

# GRAND TOUR OF SCOTLAND & IRELAND

## ITINERARY

DAY

**1**

### DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN EDINBURGH

Make your way to your hotel in the **Edinburgh** city centre. Many travellers opt to take a taxi or use public transport, but for a more direct and comfortable ride, we will be happy to organise a private airport transfer for you. For those arriving early in the day, we recommend heading out and exploring the historic city, strolling through the **Old Town** and **New Town**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are plenty of restaurants and bars to enjoy some warm Scottish hospitality, not to mention a taste of the local whisky.

Spend the night in Edinburgh.

*Included: Entrance to Edinburgh Castle*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Calton Hill - Edinburgh - Edinburgh Castle - Edinburgh New Town - Edinburgh Old Town - Scotland - The Grassmarket - The Royal Mile & St Giles Cathedral

DAY

**2**

### DAY 2: DAY AT LEISURE IN EDINBURGH

You have the full day to explore Edinburgh at your leisure. The background and history of the city is fascinating and rich, so there is no shortage of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, museums and landmarks to visit, including the majestic **Edinburgh Castle** and Holyrood Palace, the official Scottish residence of Queen Elizabeth II. You can easily travel around the city centre on foot, so we recommend strolling along the historic **Royal Mile** or walking to Castle Hill for a spectacular view of the city.

Spend another night in Edinburgh.

*Included: Entrance to Edinburgh Castle*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Calton Hill - Edinburgh - Edinburgh Castle - Edinburgh New Town - Edinburgh Old Town - The Grassmarket - The Royal Mile & St Giles Cathedral

DAY

**3**

### DAY 3: SCOTLAND'S DRAMATIC EAST COAST

Start your road trip driving up to Fife. Your first stop will be the quaint village of **Falkland**, where you can explore its Renaissance palace. From there, drive east to the town of **St Andrews**, famous for being the home of golf and of the oldest university in Scotland. As you continue north, pass by **Dundee**, a UNESCO City of Design. You can then take the direct route to **Aberdeen**, or take the coastal scenic route, which will take you past the **St. Cyrus National Nature Reserve** and the spectacular **Dunnottar Castle**, near Stonehaven.

Spend the night in the Aberdeen area.

*Included: Entrances to St Andrews Castle & St Andrews Cathedral*

*Driving distance: 235 km / 135 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Aberdeen - Dundee & Angus - Dunnottar Castle - Falkland - St Andrews - St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

DAY

4

## DAY 4: ROYAL DEESIDE, CASTLES & WHISKY

Today will take you into the Scottish Highlands. First drive along the “Deeside Tourist Route”, an enchanting route through the **Cairngorms National Park**. On the way, there is a plethora of castles you could visit, including 16th-century Crathes Castles, and of course, the Scottish residence of the Royal Family, **Balmoral Castle**, which you can visit from April to July. You will then continue to **Speyside**, which is famous for its whiskies. You may want to visit one of the many distilleries (there are over 40 to choose from!), such as Glenfiddich or Aberlour.

Spend the night in the **Inverness** area.

*Driving distance: 240 km / 150 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Balmoral Castle - Cairngorms National Park - Inverness - Royal Deeside - Speyside & Whisky

DAY

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## DAY 5: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NORTHWEST HIGHLANDS

Today you get the choice between spending the day exploring Inverness and its surroundings or getting a taste of the **North Coast 500**, one of Scotland’s most scenic driving routes. Around Inverness, you can visit the famous **Battlefield of Culloden Moor** and roam the Bronze-age cemetery **Clava Cairns**.

If you journey to the North Coast, we recommend visiting the breathtaking **Corrieshalloch Gorge** and the Falls of Measach. Stop by **Inverewe Garden**, a botanical garden which boasts over 2500 exotic plants and flowers. You can also drive through the imperious landscape of the **Torrison Hills** before returning to Inverness.

Spend another night in the Inverness area.

