



Secret Scotland

Last Updated: 8th November 2024

This document gives you a Sample of sections extracted from the "Northern Highlights" Tour Itinerary

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STOPOVER SHEETS

Information on Tourist Attractions, Restaurants, Pubs and Activities in:

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Northern Highlights

**Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete this tour.
The guide contains extra day trip suggestions for extending the tour to 10 days.**

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](#)

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 advise that you book your accommodation as early as possible.**

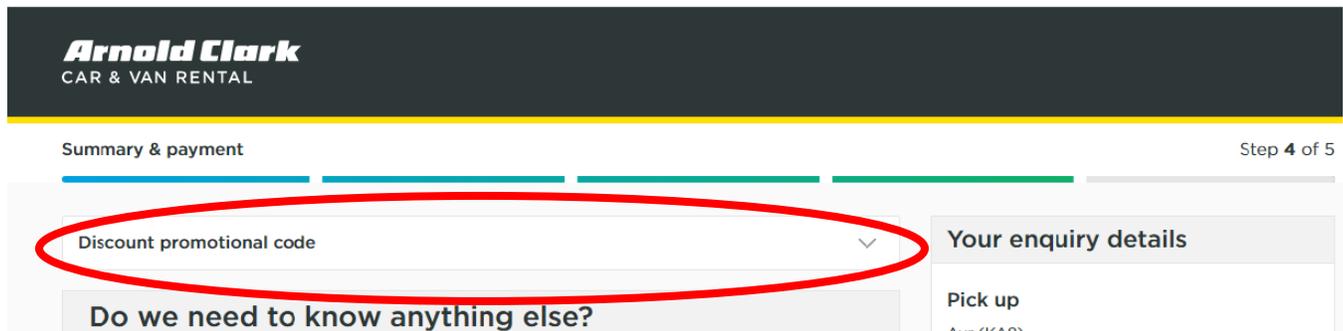
Car Hire Discount for Secret Scotland Customers:

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 “?????” when requested to do so at the payment stage.

When you go through the online booking process on the Arnold Clark website, **you get to Step 4** (“Summary & Payment”) of a 5 step booking process. At the top of the webpage on Step 4 you are asked if you have a “Discount promotional code”. You just click on that and enter the “**SS**” promotional code in the box.



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.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: Arnold Clark does not have depots at the airport terminal buildings. Instead, they run a shuttle bus from the terminal building to their nearby depots. Details of the airport collection procedure are on their website.

DAY 1: Arriving in Inverness:

Getting to the City Centre by car: If you have arrived at Inverness Airport, the journey to the town centre will take approximately 20 minutes by car. The **A96** route from the airport to Inverness town centre is clearly signposted. The road that you enter the town centre on is the **B865**.

[Arnold Clark Car Rental](#) can arrange for your collection from [Inverness Airport](#).

Getting to the City Centre by Bus: There is also the “**No.11 / 11 A**” JET bus service which runs between Inverness and Nairn via the Airport. From the airport to Inverness is a journey time of ~30 mins. [Click here](#) to view the 11 / 11A bus service times.

When approaching Inverness from the south on the A9, or from the east / airport on the A96, the signposts guide you to enter the town centre on the **B865** (see map on [page 5](#)).

When approaching Inverness from the North on the A9, you cross the Kessock Bridge over the Moray Firth and then arrive at Longman roundabout. From Longman roundabout you are guided by signposts to enter the town centre on the **A82**.

From Loch Ness and the west, you can find your way into the centre of Inverness by following the **A82**.

Getting to Inverness by Train: If traveling to Inverness by train, you arrive in the very heart of the town. The main entrance of the railway station faces out onto Academy Street, which has the road number of the B865. We start our route directions from the station as it is central to Inverness.

If collecting a hire car from the Arnold Clark garage in Inverness (see map on [page 5](#)) you really need to take a taxi as it is a bit too far to walk, but they will collect you from the Railway Station if you make advance arrangements and call them once you have arrived at Inverness. Tel: 01463 723720

Parking in the City: The streets in the town centre of Inverness are quite narrow and street parking is limited, so it's best to use one of the public car parks.

- [Rose Street Car Park](#) – You drive past the Rose Street car park when entering Inverness, from the A9 via the A82 from Longman roundabout.
- [East Gate Shopping Centre](#) – When entering Inverness on the B865, the road passes under the East Gate Shopping Centre and you can turn left to use the shopping centre's car park.
- Morrison's Supermarket – this car park is just beside the East Gate Shopping Centre and is the first car park that you come to when entering Inverness from the south on the B865. It operates a Pay & Display system.

Discovering the City:

If you are using our [Recommended Accommodation](#) list you can find directions to your Bed & Breakfast. Settle in and then consult our Stopover Sheet for **Inverness and Black Isle** for ideas about places to discover. The main Tourist Information Office in Inverness is near the Castle.

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

Inverness has a wide choice of pubs and restaurants for dinner 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 on your first night you should consult the Stopover sheet for Inverness and Black Isle.

For a bit of night-life try the Inverness pub [Hootananny's](#) on Church Street, or [MacGregors](#) on Academy Street. These pubs have live music most nights.

During Summer, [Strathpeffer Pipe Band](#) puts on a few performances in the village squares of Strathpeffer and Beaulieu. Details of the dates and locations are on their [Facebook page](#).

Inverness Town Centre Map:

