

SAMPLE TOUR 1 DAY EXTRACT

How to Use the Guide:

In this Guide you will find all the information you need to plan a great holiday in Scotland.

- We provide route directions that are punctuated with attractions that we recommend for visiting.
- We give local knowledge guidance to the best places to eat and drink.
- We suggest alternative quieter roads and detour options that you may choose depending on your schedule.
- And at the end of each day's travelling you will find a Stopover Sheet with notes on the local attractions, best restaurants and major events.

Our aim is to provide honest information and local knowledge so that you avoid the tourist traps and get the best value holiday experience for your time & money.

We have endeavoured to ensure that all road directions are accurate, but **these Guides are intended to be used in conjunction with a Road Atlas.**

We would like to make you aware of our [Terms and Conditions](#), especially our rules concerning refunds.

To save money on attractions, check out the following passes:

- [Historic Scotland Membership](#)
- [Historic Scotland Explorer Passes](#)
- [The National Trust For Scotland](#)
- The Great British Heritage Pass is an all-rounder that includes both Historic Scotland and The National Trust for Scotland properties plus more, and is a great buy if you're also visiting other parts of the UK during your trip: [The Great British Heritage Pass](#)

Itinerary Layout:

[Route from Fort Augustus to Spean Bridge:](#) - indicates a new section of route directions and states the start and finish locations.





Travel time: 30 mins / 23 miles - an estimate of the time taken to drive the route without stops.

[ALTERNATIVE Route from Fort Augustus to Spean Bridge:](#) denotes an alternative route for traveling between destinations. Alternative routes provide the option to travel on quieter back roads.

DETOUR: - places of interest that are not along the path of the main route are indicated by "**DETOUR:**". Details about the detour and route directions to it are written in *Italics*.

- ✓ When the route directions take you near a place of interest it is indicated by a "✓" symbol.
- ✓ **Killiecrankie Pass** - Attractions written in bold brown letters have facilities for tourists such as information boards, guide leaflets or staff.
- ✓ **Achmelvich Beach** – Attractions written in bold green letters are places of natural beauty.
- ✓ **Cawdor Castle** – Attractions that are written in this format have a hyperlink which will open the accompanying Information Sheet on the Secret Scotland™ website. You can then print out the information sheets on the attractions that you plan on visiting.

Symbols:

-  - Denotes a recommended pub.
-  - Denotes a recommended restaurant / café / tearoom.
-  - Denotes a recommended viewpoint
-  - Denotes a walk
-  - Denotes an attraction or facility that is not recommended

Stopover sheets:

For each of the stopover locations where we have recommended accommodation, there is an accompanying information sheet with details of Historic Sites & Castles, Scenic Spots, Tourist Attractions & Wet Day Activities, Outdoor Activities, Events and recommendations on Where to Eat & Drink.

Please note: Our itineraries recommend things to see and do along each route. We do not propose that you attempt to visit all of these attractions so it is necessary for you to choose what you want to do. To help you do this we have provided estimates of travel times along the route so you can plan your schedule. These travel times are only estimates of the time taken to drive the route and do not include additional time for stopping to visit attractions or to take photographs.

Recommended Accommodation:

Save time trying to find accommodation along your route by buying the Secret Scotland™ list of Recommended Accommodation that matches this Tour. All Recommended Accommodation has been personally visited and honestly described in the guides. As Scotland is a very popular destination with tourists, we suggest that you book your accommodation as early as possible, ideally 2 to 3 months in advance.



Car Hire Discount for Secret Scotland Customers:

We are delighted to be able to offer our customers a **10% Discount** on Car Hire from [Arnold Clark Rental](#).

Secret Scotland chose to work with Arnold Clark because they have the largest network of Garages in Scotland and our customers have consistently reported high levels of satisfaction with their services.

To claim your 10% Discount you simply book your hire car through the [Arnold Clark website](#) and quote the promotional code “XXXXX” when requested to do so at the payment stage.

Where you can find Arnold Clark Branches: [Click Here](#) for details of the locations of all the branches.

Collecting your Hire Car at an Airport: Arnold Clark has branches near Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Prestwick and Inverness Airports. Arrival procedures at each of these airports are available [here](#).