*Driving distance along the west coast: 255 km / 160 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4 hours (without stops)*

*Driving distance around Inverness: 105 km / 65 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Black Isle & Moray Firth - Clava Cairns - Corrieshalloch Gorge - Culloden Battlefield & Visitor Centre - Inverewe Garden - Torrison Hills

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## DAY 6: LOCH NESS & CASTLES

Drive along the shores of **Loch Ness** where you can visit the Loch Ness Centre and Exhibition to learn more about its history and elusive monster, Nessie. You might also wish to take a boat tour to admire the views of the loch or go explore the nearby **Urquhart Castle** ruins. From there, continue your drive west to the colourful **Portree** on the **Isle of Skye**. On the way, you may want to stop at the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle**, a sight you will surely recognise from many films and TV shows.

Spend the night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

*Included: Entrance to Urquhart Castle*

*Driving distance: 185 km / 115 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 3.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Eilean Donan Castle - Loch Ness - Portree - Urquhart Castle

DAY

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## DAY 7: THE ISLE OF SKYE

Today take full advantage of your time on Skye, a haven for nature lovers. We recommend driving to the northern part of the island and taking your time around all the attractions on the breathtaking **Trotternish Peninsula**. There you can enjoy a walk up to “**The Old Man of Storr**” rock pinnacle and see the beautiful **Kilt Rock waterfall**. Other highlights include the **Quiraing** rock face, the **An Corran Beach** at Staffin, where you may spot ancient dinosaur footprints, and the mystical **Fairy Glen**.

Spend another night on the Isle of Skye or nearby.

*Driving distance: 70 km / 45 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 1.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Fairy Glen - Isle of Skye - Kilt Rock & Mealt Falls - Old Man of Storr - Quiraing - Staffin & An Corran Beach

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## DAY 8: SLEAT PENINSULA & GLENFINNAN

Head south to the Sleat Peninsula, admiring the beautiful beaches, lochs, and glens of the region. You may wish to stop on the way to enjoy a walk to the crystal-clear **Fairy Pools** at the foot of the **Black Cuillin Hills** or to sample single malt whisky at the local distillery. This afternoon catch a ferry from Armadale to Mallaig on the mainland. On your journey to **Fort William**, we recommend a stop at **Camusdarach Beach** and **Glenfinnan**. Admire the Glenfinnan Monument, overlooking Loch Shiel, and the viaduct, featured in the *Harry Potter* films.

Spend the night in the Fort William area.

Ferry duration: 30 minutes

*Ferry from Armadale to Mallaig: 30 minutes*

*Driving distance: 135 km / 85 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 3 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Camusdarach Beach - Cuillin Mountains - Fairy Pools - Fort William - Glenfinnan

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## DAY 9: TRAVEL ALONG DRAMATIC GLENS

Today's journey takes you past Scotland's most famous valley, **Glen Coe**, which offers world-famous scenery. You could stop at Rob Roy's grave at Balquidder and at the beautiful **Falls of Dochart** in the village of Killin. Alternatively, you could travel the longer scenic route via the seaside town of Oban onto the historical valley of **Kilmartin Glen** and past the charming village of **Inveraray**. This region is considered to have one of the most important concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age remains in Scotland, including cairns, standing stones, and castles.

Spend the night in the Trossachs National Park area.

*Driving distance via Glen Coe: 130 km / 80 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2 hours (without stops)*

*Driving distance via Kilmartin Glen/Inveraray: 285 km / 180 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Glen Coe - Inveraray & Inveraray Castle - Kilmartin Glen - Loch Lomond

DAY  
10

## DAY 10: TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK TO GLASGOW

Today's drive will take you to Scotland's largest city, **Glasgow**. Drive through the **Loch Lomond** and **Trossachs National Park**, where you could stop for a nature walk, enjoy an optional steamship tour on **Loch Katrine**, or visit a local whisky distillery. For a fun photo opportunity, don't miss **Doone Castle**, featured in

*Monty Python & the Holy Grail* and the *Outlander* TV series. If time allows, you could also stop by **Stirling Castle**, one of Scotland's top attractions. Enjoy the evening at your leisure in **Glasgow**.

Spend the night in Glasgow.

*Included: Entrances to Doune Castle and Stirling Castle*

*Driving distance: 109 km / 68 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Doune Castle - Loch Lomond - Stirling & Stirling Castle - Trossachs National Park

DAY  
**11**

## DAY 11: TRAVEL TO DUBLIN, IRELAND

Today, board a flight to **Dublin**, Ireland for the second portion of your tour. Upon your arrival in Dublin, start exploring this amazing city, with its eclectic mixture of heritage sites, museums and historic pubs. There is plenty to do, from strolling along the cobbled streets of the **Temple Bar** district to visiting the historic **Trinity College** to see the ancient **Book of Kells**. You could also have a taste of the local flavours by grabbing a pint at the **Guinness Storehouse** or sipping Irish whiskey at the **Old Jameson Distillery**.

