a good night entails, you'd be hard pressed to evade a fantastic night out. In the East End, a sensational star-studded neon sign hangs from the **Barrowland Ballroom**, highlighting the city's most iconic and atmospheric venue. Behind it, hip new venues renovate disused scrapyards and a local parish church.

Descend below Jamaica Street to the ineffable **Sub Club**, the world's longest-running underground dance venue. A benchmark for techno, house, and breakbeat, Sub Club has stood on the front lines of the rave revolution since 1987, fighting tooth and nail to remain relevant. Fitted with a *'bodysonic dancefloor'*, deep resonant bass and thumping vibrations soak into the bones of euphoric clubbers.

📖 ***Delve deeper with the Glasgow pocket guide for a greater insight to the city's countless charms.***

↩️ SCOTLAND

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