Paperwork Required for Hiring a Car: All you need is your passport and your driving licence. UK customers need to bring proof of address such as a Utility Bill.

Collecting a car in one location and returning in another: Arnold Clark allow you to return your hire car at a different location to the place of collection. A small charge is added for this service.

GPS / Satellite Navigation: Secret Scotland guides are carefully written with detailed directions so that you should be able to follow the Tour Itinerary with just a good map, but Arnold Clark can also offer the hire of GPS systems for an additional daily fee.

MIDGE REPELLANT!!!

You will probably have read about the dreaded Scottish Midge and how ferocious these microscopic beasts can be! Well now you can fight back with “Mozzy Off”, a genuinely effective repellent that is largely based on the natural Scottish ingredient of Bog Myrtle.

Secret Scotland can also offer you a **10% discount** on “Mozzy Off”. Just quote the promotional code **XXXX** when purchasing from the website www.naturalbeautyscotland.com. They can do mail order all over the world, but please allow for delivery time.

DAY 8: Ullapool to Inverness

Today's recommended route heads north from Ullapool and into the dramatic landscape of the Inverpolly Nature Reserve. This is a landscape of moors, small lochs, lonely clusters of rowan, hazel and birch trees and the spectacular peaks of the magnificently isolated Cul Mor (849m), Cul Beag (769m), Suilven (731m) and Stac Polly (613m). These isolated mountains rise like columns from an otherwise barren landscape. You may choose to take a short detour into the **Inverpolly Nature Reserve** by following the road signposted to Achiltibuie. This route is detailed in Day 4 as the "Route from Ullapool to Lochinver via Inverpolly Nature Reserve".

The route then heads east towards Lairg. From there you can choose to take a more direct route south to Inverness via the **Falls of Shin**, or a slightly longer route via Golspie and **Dunrobin Castle** with its fairytale architecture and extravagant gardens.

Your route will also pass the **Glennmorangie Distillery** that you may want to visit to find out why it is the most popular Malt Whisky with the Scots. If the sun is shining, we recommend taking the short detour from the **A9** along the **A832** to the very pretty coastal village of Cromarty which sits on the peninsula known as the Black Isle.

Route from Ullapool to Inverness:

Travel time via Dunrobin: 3 hrs 55 mins / 117 miles

Travel time via Falls of Shin: 3 hrs 15 mins / 100 miles

Route from Ullapool to the A837:

Travel time: 40mins / 18 miles

1. Starting from Ullapool head north on the **A835**.
1. About 9 miles after Ullapool you pass a road on your left that is signposted to Achiltibuie.

***DETOUR: to Stac Pollaidh** – for the best views of the dramatic mountain of Stac Pollaidh you should take a drive along the road to Achiltibuie which passes close by the mountain. It is possible to follow this road around to Lochinver and then return on the **A837** to Inverness, but this detour would require around 2hrs to travel the extra 40 mile distance. See **Pages 43 – 44** for directions.*

2. Continue on the **A835**
 - ✓ **Knockan Cliff Visitor Centre** – on the right of the road about 3 miles after the turn off to Achiltibuie. This is a free entry visitor centre with displays explaining how the geology of the region was formed.
3. Continue on the **A835** and it comes to a junction with the **A837**. Turn right onto the **A837** following signposts to Lairg.

Route from the A837 via Lairg and Dunrobin Castle to Tain:

Travel time: 2hrs 15mins / 65 miles

1. Starting from the junction between the **A835** and **A837**. Turn right onto the **A837** and follow signposts to Lairg. This section of road is mainly single track and so takes longer to drive than you may expect from looking at a road map.
2. Continue on the **A837** for about 18 miles and, after crossing an attractive stone bridge, you arrive at a Y junction with a Stone Cross where the road splits. Take left onto the **A839** signposted to **Lairg**.
3. At the end of the **A839** turn left onto the **A836** to Lairg. After a short distance, turn right onto the **A839** signposted to Rogart and enter **Lairg**.
4. From Lairg, continue east on the **A839** for ~14 miles.