A9 North:
Kessock
Bridge
Wick

Longman
Roundabout

Arnold Clark
Rental Garage
47 Harbour Rd,
Tel: 01463

Clachnaharry
Inn

A862
Beauly

A96 to
Airport

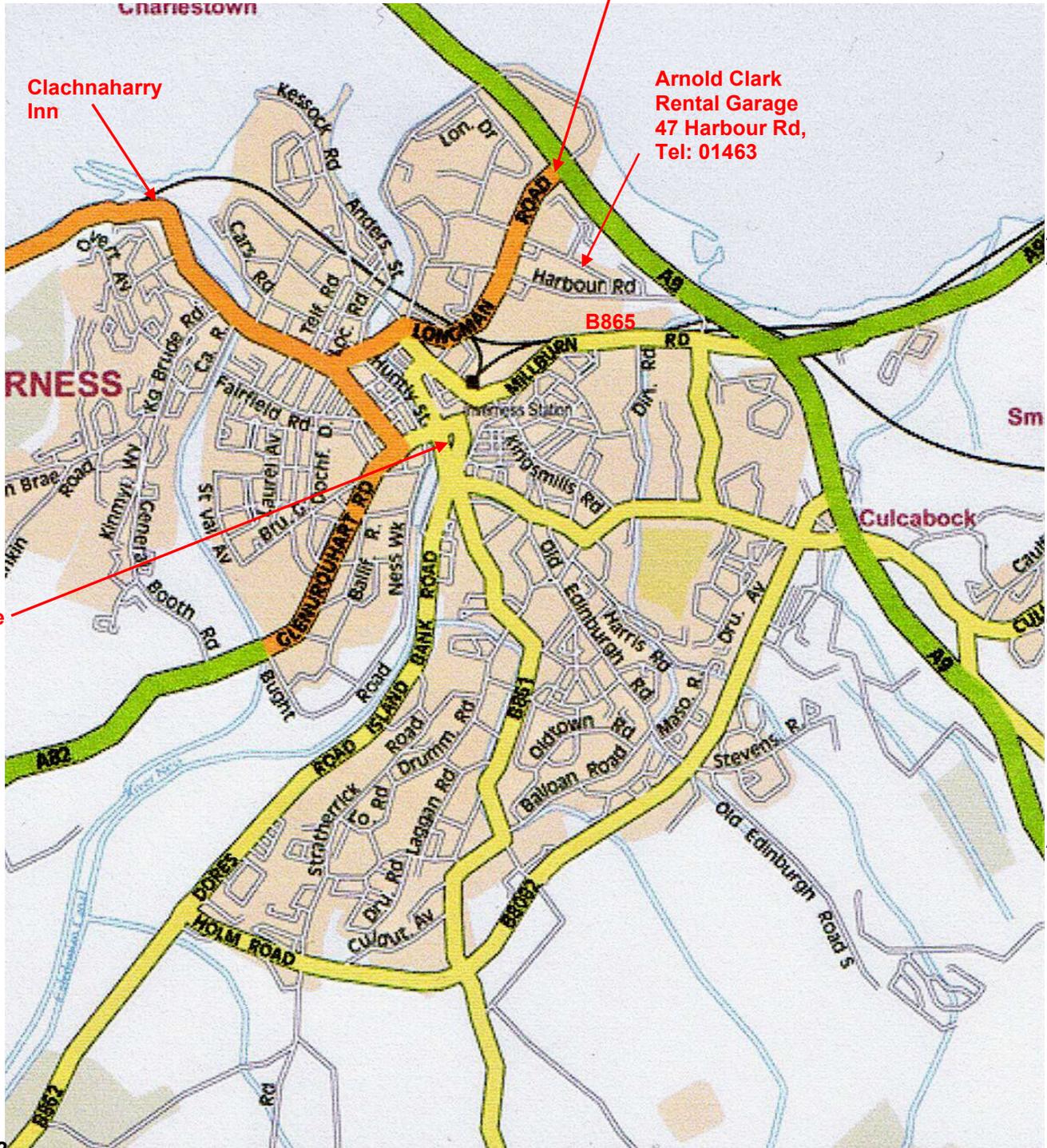
Castle

B9006
Culloden

A82
Loch Ness

A9 South:
Pitlochry
Perth

B862
Dores



Inverness Day Trips

The following pages were removed for the purpose of this Sample.

The removed pages covered the following sections:

Pages

Inverness Day Trips options

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Option 1 Day Trip: Tour around Loch Ness | 6 - 8 |
| • Option 2 Day Trip: Short Tour around Black Isle | 9 - 10 |

Option 3: Tour around Moray Coast Attractions

This route starts with a visit to some historically interesting sites. Culloden Moor, site of the last major land battle on British soil, is still a very moving place to visit and anyone with any knowledge of the events of the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion will sense the tragedy of this place. A new visitor centre opened in 2008 with modern audio-visual displays, but Culloden Moor just requires your imagination and sensitivity. Allow at least 60 minutes for going through the new visitor centre as it has a lot of information to take in.

After Culloden, you can visit the ancient burial chambers of Clava Cairns situated in a lovely little cluster of trees. Some people say that there is something a bit spooky about the site and we'd agree that you do feel the temperature drop as you enter the centre of the cairns.

There are two large castles on this route, Cawdor and Brodie. We would suggest taking the tour at Cawdor as you are free to wander at your own pace, whereas the tour of Brodie is accompanied by a guide, and they can take anything up to 90 minutes depending on the guide that you get! After a castle visit, we take you into Elgin where we strongly recommend a visit to the cathedral. You can ascend one of the towers for great views over the Moray countryside. Take note that you climb the tower on the right. The one on the left has stairs all the way to the top, but no roof access.

From Elgin, we take you north to the coast at Lossiemouth where you can take a walk on the great long sandy stretch of beach. A short drive west and past the Roseisle Forest, brings you to Findhorn. Be sure to stop at the Kimberley Inn in Findhorn for a drink!

Whilst in Forres, you could take a Distillery tour at Benromach. There are different tour options of varying duration and some with special tasting session. The basic "Welcome" tour doesn't need to be pre-booked, but the longer "Essential", "Discovery" and "Manager's" tours really do need to be pre-booked as spaces are more limited.

To make reservations:

Tel: +44 (0) 1309 675 968, or [Book Online](#) ([tour times may vary from details given below](#))

Opening times Mon - Sat 9.30am – 5pm (last tour 3.30pm).

- **Benromach "Discovery" Tour** - £25 per person and includes a tour of the distillery, followed by a dram of Benromach 10 Years Old. Duration ~1 hour. Tours at 11:30 and 15:30, Mon – Sat. **Pre-booking advised.**
- **Benromach "Contrast" Tour** - £20 per person. A more in-depth tour followed by a tutored tasting. Duration ~30 mins. Tasting sessions start at 30 minute intervals from 10:00 to 15:30 Mon – Sat. **Pre-booking advised.**



1. Setting out from Inverness Railway Station, drive towards the East Gate Shopping Centre. Drive past the shopping centre and head out of town on the **B865** dual carriageway.
2. You drive past the Morrisons Supermarket and arrive at a roundabout, where you take the 3rd exit for the **B9006**, signposted to **Culloden Moor, Croy**.
3. The road climbs a hill and arrives at a small roundabout. At the roundabout take the 1st exit for the **B9006** signposted to **Culloden Moor**, and you drive past a Shell Petrol Station.
4. Continue out of Inverness on the **B9006** and you drive past the Raigmore Hospital before arriving at a large roundabout. At the roundabout take the 2nd exit for the **B9006** to **Culloden Moor**.
5. Continue on the **B9006** and look for signs to **Culloden Battlefield** Visitor Centre which is on your right, about 3 miles after the roundabout.
 - ✓ **Culloden Battlefield** – A very important site in Scottish culture and history. Still a moving place to experience. Allow at least an hour to take in the information at the new visitor centre which has some very good audio-visual displays and a hard-hitting short film that depicts the tragedy. **Visitor centre opens 9am, but Battlefield is always open.**
6. Continue on the **B9006** and, immediately after Culloden Battlefield, you see the signposts to Clava Cairns.
 - ✓ **Clava Cairns** – a mysterious and ancient burial site in a small wood. There are 3 large circular stone cairns where burial ceremonies took place. In the centre of the burial cairn you can feel the temperature drop...spooky! From the B9006 turn right following the signpost. At the small crossroads go straight ahead and continue on the road until you arrive at the car park.
7. Return to the **B9006** and continue eastwards. After passing the village of Croy, the road becomes the **B9091**.
8. When the B9091 comes to a crossroads with the B9090, turn right and follow the **B9090** signposts to **Cawdor** **OR turn left for a detour to Fort George.**

DETOUR: to Fort George – Instead of turning right towards Cawdor, you can turn left to follow the B9090 which is signposted to Fort George & Ardersier. After crossing the A96, you follow the B9006 which leads straight to the fort. It is a 15~20 min drive from Cawdor. [View Map](#)

- ✓ **Fort George** – Is an impressively large fortress built after Culloden to suppress the Jacobites. The artillery defences were carefully designed to have no blind spots. The fort is still in use today as a military base, but there are exhibits explaining the life of soldiers in the Highland Regiments. Audio guides explain the tour, but you need to allow 2 hours as the fort is massive and the audio guide takes a long time unless you skip through it.
9. Continue on the **B9090** to **Cawdor** and the road to the castle is on your right after the village.
 - ✓ **Cawdor Castle** – One of the most interesting castles in terms of the stories surrounding it. Made famous by its Shakespearian connections through the play Macbeth.
 - ✓ **Cawdor** – The B9090 doesn't actually pass-through Cawdor, but this is a very pretty little village with a picturesque Church and Post Office. [The Cawdor Tavern](#) is also a nice quiet pub.
 10. From Cawdor, continue on the B9090 / B9101 to a T junction (offset crossroads) with the **A939**. At the T junction turn left and then first right to follow the **B9101** to **Auldearn**.
 11. In Auldearn follow the signposts to join the **A96** to **Forres, Aberdeen**.

SMALL DETOUR: To Brodie Castle – Once on the A96, drive past the entrance of Brodie CountryFare and take the next left. You drive over a railway line, then first right for Brodie Castle. Follow the country lane until you see signposts for a lane on your left leading to the castle car park.