Spend the night in Dublin.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Book of Kells and Old Library - Dublin - Glasgow - Guinness Storehouse - Ireland - Old Jameson Distillery - Temple Bar District - Trinity College Dublin

DAY  
**12**

## DAY 12: DAY AT LEISURE IN DUBLIN

You have all day to explore Dublin at your own pace. You can wander around the city to visit more historical locations or maybe go for a leisurely stroll in **Phoenix Park** in the west of the city centre. We recommend visiting **Dublin Castle**, a key attraction and government complex with a long and storied past, and not to miss **St Patrick's Cathedral**, dating back to 1220. You could also enjoy an afternoon tea sightseeing tour of the city on a vintage bus or roam along the characterful **O'Connell Street** filled with interesting shops and landmark buildings.

Spend another night in Dublin.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Dublin - Dublin Castle - Phoenix Park - St Patrick's Cathedral

DAY  
**13**

## DAY 13: TOWARDS THE IRISH WEST COAST

Start your road trip towards the west coast, passing through the beautiful midlands. Your first stop is **Trim Castle** where you can learn about Irish history at the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland. You could also make a pit stop at **Kilbeggan Distillery** to see how the local whiskey is made. Later, we recommend roaming around the atmospheric ruins of **Clonmacnoise**. Finally, arrive in **Galway**, a lively city by the Atlantic Ocean. The colourful city is the perfect place to taste some Irish delicacies with its famous food scene and numerous pubs.

Spend the night in the Galway area.

*Driving distance: 229 km / 142 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Clonmacnoise - Galway - Kilbeggan Distillery - Trim Castle

DAY  
**14**

## DAY 14: DISCOVER RUGGED CONNEMARA

Visit the striking region of Connemara with its landscapes characterised by rugged mountains, white sand beaches, picturesque lakes and heathlands. Stop by **Killary harbour**, Ireland's only true fjord with a length of 16km (9.9miles). Further along, visit **Kylemore Abbey** where you can admire spectacular Gothic architecture and take a stroll in the Victorian Walled Garden.

For a more leisurely day, you can opt for a boat trip to the **Aran Islands**. These three windswept islands are one of the few places where the Gaelic language, culture and music still truly thrive.

Spend another night in the Galway area.

*Driving distance around Connemara: 214 km / 133 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4.5 hours (without stops)*

*Driving distance to Aran Islands: 76 km / 47 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Aran Islands - Clifden - Connemara National Park - Killary Harbour - Kylemore Abbey

DAY

15

## DAY 15: CLIFFS OF MOHER & LIMESTONE LANDSCAPES

Start the day by visiting **Dunguaire Castle**. Sitting on a rocky outcrop overlooking Galway Bay, it is one of the most photographed castles in Ireland. Further ahead, explore the unique, lunar-like landscape of **The Burren**. Here you can visit the iconic portal tomb **Poulnabrone Dolmen**, one of Ireland's oldest megalithic monuments.

Next stop is the breathtaking **Cliffs of Moher**, Ireland's top tourist attraction, showcasing some of the country's most iconic coastal scenery. On a sunny day the views are expansive, but even a stormy day can be exhilarating with the powerful Atlantic below.

Spend the night in the **Doolin**/Lisdoonvarna area.

*Driving distance 111 km / 69 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Cliffs of Moher - Doolin - Kinvara & Dunguaire Castle - Poulnabrone Dolmen - The Burren

DAY

16

## DAY 16: MEDIEVAL CASTLES & PICTURE-PERFECT VILLAGES

Start the day visiting the 15<sup>th</sup>-century **Bunratty Castle**. Here you'll also find the Bunratty Folk Park, where you can experience Irish rural life from the 1800s. We then recommend stopping at **Adare**, one of Ireland's prettiest villages with its thatched cottages housing craft shops and restaurants. In the afternoon, explore **Killarney National Park** set beneath Ireland's highest mountains. You can visit the 19<sup>th</sup>-century mansion of **Muckross House**, take an optional Jaunting Car tour of the park or a boat trip on the peaceful Lough Leane, departing from the medieval **Ross Castle**.