5. At the end of the **A839**, turn left onto the **A9** signposted to **Thurso, Wick**.
6. Continue on the **A9** for ~4 miles and you come to **Golspie**.
 - ✓ The large statue on the hill to your left, as you enter Golspie, is of the 1st Duke of Sutherland who is an unpopular figure in Scotland for his active role in the Highland Clearances of the 1800's. There have even been attempts at toppling the statue with explosives!
7. Continue through **Golspie** and the entrance to Dunrobin Castle is on your right.
 - ✓ **Dunrobin Castle** – the most northerly of Scotland's great houses, it is a Fairytale Castle with amazing French gardens. A great number of rooms are visitable, the staircase is imposing with its hanging portraits. One of our favourites castles, well worth the visit especially on a sunny day when you can take time exploring the gardens. Falconry displays in the gardens in Summer at 11:30am and 2pm.
8. From Dunrobin Castle, head south on the **A9** following signposts to **Inverness**.
9. After ~14 miles, you cross the bridge over the Dornoch Firth.
10. Immediately after crossing the bridge you come to a roundabout. Take the 1st exit onto the **A9** signposted to **Inverness**. A mile after the roundabout you pass the Glenmorangie Distillery.
 - ✓ **Glenmorangie Distillery** - Just before Tain you see signposts to Glenmorangie Distillery, which has the tallest stills in Scotland. These are claimed to give a purer spirit. Perhaps this is true because Glenmorangie is the most popular malt with the Scots.
10. Continue on the **A9** and it by-passes the town of **Tain**. If you need to refuel there is a petrol station on the road that leads from the A9 into Tain.

Route from the A837 via Falls of Shin & Glenmorangie Distillery to Tain:
Travel time: 1hr 35mins / 48 miles

1. Starting from the junction between the **A835** and **A837**. Turn right onto the **A837** and follow signposts to **Lairg**. This section of road is mainly single track and so takes longer to drive than you may expect from looking at a road map.
2. Continue on the **A837** for ~18 miles and, after crossing an attractive stone bridge, you arrive at a Y junction with a Stone Cross where the road splits. You should take the road on the right which is the **A837** signposted to Inveran / **Bonar Bridge**.
3. Continue on the **A837** to the T junction with the **A836**.

***DETOUR: to Falls of Shin** - Just before the T junction with the **A836**, you pass through the village of Inveran where you can turn left onto the **B864** signposted to the **Falls of Shin**. The visitor centre is about a mile up this road. It was developed for the waterfalls, which are a well-known spot for watching salmon leap. There are also forest walks, an adventure playground, "Harrods" shopping outlet and a restaurant selling simple snacks.*
4. Turn right at the T junction onto the **A836** following signposts to **Bonar Bridge**.
5. Continue on the **A836** into the village of **Bonar Bridge** and you arrive at another T junction. Turn right to cross the bridge and stay on the **A836**, signposted to **Tain**.
6. Continue on the **A836** for ~13 miles and you come to a roundabout. Take the 2nd exit onto the **A9** signposted to **Inverness**. A mile after the roundabout you pass the Glenmorangie Distillery.
 - ✓ **Glenmorangie Distillery** - Just before Tain you see signposts to Glenmorangie Distillery, which has the tallest stills in Scotland and these are claimed to give a purer spirit. Perhaps this is true, because Glenmorangie is the most popular malt with the Scots.
7. Continue on the **A9** and it by-passes the town of **Tain**. If you need to refuel there is a petrol station on the road that leads from the A9 into Tain.

Route from Tain to Inverness Airport:

Travel time: 1hr / 34 miles

1. From **Tain** take the **A9** following signposts to **Inverness**.

DETOUR: to Tarbat Ness Lighthouse - This Lighthouse at the end of the B9165 offers bird spotting and panoramic views over the North Sea and the Dornoch Firth. On clear days you might even be able to see Dunrobin Castle. A lonely windswept peninsula with a photogenic Red & White striped lighthouse.

Directions: About 2 miles south of Tain on the A9, look for signs to **Portmahomack**. Turn left onto the **B9165** and follow the road to Portmahomack, and then to Tarbat Ness Lighthouse. The lighthouse is ~8 miles from the A9.