Brodie Castle – a 16th century Tower House full of art and antiques, lived in by the Brodie family until the late 20th century. Tours of the castle are led by guides, and they can take 60-90 minutes. We prefer Cawdor Castle as it is still the family home of the Countess of Cawdor.

12. Continue on the **A96** and, after ~8 miles, you arrive at the roundabout where you can exit the A96 to enter **Forres** on the **B9011**. Follow the B9011 and it takes you through the town centre.
 - ✓ **Forres** - The town of Forres is now by-passed by the A96, but it has an attractive town centre of Victorian buildings and is quite a pleasant place for a wander if you wish to spend sometime browsing in its little shops. The town has won awards for its floral displays and there is a lovely park (Grant Park) on the eastern side of town.
 - ✓ **St Laurence Church** – the west end of Forres High Street is graced by this attractive church. It is a fairly recent building that stands upon the site of earlier churches.
 - ✓ **Benromach Distillery** – Just north of the A96 at Forres. The red chimney of the distillery is visible on the left as you drive past Forres on the A96. Signposted from the A96. **IV36 3EB**
13. Follow the **B9011** through the centre of Forres (it changes from the High Street to Victoria Road as it heads east).
 - ✓ **Sueno's Stone** – on the way out of Forres, the road widens and you should see a signpost for Sueno's Stone. You bear left and follow the side road a short distance until you see the 20 foot tall Pictish carved stone encased in its protective glass shell. [Read More](#)
14. The B9011 arrives at a roundabout on the A96. At this roundabout, take the 3rd exit to continue on the **A96** signposted to **Aberdeen**.
15. About 12 miles after Forres, the A96 arrives in Elgin. We have guided you to Elgin because we highly rate the ruins of Elgin Cathedral. The signposts to the cathedral are not very good, but you will see them if you drive through the town staying on the A96. The side road to the cathedral is on your left and it is to the east of the town centre. The cathedral exit is quite soon after the A96 passes under a pedestrian bridge.
 - ✓ **Glen Moray Distillery** – just to the west of Elgin and briefly visible to the right of the A96 as it approaches Elgin. The roads to the distillery are clearly signposted from the A96.
 - ✓ **Gordon & MacPhail Whisky Shop** - The definitive whisky shop with over 800 malts available, including some that you'll not get anywhere else. Located on South Street in the town centre.
 - ✓ **Elgin Cathedral** - The attractive ruins of a 13th century cathedral in the town centre of Elgin. You can still climb one of its towers for views over the town. Signposted from the A96 as it passes through Elgin heading towards Aberdeen. The it is on your left ~300 yards after the A96 passes under modern footbridge.
 - ✓ **Johnstons of Elgin** – Near to the cathedral is the Woollen Mill and visitor centre for this famous manufacturer of Cashmere clothing. From the cathedral ticket office on King Street, head back to the T junction with North College Street and turn left. Drive east along North College Street to the next T junction. At this junction, turn left and drive across the bridge over the River Lossie. Johnstons Visitor Centre is then on your right. Post Code for GPS reference: **IV30 4AF**. From the Cathedral it is a 10 min walk. Just follow the road on the north side of the cathedral to a footbridge over the River Lossie. Cross the bridge and go straight on until you see the factory.

[Route from Elgin to Inverness via Findhorn:](#)
Travel Time: 1 hr 50 mins / 55 miles

[View Map](#)

1. From Elgin Cathedral, return into **Elgin** on the **A96** and look for signposts at the roundabouts for the **A941** to **Lossiemouth**.
2. As the **A941** leaves Elgin, it passes a petrol station.
 - ✓ **Spynie Palace** - just North of Elgin on A941 to Lossiemouth, the residence of the Bishops of Elgin. An attractive setting at the end of a tree-lined road, but not a lot to see although you can climb the central tower for views of the surrounding countryside. The road to Spynie Palace is on the right of the A941 as you travel towards Lossiemouth. The entrance is on a slight bend in the road and is easy to miss.
 - ✓ **RAF Lossiemouth** – the only operational RAF base in Scotland. Home to the RAFs Typhoon jets.
 - ✓ **Lossiemouth Beach** - the town of Lossiemouth mainly consists of quite stark looking grey cottages which have been built to weather the east coast storms. The best features of the town are the old harbour and the great long stretch of sandy beach that extends for 2-3 miles from the mouth of the River Lossie eastwards. The [East Beach](#) is accessed from the town via a modern footbridge.
3. From Lossiemouth, drive west along the main street. You should now be following the **B9040** to **Burghead**.

4. On the B9040, about 5 miles after leaving Lossiemouth, you pass the B9012 side road that is signposted to Duffus. **If you wished, you could take a short detour of ~4 miles to Duffus Castle.**
 - ✓ **Duffus Castle** - The castle is about a mile southeast of **Duffus** which is signposted from the B9040. The castle stands on a manmade hill surrounded by a shallow moat. It was a large and imposing castle, but most of the buildings have succumbed to subsidence and sections of the castle have broken off to sit at bizarre angles. You can see some pictures on our [Facebook page](#).
5. The roads ends at a T junction in **Burghead** where you turn left to head inland on the **B9013**. At the next junction, bear right onto the **B9089** which takes you to **Kinloss**.
6. The B9089 arrives at a crossroad junction where you turn right to stay on the **B9089** signposted to **Kinloss**.
7. Soon after passing a large Diageo Maltings factory on your left, you come to the green signpost that indicates the road (on your right) to the **Roseisle Forest**.
 - ✓ **Roseisle Forest** – As the road heads south from Burghead it passes the attractive [coastal forests](#) of pinewood trees. This a great place for a picnic and the Forestry Commission has even provided some BBQ's so you might want to bring your own charcoal. The entrance is on your right quite soon after passing the large Diageo factory (on your left). There is green wood sign that indicates the access road. There is a small charge for parking.
 - ✓  **Gentle Walks in the Roseisle Forest** – From the car park you follow a marked path through the pine trees of this coastal forest that ends beside a nice sandy beach on the Moray Firth. It is only a 1 hour walk and doesn't require any special footwear. The ground is quite sandy, so it drains fast and is usually not too wet underfoot. [Click here](#) for details of path.
8. Follow the **B9089** into **Kinloss** and you see the ruins of **Kinloss Abbey** (of which not much is left). After passing the Abbey, you turn right at the traffic lights (beside the Spar shop) onto the **B9011** which leads directly into **Findhorn**.
 - ✓ **Findhorn** is situated beside the sheltered Findhorn Bay and you can walk from Findhorn to some lovely large expanses of golden sandy beaches. It is only a short detour to get here, and on sunny days it is highly recommended for visiting. To get to the beach, drive to the northern tip of the village and there is a car park which is just a short distance from the beach.
 - ✓ Findhorn is also home to an Eco-village community called the [Findhorn Foundation](#) that grew out of a 1980's project to build a self-sustainable, enviro-friendly town.
 - ✓  Recommended Pub – [Kimberley Inn](#), overlooking the sea in the village of Findhorn and a nice place to stop for a drink outside on a sunny day. One of the nicest pubs in the area and it serves food. Ideally try to get a seat outside for the view.
 - ✓  [Bakehouse](#) – Organic Bakery and Café. Food served during the day and on Fri/Sat evenings. Located in Findhorn beside the village Shop/Post Office.
9. From Findhorn, return along the **B9011** to **Kinloss** and turn right at the T junction with traffic lights beside the Spar Shop. You should start to follow signposts for the **B9011** to **Forres**.
10. When the B9011 arrives at a roundabout, you should take the 3rd exit to follow signposts for the **A96** to **Inverness**.
 - ✓ **Benromach Distillery** – Just north of the A96 at Forres, exit at the junction signposted to Waterford. The red chimney of the distillery is visible on the right as you drive past Forres on the A96 to Inverness. Post Code – **IV36 3EB**
11. Continue on **A96** following the signposts all the way back to **Inverness**.