Spend the night in the Killarney/Tralee area.

*Driving distance: 206 km / 128 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Adare - Bunratty Castle - Killarney - Killarney National Park - Muckross House & Abbey - Ross Castle

DAY

17

## DAY 17: RING OF KERRY

Take in the magic of the **Ring of Kerry**, a classic "must do" scenic drive of the Irish countryside. Stop at **Kells Bay House**, to see its primeval forest of planted giant ferns. Other highlights include the ancient stone forts of **Caherdaniel** and **Staigue**, and **Derrynane Bay** with its beautiful white sand. Complete the circle with a visit to the picturesque **Tara Waterfall**. Today you could also take an optional boat tour from the coast to see the

to the picturesque **Torc waterfall**. Today, you could also take an optional boat tour from the coast to see the Skellig Islands from up close. These otherworldly islands were recently featured in the *Star Wars* movies.

Spend another night in the Killarney/Tralee area.

*Driving distance: 198 km / 123 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 4.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Caherdaniel & Staigue Forts - Kells Bay House and Gardens - Ring of Kerry - Skellig islands - Torc Waterfall

DAY  
18

## DAY 18: GARNISH ISLAND & IRELAND'S SOUTH COAST

Today, you will travel over the scenic, winding Cahah Pass to the colourful village of **Glengarriff**. From here, we recommend taking a short boat trip, with the opportunity to spot a seal colony on the way, to **Garnish Island**, which features a world-renowned garden. You could also visit the 18<sup>th</sup>-century **Bantry House**. Later, travel via **Kinsale**, a popular resort town with its picturesque yachting harbour and historic forts. Continue to **Cork**, a buzzing city with a vibrant cultural scene.

Spend the night in the Cork area.

*Driving distance: 191 km / 119 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 3.5 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Bantry House - Cork - Garnish Island - Glengarriff - Kinsale

DAY  
19

## DAY 19: ANCIENT CASTLES & THE BLARNEY STONE

This morning, you can visit **Blarney Castle**, a legendary medieval stronghold that houses the Blarney Stone, surrounded by many myths and tales. Then we recommend stopping at the photogenic harbour town of **Cobh**. It is known as the last port of call of the Titanic in 1912! Continue to Cashel, where you can visit the spectacular **Rock of Cashel**, one of Ireland's most visited attractions. The site offers a fantastic collection of medieval buildings that span over 1000 years of history. Later, drive to **Kilkenny**, a medieval town nestled around a majestic 12<sup>th</sup>-century castle.

Spend the night in the Kilkenny area.

*Driving distance: 208 km / 129 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 3 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Blarney Castle - Cobh - Kilkenny - Rock of Cashel

DAY  
20

## DAY 20: THROUGH THE WICKLOW MOUNTAINS TO DUBLIN

If you wish to spend more time exploring Dublin, you can head straight to the city this morning.

Alternatively, we highly recommend a drive through the scenic **Wicklow Mountains** to take in the beautiful views. In the area you could visit **Glendalough**, a 6th-century monastic settlement, and the Powerscourt Estate, featuring the restored mansion **Powerscourt House**. On the estate, you will find Ireland's highest waterfall as well as magnificent gardens. Back in Dublin, enjoy the rest of the evening at your leisure, perhaps with a fine Irish dinner to top off your amazing journey.

Spend the night in Dublin.

*Driving distance to Dublin: 123km / 77 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 2 hours (without stops)*

*Driving distance via Wicklow Mountains: 165km / 102 miles*

*Estimated driving duration: 3 hours (without stops)*

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Dublin - Powerscourt House & Gardens - Wicklow Mountains & Glendalough

DAY  
**21**

## **DAY 21: DEPARTURE**

To get to Dublin Airport, you can take a taxi, or we can arrange a convenient private transfer directly from your hotel. If your flight is in the afternoon, you can use the morning to enjoy some last-minute shopping, visit one of the many attractions or simply relax and take in the atmosphere of the city one last time.

*Whatever your needs, we are here to help. If you have any questions about our packages or services, please do not hesitate to contact us.*

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