2. About 3 miles south of Tain, you arrive at the Nigg Roudnabout. Continue on the **A9** following signs at the Nigg roundabout for **Inverness**.

DETOUR: to Cromarty & Black Isle via Nigg Ferry – A few miles south of Tain, the A9 arrives at a roundabout with an exit signposted to the Nigg Ferry. The Nigg – Cromarty Ferry runs everyday from June to end of September from 8 am to 6.15 pm (weather permitting). It can only take 50 passengers and 2 cars, but it runs every 30 mins so you'll get on it eventually. It costs £ 7.00 per car + driver and £ 3.00 per additional passenger.

✓ **Nigg Old Church** – When you arrive at Nigg, it is worth seeking out this traditional little church as it has one of the most beautifully carved stone crosses that you could hope to find.
<http://www.niggoldtrust.org.uk/church.html>

On disembarking from the ferry at Cromarty, turn right and drive past the harbour. After passing the harbour, turn left and drive up Bank Street, which ends at a T junction with the A832. To drive back to Inverness, turn right and follow the A832 out of Cromarty.

Cromarty is a very pretty and charming place and worth a visit on a sunny day. From Cromarty you can then get to Tore Roundabout, on the A9, by following the **A832** to **Fortrose, Inverness**.

Please Note: This route is about 23 miles, but could add more than an hour to your total travel time as you may have to wait for the ferry which sails every 30 mins and can be cancelled in bad weather.

3. At Ardullie roundabout, beside the bridge over the Cromarty Firth, you can take the option of a Detour to Strathpeffer.

DETOUR: to Strathpeffer - We suggest a trip to Strathpeffer, a lovely Victorian Spa village that's well worth the detour. Victorian houses and hotels are hidden amongst century old trees. The Spa Pavilion, which used to be where treatments were performed, has been refurbished into an events building and there are also a few shops and the excellent "Maya" chocolate shop / cafe.

Directions: From **Ardullie roundabout** take the 2nd exit for the **A862** into Dingwall. At traffic lights in Dingwall turn right onto the **A834** signposted to Strathpeffer and Ullapool. Strathpeffer is 3 miles down that road. To return to Inverness continue on the **A834**, descending the hill into Contin. At the T junction, turn left to join the **A835** and follow signs for Inverness.

4. Continue on the **A9** to **Inverness** and, 11 miles after the Cromarty Firth bridge, the road crosses the Moray Firth on the **Kessock Bridge**.
5. At the first roundabout (Longman) after crossing the bridge, take the 3rd exit for the **A82** signposted to **Inverness**
6. At the Harbour Road roundabout go straight on, following the **A82** signposted to **Town Centre**.
7. At the Rose Street roundabout (with the multi storey car park on your left) take the 2nd exit for the A82 to **Town Centre**.

8. At the Shore Street roundabout take the 1st exit for the **B865** signposted to the **Town Centre**.
9. Continue on this road and you can find signposts to car parks. After the East Gate Shopping Centre, there is a Morrison's supermarket (on your left) with a large Pay & Display Car Park that is easy to find.

The [Recommended Accommodation](#) for tonight is in Inverness and the Black Isle.

For information about the best attractions and restaurants in the area, please consult the Stopover Sheets for **Inverness Area**.

Despite its city status, Inverness is not large so we don't recommend taking the £6 City Sightseeing bus tours, as the 45 minute trip doesn't represent value for money.

Inverness has a wide choice of pubs and restaurants and you'll find lots of them by taking a walk along the river. In general, Inverness is quite expensive for eating out, so we recommend that you try to dine between 5pm – 6:30pm when you may get a cheaper "pre-Theatre" dinner. For ideas on where to eat, you should consult the Stopover sheet for Inverness and Black Isle. If you have also bought the Recommended Accommodation List for this Tour, you will find a choice of recommended restaurants in the neighbourhood of the accommodation.