DETOUR: to Fort George - About 5 miles after Nairn, you see signposts on the A96 for a right turn onto the B9006 to Fort George. The B9006 leads straight to the fort and it is a 10 min drive.

- ✓ **Fort George** – Is an impressively large fortress built after Culloden to suppress the Jacobites. The artillery defences were carefully designed to have no blind spots. The fort is still in use today as a military base, but there are exhibits explaining the life of soldiers in the Highland Regiments. Audio guides explain the tour, but you need to allow 2 hours as the fort is massive and the audio guide takes a long time unless you skip through it. [View Map](#)

DETOUR: to Connage Highland Dairy – A small family run business that makes traditional Scottish cheeses using organic methods. They have a farm shop and observation windows for watching the production areas. Cheese production only takes place from Mon – Wed, but the shop & Café is open 10am – 4pm Mon – Sat. <https://www.connage.co.uk/>

Directions: From Fort George, return along the B9006 to Ardersier. In Ardersier, turn right to take the B9039 to Inverness Airport. As you leave the 30 mph speed restricted zone of the village, you pass the left turn to the Dairy. The entrance to the Dairy is indicated with a sign attached to the fence.

A possible schedule for this route if paced as a full day trip would be:

- 09:00** Depart Inverness
- 09:15** Arrive **Culloden Battlefield**
The Battlefield is always open, but the Visitor centre opens as follows:
- 9am – 5pm (Apr – Oct)
 - 9am – 4pm (Nov - Feb)
- <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/culloden/planning-your-visit>
- 10:45** Depart Culloden
- 11:00** Arrive **Cawdor** Castle
- 12:30** Depart Cawdor
- 12:55** Arrive **Forres** and get a light lunch at Peppermill Restaurant, or get something at Cawdor Castle or at the nearby [Cawdor Tavern](#) which is a nice pub in the middle of Cawdor village.
- 13:45** Depart Forres to do the optional roundtrip route around Elgin, Lossiemouth and Findhorn. On the way out of Forres, remember to pay a visit to the **Sueno Stone**.
- 14:15** Arrive **Elgin**
- ✓ **Elgin Cathedral** - The attractive ruins of a 13th century cathedral in the town centre of Elgin. You can still climb one of its towers for views over the town.
 - ✓ **Johnstons of Elgin** – Woolen Mill and visitor centre with café. It is near located the cathedral and you could walk to it in under 10 mins from the front of the cathedral.
- 15:15** Depart Elgin. - At this point you could cut ~40 mins of travelling time by just taking the A96 back to Forres, **but we would suggest** (if the weather is good) that you take the longer coastal route which takes you past:
- ✓ **Spynie Palace** - just North of Elgin on A941 to Lossiemouth, the residence of the Bishops of Elgin. An attractive setting at the end of a tree-lined road, but not a lot to see although you can climb the central tower for views of the surrounding countryside.
 - ✓ **Lossiemouth Beach** - the town of Lossiemouth consists of a main street of quite stark looking grey cottages which have been built to weather the east coast storms. The best feature of the town is the great long stretch of sandy beach that extends for 2-3 miles from the mouth of the River Lossie eastwards. The East Beach is accessed via a wooden footbridge.
 - ✓ **Duffus Castle** - The castle is about a mile southeast of Duffus and stands on a small man-made hill which is surrounded by a shallow moat. Whilst it was once a large and imposing castle, most of the buildings have succumbed to subsidence and sections of the castle have broken off to sit at bizarre angles. You can see some pictures on our [Facebook page](#).
- 16:15** Arrive **Findhorn** – maybe head to the **Kimberely Inn** for a drink.
- From Findhorn, you simply rejoin the A96 for a fast and direct drive back to Inverness, but you could break this leg of the tour with a detour to **Fort George** (last admission at 16:45 in Summer)
- 17:00** Depart Frindhorn
- 17:50** Arrive back at Inverness

DAY 2: Inverness to Skye via Loch Ness

Today's route takes you along the shores of **Loch Ness** and through the Great Glen to Invermoriston, where you turn west for a road that heads towards Glen Shiel and the coast of Wester Ross. The time constraints of this tour dictate that we have to take you via the busy A82 route. Expect to be stuck behind some slow caravans and coaches as this is part of the main tourist trail through the Highlands.

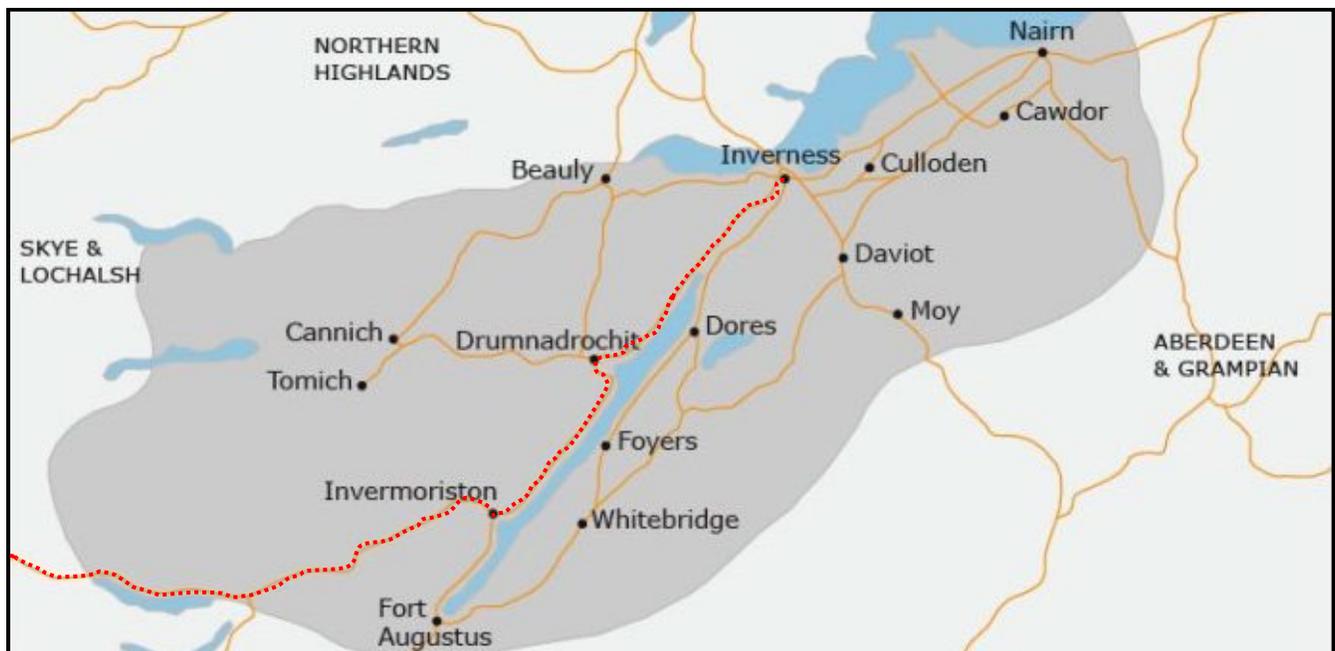
From Invermoriston, the road climbs through Glen Moriston to Loch Cluanie before descending through Glen Shiel to the shores of Loch Duich where you will see the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle**. The castle is a must for a photo stop, however, most of the castle is a re-construction from the 1930's and you don't get to see a lot of the interior of the castle so you don't miss out on too much if you skip the castle tour.

Glen Coe gets more attention, but **Glen Shiel** really has every bit as much to offer. The road weaves through a valley dominated by forbidding mountains and there are very few signs of mankind bar the occasional sheep pen and the [Cluanie Inn](#). Glen Shiel also has a dark history as it was the site of a battle that crushed a short lived Jacobite Rebellion in 1719. This particular uprising was supported by an army of 300 Spanish Marines who were garrisoned in Eilean Donan castle. The Spaniards, in conjunction with ~800 Highlanders from various clans, took up defensive positions at a narrow point of Glen Shiel (look for the crossed sword signposts that mark the battle site) and waited to intercept the army of ~1,000 Redcoat soldiers deployed from Inverness.

The Jacobites and Spanish valiantly held their ground for a while, but were eventually broken by the barrage of fire from howitzers that were able to drop artillery down on their positions. The battle was all over in ~3 hours. There is a hill in Glen Shiel that is known as the "Hill of the Spanish" (Sgurr nan Spainteach in Gaelic). An interesting fact about the battle of Glen Shiel is that "Rob Roy" was one of the soldiers on the Jacobite side.

If the weather is good, we strongly recommend that you drive from Shiel Bridge up to the [viewpoint on the Ratagan Pass](#) to Glenelg as this really is one of the best views in Scotland. The **Ratagan Pass** looks across to the range of mountains known as the "**Five Sisters of Kintail**". The local legend behind these mountains tells the story of seven sisters. Two of the sisters were married to two Irish brothers who promised that their other brothers would return to marry the remaining Five Sisters. When it became apparent that the remaining sisters would have a long wait, a local witch turned the sisters into stone to preserve their beauty. If time allows, we recommend that you continue to Glenelg to explore the nearby **Iron Age Brochs in Gleann Beag**.

A short drive along the coast from Eilean Donan will bring you to Kyle of Lochalsh and the bridge to Skye. However, the village of **Plockton** is a hidden gem just a few miles north of Kyle of Lochalsh and we have provided detour directions that take you to this very pretty little seaside village before heading to the **Skye Bridge**.



1. Setting out from the small car park in front of Inverness Railway Station, **turn right** onto **Academy Street**.
2. Look for a small signpost on left for the **B862** to Hilton Culduthel, Holm Mills, **Dores, Foyers**. Turn left at the traffic lights in front of the “Ironworks” (the other landmark is MacGregors Whisky Bar on your left).
3. Follow this road down to the riverside and you arrive at a **crossroad junction** with traffic lights, **beside the road bridge** over the River Ness. Get into the right-hand lane for crossing the river.
4. Turn right and cross the bridge over the River Ness. Follow signposts to **Fort William**.
5. At the next road junction, go straight ahead to follow the **A82** signposted to **Fort William** and the **Loch Ness Trail**.
 - ✓ **Jacobite Cruises** – Cruises depart near the Dochgarroch on the outskirts of Inverness. As you arrive at Dochgarroch, you will see the exit for Jacobite Cruises signposted on the left. They offer a [range of cruises](#) and have another departure point on the A82 near Drumnadrochit.
6. Continue on the **A82** to **Drumnadrochit**. Loch Ness appears on your left.
 - ✓ **Loch Ness Exhibition Centre** – About 12 miles after the Tomnahurich Bridge. This is the better of the two “Nessie” exhibitions on Loch Ness. It combines audio-visual displays with exhibits on the history of “Nessie” hunting and poses questions about the existence of Nessie. Well worth it if you want the facts. On the A82 just before it arrives in Drumnadrochit.
7. Arrive Drumnadrochit (approximately 20 minutes after leaving Inverness)..
 - ☹ **“Nessieland”** – A tourist trap and not much to see apart from the giant Nessie model outside the building. Signposted in Drumnadrochit beside the road junction with the A831 to Cannich. Tacky!
 - ✓ **Loch Ness Cruises** – A bus to the cruise boat departs every hour on the hour from the Celtic Crafts shop near the “Nessieland” at Drumnadrochit. www.lochness-cruises.com. April – October.
 - ✓ **Urquhart Castle** – a short distance after Drumnadrochit. This is the castle that appears in all the iconic images of Loch Ness, however we feel that it is a somewhat overpriced tourist attraction capitalising on its Loch Ness Monster connections. So we say save your money and just stop in the Car Park to take photos from the A82. You need to go back to the main road as bushes have been planted to obscure the view from the car park.
8. Continue on the **A82**, following signs to **Fort William**, and you arrive at **Invermoriston** (~13 miles from Drumnadrochit).
 - ✓ **Invermoriston Falls and Old Bridge** –There is a large car park on your left in the centre of Invermoriston. From the car park, walk to the bridge to see the Old Bridge. Just before you cross the bridge, there is a path on the right that leads down to the old bridge over the River Moriston.
9. From **Invermoriston**, take the **A887** which is signposted to **Kyle of Lochalsh**. The A887 then climbs uphill out of Invermoriston and passes through the forests of Glen Moriston.
 - ✓ **Highland Coos at the Redburn Café** – About 7 miles along the A887, you should see (to the right of the road) the reddish / brown painted building that is the Redburn Café. There are usually Highland Cows in the field next to the café and the café owner sells bags of food so you can bribe the cattle into having their photo taken.
10. Continue on the **A887** and after ~16 miles the road meets the shores of Loch Cluanie. You are now driving through Glen Shiel and the mountains on your right are collectively known as the “Five Sisters of Kintail”.
 - ✓ 🍷 Recommended Pub – **Cluanie Inn** (~24 miles from Invermoriston) if you are getting desperate for some food and a travel stop, then this is the first bit of civilization that you come across after Invergarry. The hotel also has a **Petrol Pump** (the next fuel stop is ~12 miles in Shiel Bridge).
 - ✓ **Glen Shiel** – About 6 miles after the Cluanie Inn, you pass through the site of the Battle of Glenshiel (1719). This was a short lived Jacobite uprising that was supported by ~300 Spanish soldiers who had made garrison at Eilean Donan Castle. Rob Roy also fought in this battle. The battle site is identified with a brown road sign bearing crossed swords. There is a rough lay-by and a “cairn” nearby with an information board that gives some basic details about the battle.

11. Continue on the **A87** and it descends to **Shiel Bridge**. At Shiel Bridge, you may choose to take a detour over the Ratagan Pass to get spectacular viewpoints for photography of the Five Sisters.

DETOUR : to Ratagan Pass, Glenelg & Glenelg Brochs -  One of the best viewpoints in Scotland is the **Ratagan Pass**. From there, you have a panoramic view of the mountain range known as the Five Sisters of Kintail. The drive to the viewpoint only takes about 10 mins from the A87 at Shiel Bridge. You may also wish to carry on over the summit of the pass to the village of Glenelg, where the ferry still crosses the sea to Skye. There is a nice pub called the  **Glenelg Inn** where you might get **live music** at weekends. If you drive past Glenelg, you come to signs for the Iron Age **Glenelg Brochs**. These Brochs are some of the best examples on mainland Scotland of the ancient tower dwellings that were built by the Picts. There is a sense of time stood still and we would recommend making this detour. [Watch our video about Glenelg.](#)

Directions: [View Map](#)

- i. From the **A87** passing through Shiel Bridge, you see a stone bridge on your left opposite a bus shelter. Turn left and follow signs to **Glenelg**.
- ii. When the road splits, take the road on left which then climbs steeply through a series of S-bends.
- iii. Follow this road to the summit of the Ratagan Pass and then onto Glenelg.
- iv. Follow the road past Glenelg and the Brochs are signposted up a road on your left.

[Round trip to Glenelg Brochs : 1hr 15 mins / 27miles](#)

12. From Shiel Bridge, continue on the **A87** following signs to **Kyle of Lochalsh**. After 7 miles you arrive at the car park and visitor centre for Eilean Donan Castle.