We suggest the following:

- 📍 **River Café**, Inverness – an informal restaurant beside the river that always seems to be busy, a good sign! Dinner main courses from £8 upwards. Tel: 01463 714884
- 📍 **Mustard Seed**, Inverness – Great riverside location, nice stylish atmosphere & Franco-Scottish cuisine. Balcony area overlooks the river. Dinner main course ~£12+. Pre-booking advised as this is a popular restaurant. Tel: 01463 220220
- 📍 **The Kitchen**, Inverness – This is the sister restaurant of the Mustard Seed and is even more stylish in a slick modern way. It shares a riverside location, but is on the opposite bank from the town centre and has views towards the castle. A similar style & price of menu to the Mustard Seed. It is located quite close to the main road bridge across the river. Tel: 01463 259119
- 📍 **The Anderson**, Fortrose – A vast choice of whiskies and a menu that constantly changes to make use of the best fresh local produce. Reasonably priced. Tel: 01381 620236
- 📍 **Sutor Creek**, Cromarty – An informal pizza and seafood restaurant in one of the prettiest villages in Scotland. The pizzas are baked in a proper wood fired oven. Situated near the harbour in Cromarty. Tel: 01381 600855

For a bit of night life try the Inverness pubs: Hootananny's or Blackfriars. These pubs have live music most nights, and it's often traditional Celtic music with fiddles, guitars and accordions. Blackfriars also hosts a Ceilidh on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

For a quieter pub you can try the Clachnaharry Inn on the outskirts of Inverness. Follow the A862 signposted to Beauly, and as the road gets close to the coast look on your right for the Inn which is just before a small railway bridge with traffic lights. The Clachnaharry Inn is recommended for its choice of Real Ales and they serve simple, but reasonably priced pub meals. Another favourite country pub of ours is the Culbokie Inn on the B9169 to Cromarty. The Culbokie Inn is in need of some redecoration, but it is a bar where you will find "locals" rather than tourists.

We have some recommended accommodation on the Black Isle which you can find by following the directions below:

[Route from Inverness to Cromarty:](#)
[Travel time: 1hr / 23 miles](#)

1. From Inverness town centre, follow signs for the **A9** North, Ullapool and **Thurso**.
2. Cross the **Kessock Bridge** over the Moray Firth

- ⊗ **Dolphin and Seal Centre near Kessock** – this is just a hut offering information on seals and dolphins in the area. If you want to go on a dolphin watching boat trip, try the ones in Fortrose or go to the beach at Chanonry Point (see directions at step 5).
3. Continue on the **A9** for ~2 miles, until you see a right turn for the **B9161**. Turn right onto the **B9161** signposted to **Munlochy, Cromarty**
 - ✓ **Black Isle Brewery** – As you approach the village of Munlochy, you see signs on the left to the Black Isle Brewery which is about 1.5 miles along a road to your left. This is a small organic brewery that offers visitors free tours of ~20 mins, beer tastings and they have a shop selling their beer and some stylish T-shirts!
 4. Continue through Munlochy village and arrive at a T junction, turn right onto the **A832** signposted to **Avoch, Cromarty**.
 - ✓ **Dolphin Trips Avoch**: You may encounter osprey and red kites or if you are lucky, the famous bottlenose dolphins of the Moray Firth. Trips run for 1 hr. £10 per adult, £7 per child (3-12 yrs) www.dolphintripsavoch.co.uk/index.htm
 5. In Avoch, continue on the **A832** following signs for **Fortrose**.
 - ✓ **Fortrose & Rosemarkie**: two traditional villages with narrow streets and small cottages. The ruins of Fortrose Cathedral stand proudly in the centre of the village on a square to the right of the main road, next to the Anderson Hotel.
 - ✓ 🍷 Recommended Restaurant – **Anderson Hotel**, in Fortrose, with an innovative menu and a great range of whiskies.
 - ✓ 👁️ **Chanonry Point**: a great spot for dolphin watching, probably the most famous one on the Black Isle. To reach Chanonry Point, follow the signs which lead you through the golf course to the car park by the lighthouse. A great viewpoint towards Fort George (on clear days).
 - ✓ **Groam House Museum**: a small museum dedicated to the find of pictish stones in the area. Rosemarkie is part of the Pictish Trail that also goes to the Nigg Peninsula. The museum is free, but donations are welcome.
 6. Exit **Rosemarkie** on the **A832**, turning left at the Plough Inn to follow the **A832** towards **Cromarty**.
 7. About 8 miles after Rosemarkie, the **A832** descends into **Cromarty**. As you descend into Cromarty the road takes a right turn and the B9163 is on your left. You will be returning on B9163 so try to remember the junction!
 - ✓ **Cromarty**: this is one of the prettiest villages in Scotland. Well worth parking the car and wandering in the narrow streets bordered with old cottages. The village looks stuck in the 19th century, and when the sun shines on the colourful houses, you will wish you lived there.
 - ✓ 🍷 Recommended Tearoom – **The Pantry** on the corner of Church Street which is on the right at the end of the road that leads into Cromarty. May be closed in January, but there is also a Bakery on Bank Street which is the road that leads down to the harbour.
 - ✓ **Hugh Miller's Cottage & Miller House**: Hugh Miller was a famous author, geologist, stonemason who wrote about the Earth. The Cottage and the House retrace his life.
 - ✓ 🍷 Recommended Restaurant - **Sutor Creek**, Cromarty. An informal pizza and seafood restaurant in one of the prettiest villages in Scotland. The pizzas are baked in a proper wood fired oven. Situated near the harbour in Cromarty. Tel: 01381 600855
 - ✓ [Ecoventures](#) – Dolphin Spotting cruises in small speed boats that depart from Cromarty harbour.