- ✓ **Eilean Donan** – possibly the most photographed of Scotland’s castles and familiar to many for its use in films such as Highlander and James Bond’s “The World is Not Enough”. Interestingly, the castle was a ruin until the 1930’s when it underwent a major restoration.
- ✓  **Carr Brae Viewpoint** – If you go into the village of Dornie (the exit road to Dornie is just across the A87 from the Eilean Donan Car park), you will see a signpost to the “Carr Brae viewpoint”. The road climbs uphill through woodlands to a [viewpoint above Eilean Donan castle](#). It can be a great spot for sunset photographs of the castle.
- ✓  **The Clachan** (Dornie) – from the car park at Eilean Donan, you can follow a path into Dornie where you will find this nice little pub. It often has **live music** on Saturday nights in Summer.
- ✓ **Manuela’s Wee Bakery** – From Eilean Donan castle, head west and, soon after crossing the causeway, turn left into Ardelve. Excellent bread, pizzas and pastries. The bakery features some whacky little huts that look like something out of a Hansel & Gretel fairy tale.

13. Continue on the **A87** towards Kyle of Lochalsh and ~5 miles after Dornie, you pass through the village of Reraig. After passing **Reraig** you have the option of turning right to visit Balmacara Square and Plockton.

DETOUR: to visit Plockton –  Plockton is just 4-5 miles from Reraig and it is one of the prettiest villages on the West Coast so well worth a detour. It also has some lovely pubs so you can have a beer sitting outside at the  **Plockton Inn** or  **Plockton Hotel** on the shorefront. Our favourite place to eat in the village is the  [Shores Restaurant](#) which is on the seafront after the Plockton Hotel.

Directions: [View Map](#)

- i. After Reraig, take the next road on right and drive straight on through the village of Balmacara Square.
- ii. Drive up the hill behind Balmacara and take right at the “Y” junction near the top of the hill.
- iii. Stay on this road and it descends to Duirnish village where it crosses a bridge.
- iv. Continue straight on and the road brings you to Plockton.

Directions from Plockton to the Skye Bridge: [View Map](#)

- v. Return from Plockton on the same road, but after crossing the bridge at **Duirnish**, turn right to follow the road that goes via Drumbuie to Kyle of Lochalsh.
- vi. This road eventually comes to a T junction with the A87 and you turn right to head towards the Skye Bridge.

14. Continue on the **A87** following signs to **Kyle of Lochalsh**. There isn't much to see in Kyle of Lochalsh other than a few shops so continue through the town and cross over the **Skye Bridge**.
 - ➡ **Petrol Station** – on left of A87 as you enter Lochalsh
 - 📍 **Buth Beag Fisherman's Kitchen**, Kyle of Lochalsh IV40 8AF – From the traffic light junction in the centre of Kyle of Lochalsh, take the road that goes downhill to the seafront. As you drive down towards the sea, the shop is in a modern red roofed building on your left. We recommend the Cullen Skink soup. Open: 10:30 – 18:00 Tues - Sat.
15. After crossing the bridge, the A87 arrives at a small roundabout. At the roundabout, take the exit for the **A87 to Portree**. The A87 drives the length of Skye, from the Skye Bridge to Uig.
16. We have provided guidelines for a tour route around Skye on **Page 22**.

The [Recommended Accommodation](#) for tonight is in various locations around the **Isle of Skye** and the **Lochalsh area** (Plockton, Reraig, Dornie, Ratagan).

For information about the best attractions and restaurants in the area, please consult the Stopover Sheets for the **Isle of Skye** and the **Lochalsh Area**.

Direct Route from Skye Bridge to Portree:
Travel time: 45 mins / 35 miles



1. After crossing the Skye Bridge, you come to a roundabout where you take the exit for the **A87 to Portree** (which ~35 miles away from the Skye Bridge).
2. After ~6 miles, you pass the left turn for the **A851** that is signposted to **Isle Ornsay & Armadale**.
 - ✓ 📍 **Isle Ornsay** - a pretty little cluster of white painted buildings on the shores of the Sound of Sleat (pronounced "Slate"). In the village, there is an exclusive hotel with a distinctive pub next door, a beautiful art gallery, a specialist whisky shop and a woolen clothing shop.
3. Continue on the **A87**, following signs to Portree. The next village on the A87 is **Broadford** (~7 miles from the Skye Bridge). **Petrol Station**
 - ✓ 📍 Recommended restaurant – **Red Skye**, IV42 8PY – As you approach Broadford from the south on the A87, the Red Skye restaurant is on your left in an old school building and is easy to find. Now the best place to eat in Broadford. Not open Sundays. Tel: 01471 822180
 - ✓ 📍 Recommended restaurants – cheaper eating options in Broadford are the **Claymore** (good for seafood) and **Café Sia**, which is a nice Italian at the north end of the town. Mainly pizzas, but they do them well.
4. In Broadford, you pass the junction for B8083 to Elgol.
 - ✓ **Elgol** is a small village with not many tourist facilities other than [sealife cruises](#) from the pier. It's appeal is its dramatic views towards the Black Cuillin Hills. About 15 miles from the A87.
 - ✓ The road to Elgol passes the ruins of **Cil Chriosd** (Christ's Church) a picturesque little 16th century church and graveyard that stand on a small rise of land beside the road.
 - ✓ **Torrin Pools** – A quieter alternative to the Fairy Pools but getting busier. Soon after passing Torrin Bunkhouse, the road crosses a stream. Walk up-stream from here to find a pretty rock pool.
 - ✓ 🥾 **Walk to Prince Charlie's Cave**: a gentle walk to the cave where Bonnie Prince Charlie hid during his last night on Skye. Around 2.5 hrs with stunning scenery. You need to take note of high tide times as the path gets cut off by the sea at high tide. [Click here](#) for details of path.
5. Continue on the **A87 to Sligachan** (~24 miles from the Skye Bridge). Just after crossing the bridge at Sligachan, there is a hotel on the left which has 🍺 a bar with a great choice of beers including the ones from the Skye Brewery at Uig.
6. Stay on the **A87** and it climbs up through Glen Varragill, before starting on the long descent to **Portree**.
7. As you enter Portree, the road number changes from the A87 to the **A855 to Staffin**. The A855 winds its way through the centre of Portree and then heads north towards Staffin.

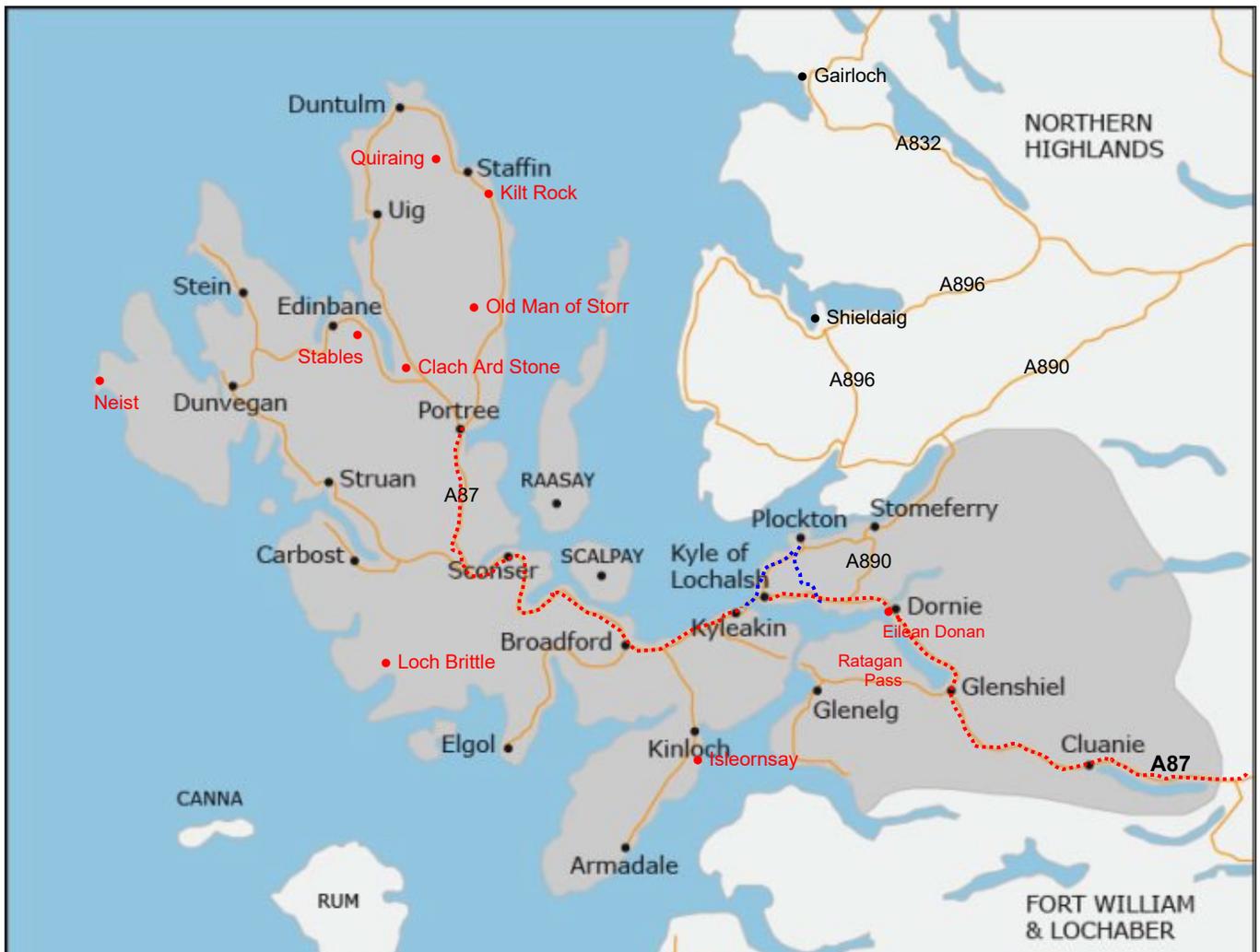
ENTERTAINMENT:

If you stay in the Lochalsh area, you should head to the [Plockton Inn](#) on a **Thursday night** as that usually is a live music night in the bar. Check out their [Facebook page](#) for events.

The black painted [Plockton Hotel](#) has a small bar at the rear of the building and it has music sessions on a Wednesday night in summer.

The best pub on Skye for live music is the [Edinbane Inn](#), and the music sessions are usually on **Wednesday, Friday** and **Sunday** evenings, although you might get something spontaneous on other nights of the week. See Step 11 of [page 24](#) for directions.

[Old Inn](#) (Carbost IV47 8SR) can be a lively little pub just along the road from the Talisker Distillery. Usually hosts a **Live music** on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday night. Check their [Facebook page](#) for upcoming events. See Step 6 of [page 23](#) for directions.



A possible schedule:

- 09:00** Depart Inverness
- 09:30** Arrive **Urquhart Castle** – the castle doesn't open until 09:30
- 10:00** Depart Urquhart Castle
- 10:20** Arrive at Invermoriston where you turn right to join the A87 that leads west to Glen Shiel and the Skye Bridge.
- There is an attractive old bridge at Invermoriston which makes for a lovely photo opportunity. More details of the bridge at this website: <https://her.highland.gov.uk/monument/MHG15753>
- 11:20** Arrive at **Eilean Donan Castle** and maybe stop for a tour of the castle, but most of it is actually a 1920 - 1930's reconstruction so a bit of a fake in truth,
- 12:20** Depart Eilean Donan Castle and follow the detour option on **Page 18** for a visit to Plockton for lunch.
- 12:45** Arrive **Plockton** – a very pretty village with several good restaurants for lunch
- 13:30** Depart Plockton
- 13:45** Cross over **Skye Bridge** and arrive on Skye, take A87 north to Broadford where you turn left onto the single track B8083 that leads to Elgol.
- 14:30** Arrive at **Elgol** on Isle of Skye. The jetty at Elgol affords you one of the best viewpoints for taking pictures of the Cuillin Mountains
- 14:45** Depart Elgol
- 16:00** **Arrive Portree** but just drive through the town heading north on A855 signposted to Staffin.
- 16:30** Arrive at **Kilt Rock Viewpoint Car Park** – can be a busy car park, but should be quieter by this time of day. If too busy to get a parking space here, you can continue up the road to the Staffin Museum car park and then walk back to the Kilt Rock Viewpoint.
- 16:45** Depart Kilt Rock to drive north to Staffin and the Bealach na Uige road that crosses over the Quiraing heading west to Uig.
- 17:00** Arrive at **Quiraing Viewpoint** on the **Bealach na Uige** road between Staffin and Uig.
- 17:15** Depart Quiraing Viewpoint and continue on road heading west to Uig.
- When you get to Uig, you might wish to visit the Fairy Glen, but it will be getting late in the day and you may prefer to head to your accommodation.
- From Uig, travel south on the A87 to speed back to Portree (Uig to Portree is ~15 miles / 20 – 25 mins)
- 18:00** **Arrive back at Portree** – be sure to pre-book a restaurant for dinner as Skye is a busy destination and restaurants fill up fast in the evenings.

The following pages were removed for the purpose of this Sample.

The removed pages covered the following sections:	Pages
Skye & Lochalsh Day Trip Options	
• Discovering Skye	22 - 27
• Alternative Day Trip around Loch Alsh	28 - 29
Day 3 – Skye Bridge / Plockton to Gairloch	30 - 35
Gairloch Day Trip Options	
• Day trip 1: Hillwalking around Gairloch	36
• Day trip 2: Fishing Boat Experience	37
Day 4 – Gairloch to Ullapool & Inverpolly Nature Reserve	38 - 43

DAY 5: 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), Suiiven (731m) and Stac Polly (613m). These isolated mountains rise like icebergs from an otherwise barren landscape of moorland.

The route then heads east towards Lairg, but we have given you 2 options for the last leg of the journey to Inverness. You can choose to take:

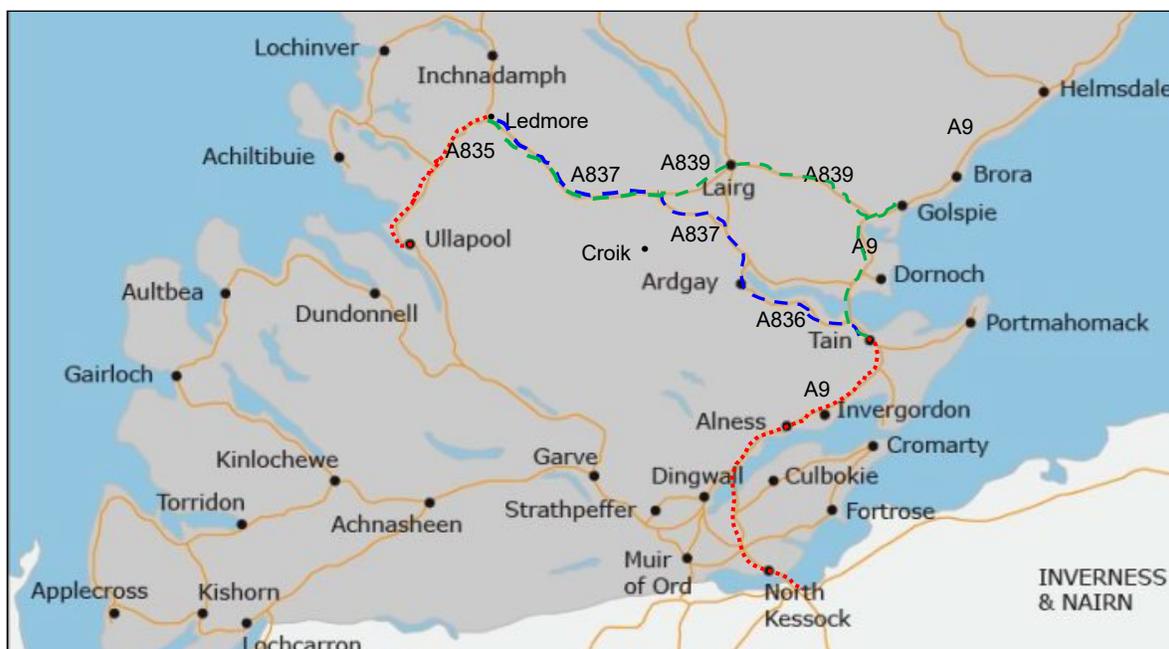
- a more direct route south to Inverness via the cascades at the **Falls of Shin** where you may see [salmon leaping](#). This route also has a detour option for a visit to the isolated Croick Church where you can see a moving memorial to the many families evicted from this area during the Highland Clearances.
- a slightly longer route via Golspie and **Dunrobin Castle** with its fairytale architecture and extravagant gardens. [Dunrobin Castle](#) represents the other side of the Highland Clearances, for this was the luxurious home of the Dukes of Sutherland who were largely responsible for the eviction of the crofters.