Stopover Sheet: Inverness Area

Although recently awarded city status, Inverness is still just a town in size. It is, however, one of the fastest growing towns in Scotland and it is certainly the capital of the Highlands. The town centre is a confused collection of different periods of architecture and it cannot be described as a particularly pretty town. In some side streets you will find traditional houses dating back to the 1700's, but then you turn a corner and find a square concrete office block from the 1970's.

Inverness is a vibrant and busy tourist town as it is a focal point for visitors to Loch Ness, Culloden and the Northern Highlands. On Friday and Saturday nights it also becomes the focus for the social scene in the Highlands, and the town's bars get busy with locals on their weekend nights out. For a quieter pace of life you may prefer to stay on the nearby Black Isle, which is not an island, but a peninsula between the Moray and Cromarty estuaries.

Historic Sites & Castles:

- **Cawdor Castle** - A privately owned castle with attractive gardens and historical links to the Macbeth's made infamous by Shakespeare.
- **Culloden Battlefield** – The site of the last major Battle on UK soil has been preserved to appear much as it would have done on the tragic day of 16th April 1746. The visitor centre was upgraded in 2008 and is much improved.
- **Clava Cairns** – Near to Culloden Battlefield are the curious and carefully arranged circles of stones that are believed to have been used for ancient burial rituals. An atmospheric place.
- **Fort George** – An impressive fortress that was carefully designed for defense by artillery, Fort George has exhibits that tell the story of how Highlanders were recruited into the British Army to then become their most respected soldiers.
- **Urquhart Castle** – Famous as one of the most frequent sites for Nessie appearances. We recommend that you don't pay to enter the castle as it is over-priced for a visit to a ruin and you can get good photos from the car park.
- **Elgin Cathedral** – This was the second largest cathedral in Scotland and one of the most impressive, but fires, raiders and post-Reformation neglect have resulted in the ruin you see today. Still impressive, but you need to use some imagination to picture its past glory.
- **Dunrobin Castle** – This is a castle with real WOW factor. You don't expect to find castles like this in the Scottish Highlands and we strongly recommend this attraction. The entrance hall could be a scene from a Harry Potter film.
- **Spynie Palace** – The once grand residence of the Bishops of Moray, but now a ruin. One of the palace's buildings has been re-roofed and there is an internal walkway giving access to the roof.
- **Pluscarden Abbey** – founded in 1230 by Alexander II for French Benedictine monks, it is a unique example in Britain of a medieval Abbey still inhabited by monks. Unfortunately there isn't much to visit: the gardens and the chapel. There is a wee shop selling religious-themed gifts, with an honesty box.
- **Brodie Castle** – Originally a defensive tower house, this castle was extended over the years to become a luxurious residence. The castle is still fully furnished and there is a lot to see.

Scenic Spots:

- **Black Isle** – The Black Isle has several attractive villages on it, but the most distinctive and charismatic village is Cromarty. Narrow streets and traditional east coast houses by the sea.
- **Chanonry Point** – Signposted from Fortrose, drive through the Golf Course to this attractive lighthouse on a peninsula in the Moray Firth. A famous spot for dolphin watching.
- **Findhorn** – A pretty village on the coast north of Forres. Near the village there are long stretches of golden sand beaches and attractive forests of Scot's Pine trees at Roseisle.
- **Cullen Bay** – A well known sandy beach about 21 miles / 34km east of Elgin on the A98.
- **Reelig Glen** – An attractive woodland with paths and picnic spots. From Inverness, take the A862 west towards Beaully and after 8 miles, turn left onto a small road signposted to Reelig and Moniack. Continue for ~ 1 mile and arrive at a Forestry Commission car park. [Walks in Reelig Glen](#)

- **Falls of Shin** – A waterfall that is famous as a good spot for watching salmon leaping. There is also an upmarket shop, café and adventure playground for kids here.
- **Glen Affric** – One of the last areas where you can see remnants of the Caledonian Forest of Scots Pine trees that once covered almost all of the Highlands. Some of the trees growing here are over 250 years old and would have been saplings at the time when Bonnie Prince Charlie fled through Glen Affric after his defeat at Culloden (1746). [Walks in Glen Affric](#)

Tourist Attractions & Wet Day Activities:

- **Glenmorangie Distillery**, Tain – The favourite malt whisky of the Scots. The distillery is easily found from the A9 just north of Tain. About 1 hour from Inverness.
- **Loch Ness 2000 Monster Exhibition** – not to be confused with the Original Loch Ness Visitor Centre which is to be avoided. Loch Ness 2000 is a very informative sound and light attraction about the sightings of the monster and the research that followed in the Loch.
- **Loch Ness Trail** – There is a route that circumnavigates the loch via roads along the north and south shores. If you are driving around the shores of Loch Ness don't just look for the monster. Keep an eye out for an old van near Dores with "Nessie-serry Independent Research" written on its side. This is the home of full time Nessie Hunter Steve Feltham who quit a job in England to dedicate his life to the search for the Loch Ness monster.
- **Moniack Wines**, nr Beauly – Tours of the winery in Moniack Castle where wines are fermented from berries, flowers and tree sap!
- **Aquadome**, Inverness – A 25m swimming pool with a variety of water rides to keep the kids entertained. Signposted from the A82 as it heads out of Inverness towards Fort William.
- **Baxters Highland Village**, Forres – A visitor centre to learn about the story of the Baxter family and their famous food company. Visitors can sample the foods & buy gifts in the several shops.
- **Strathspey Railway** – Steam trains and nostalgia can be experienced on this short train service between Aviemore and Boat of Garten (near the West end of A95). Don't confuse this attraction with the railway between Dufftown and Keith which doesn't feature steam trains. See the website for details www.strathspeyrailway.co.uk

Speyside Whisky Trail: There are many more distilleries in Speyside, but these are the ones that we rate highest for their visitor centres and tours. The drive from Inverness to Grantown-on-Spey and through the Spey Valley to Keith is about 75 miles long and 2 hours of driving.

- **Aberlour Distillery**, Aberlour - Tours need to be pre-booked as they involve a thorough connoisseur's tasting session.
- **Glenlivet Distillery**, nr Tomintoul - The distillery has an excellent visitor centre with café.
- **Strathisla Distillery**, Keith - Arguably the prettiest distillery in Speyside.
- **Macallan Distillery**, nr Craigellachie - One of the most celebrated and prestigious whiskies.
- **Glen Grant Distillery**, Rothes - A distillery with an impressive woodland garden for visitors.
- **Speyside Cooperage**, Craigellachie - Just outside of Craigellachie you can visit this factory where the whisky barrels are made.

Outdoor Activities:

- **Dolphin Watching Boat Trips**, Cromarty – 2 hour boat trips in the Moray Firth. Quite expensive and pre-booking recommended. See website for details www.ecoventures.co.uk
- **Loch Ness Boat Trips** – two companies offer cruises on the Loch.
 - ✓ **Loch Ness Cruises** in Drumnadrochit does hour long cruises starting on the hour from the Original Loch Ness Monster Visitor Centre
 - ✓ **Jacobite Cruises** have a range of cruises and tours starting at Tomnahurich Bridge in Inverness.
- **Cairngorm Mountain Railway** – A funicular railway that climbs 460m up the Cairngorm Mountains to the Ptarmigan visitor centre where there is a restaurant, exhibition and viewing areas. In summer, access to the mountain from the visitor centre is not permitted for environmental reasons. Take the A9 to Aviemore and then follow the road to Coylumbridge and the signposts to the Cairngorm Railway.
- **Landmark Theme Park**, Carrbridge – A variety of outdoor activities and rides to keep all ages of children entertained. Take the A9 to Carrbridge and the Landmark Centre is on the B9153 road that heads south from Carrbridge.

- **Speyside Way** – The full length of this walking route runs from Buckie to Aviemore, but there is a gentle section that closely follows the River Spey from Craigellachie to Ballindalloch.

Events:

- **Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival** – A celebration of whisky and music usually held in May & September. www.spiritofspeyside.com
- **Glen Urquhart Highland Games**, Drumnadrochit – Held on the last Saturday of August. See the website for details www.glenurquhart-highland-games.co.uk
- **Blas Highland Music Festival** – A celebration of Highland music with events throughout the Highlands and Inverness. See the website for details www.blas-festival.com
- **The Northern Meeting** – A major competition for bagpipe musicians that usually takes place over 2 days in early September. See the website for details www.northern-meeting.org
- **Highland Feast** – A variety of food and drink events in and around the Inverness area. Held in late September - October. See website for details www.highlandfeast.co.uk

Where to Eat & Drink:

Eating out in Inverness is relatively expensive so we recommend that you try to get to a restaurant between 5pm – 6:30pm as most restaurants offer a more reasonable pre-Theatre menu. A word of warning though, the pre-Theatre menu at the “Contrast” restaurant is not good value. The portions are ludicrously small and the food we chose was bland. It is, however, a lovely location for a riverside coffee or a cool drink on a sunny afternoon.

River Café, Inverness IV1 1QY – an informal restaurant beside the river that always seems to be busy, a good sign! Dinner main courses from £9 upwards. Tel: 01463 714884

Mustard Seed, Inverness IV1 1DW – Great riverside location, nice stylish atmosphere & Franco-Scottish cuisine. Balcony area overlooks the river. Dinner main course ~£12+. Pre-booking advised as this is a popular restaurant. Tel: 01463 220220

The Kitchen, Inverness IV3 5PR – This is the sister restaurant of the Mustard Seed and is even more stylish in a slick modern way. It shares a riverside location, but is on the opposite bank from the town centre and has views towards the castle. A similar style & price of menu to the Mustard Seed. It is located quite close to the main road bridge across the river. Tel: 01463 259119

Waterfront Bar, Inverness IV3 5JN – On west shore of River Ness. Simple Pub food, but good value. Tel: 01463 223870

Café 1, Inverness IV2 3EA – Funky décor and an eclectic menu with dinner main courses starting at £9. Situated below Castle on Castle Street. Tel: 01463 226200

Culbokie Inn, Culbokie IV7 8JH – An unpretentious pub for the locals that offers a very good pint of beer. It is a bit shabby looking inside, but a great place on sunny days when you can sit at the outdoor picnic tables with views across to Ben Wyvis. Tel: 01349 877280

The Anderson, Fortrose IV10 8TD – A vast choice of whiskies and a menu that constantly changes to make use of the best fresh local produce. Reasonably priced. Tel: 01381 620236

Plough Inn, Rosemarkie IV10 8TF – Long standing hostelry in the quiet village of Rosemarkie. Seems to change owners quite frequently, but has had a good reputation for food recently. Tel: 01381 620164

Sutor Creek, Cromarty IV11 8YE – Proper Pizzas made the traditional way in a wood fired oven for a nice smoky flavour. This is a family friendly restaurant near the harbour in Cromarty. Good choice of pizzas and a daily changing choice of meat and fish options too. Tel: 01381 600855