On the journey from west to east, you pass through Strath Oykel on a road that is mainly single track with very few signs of human habitation. It was not always this desolate, but Strath Oykel was one of the first areas to suffer during the Sutherland Clearances. The motivation for the Clearances was the fact that the Landlords could make more money from renting their land to sheep farmers than they could from renting to the Crofters who had traditionally worked the land to grow crops and breed cattle.

In 1800, the Duke of Sutherland appointed James Loch and Patrick Sellar to execute the clearance of his estates and make way for sheep farming. Loch and Sellar set about their task with notorious brutality and there are stories of elderly crofters being burnt alive in their homes when they refused to move. [Croick Church](#) is a poignant reminder of these times as it contains a [window etched with the names](#) of the families who took shelter in the graveyard of the church following their eviction from their crofts.

The A837 closely follows the River Oykel on its way to join the sea at Bonar Bridge. This is one of Scotland's best rivers for salmon fishing. If travelling in late July – October, you might wish to visit the **Falls of Shin** where there is an observation area above a waterfall where [salmon are often seen leaping](#). There is also a good café at the falls.

Regardless of which route you choose, you will pass the **Glenmorangie Distillery** which you may want to visit to find out why it is one of the most popular Malt Whiskies in Scotland. If you want to take a tour you need to pre-book a tour time by calling **01862 892 477**



Route from Ullapool to Inverness:

Travel time via Dunrobin: 3 hrs 15 mins / 117 miles

Travel time via Falls of Shin: 2 hrs 45 mins / 100 miles

Route from Ullapool to the A837 (Ledmore Junction):

Travel time: 25 - 30 mins / 18 miles



[View Map](#)

1. Starting from Ullapool head north on the **A835**.
2. 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. See [Page 41](#) for directions. [Watch our video](#) from 5:00 and you can see some shots taken on Stac Pollaidh.

3. Continue north on the **A835**.
 - ✓ **Knockan Crag 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 and, in particular, the “Moine Thrust” which, when identified in the 1880’s, was a major development in the Science of Geology. There is a well defined circular path that you can follow to get to a viewpoint. <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/ullapool/knockancrag.shtml>
4. Continue on the **A835** and it comes to a T junction with the **A837**. This is Ledmore Junction and you should turn right to follow signposts to **Lairg**.

LONGER Route from Ledmore to Tain via Lairg and Dunrobin Castle:

Travel time: 2 hrs / 65 miles



[View Map](#)

1. Starting from Ledmore junction, where the **A835** meets the **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, about 1 mile 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. Continue on the **A839** for ~8 miles and you arrive at **Lairg**.

DETOUR: to Falls of Shin – After ~7 miles on the A839 and just before the **A839** arrives at Lairg, you pass a junction where you can turn right onto the **B864** signposted to the **Falls of Shin**. The car park is **about 4 miles** along this road and there is an excellent café at the [visitor centre](#) as well as a play park for kids. The waterfalls are a well-known spot for watching [salmon leap](#). The best time for seeing this spectacle is usually August – October. [View Map](#)

4. As the **A839** enters **Lairg**, you pass a petrol station and then cross a modern bridge. After crossing the bridge, turn left onto the **A836** to **Lairg**. The waters of Loch Shin are to your left.
5. After a short distance, turn right onto the **A839** signposted to **Rogart** and drive through Lairg. The A839 is an enjoyable road to drive with fast sweeping bends and seldom has much traffic on it.
6. From Lairg, continue east on the **A839** for ~14 miles. At the end of the **A839**, turn left onto the **A9** signposted to **Thurso, Wick**. **We are guiding you north on a short detour to visit Dunrobin Castle.**
7. 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 unofficial attempts at toppling the statue with explosives!
 - ✓ Recommended Takeaway – [The Trawler](#) – A very popular fish and chip shop in Golspie. It will be on your right as you drive north through Golspie. Opens 1pm Thu – Sat / 4pm Sun – Wed.

8. 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 gardens that are reminiscent of a French Chateau. The castle tour covers a great number of rooms, and the main 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 from April – October at 11:30am and 2:30pm.
9. From Dunrobin Castle, head south on the **A9** following signposts to **Inverness**.

DETOUR: to Dornoch– Dornoch is an easy place to miss as the A9 bypasses it and you wouldn’t even realize it was there. This small town is a very pretty place and well worth a visit. It has a sturdy little 13th century cathedral and a Castle (now converted into a hotel) that dominates the town square. Dornoch is also home to a Championship golf course, Royal Dornoch. The village has a small museum and there are historical trails around the village that are punctuated with information boards.

- ✓  Recommended bar – [Dornoch Castle Hotel](#) has a very inviting lounge bar with stone walls, open fire, leather sofas and wood paneling.
- ✓ **The Dornoch Witchstone** – a curiosity that you will find in the front garden of the last house on Carnaig street in Dornoch is a memorial stone (about 2 feet high) that commemorates the spot, where in 1727, Janet Horne was burnt alive in a barrel of tar in punishment for being accused of witchcraft. She was the last woman in Scotland to be executed for alleged witchcraft. Carnaig Street is a side street off Church Street which is the signposted route to the beach and campsite.

Directions:

- i. From Golspie, head south on the A9 for ~10 miles and then take left onto the **A949** signposted to **Dornoch**. The exit is on a sweeping right hand bend and is beside a few houses.
- ii. The A949 leads right into the centre of the village where you should have no problems finding a parking spot.

10. On the **A9**, about ~14 miles south of Golspie, you cross the bridge over the Dornoch Firth.
11. 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 on your left.
 - ✓ **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. Tours need to be pre-booked. Tel: 01862 892 477 <https://www.glenmorangie.com/>
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.

SHORTER Route from Ledmore Junction to Tain via Falls of Shin:
Travel time: 1hr 30 mins / 48 miles



[View Map](#)

1. Starting from Ledmore Junction, where the **A835** meets the **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, about 1 mile 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 Invershin / **Bonar Bridge**.
3. Continue on the **A837** to the T junction with the **A836** (~7 miles).

DETOUR: to Falls of Shin - Just before the T junction with the **A836**, you pass through the village of Invershin where you can turn left onto the **B864** signposted to the **Falls of Shin**. The left turn is before the village and just before the A836 crosses a modern bridge. The car park is about 2 miles along this single-track road. There is an  excellent café at the [visitor centre](#) as well as a play park for kids. A short path descends from the road to a viewing point above the waterfalls which are a well-known spot for watching [salmon leap](#). The best time for seeing this spectacle is September – October, but you might see a few salmon from as early as mid-July. [View Map](#)

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** (~5 miles) and you arrive at another T junction. Turn right to cross the bridge and stay on the **A836**, signposted to **Tain**.

DETOUR: to [Croick Church](#) – [View Map](#)

We have suggested this rather obscure detour because Croick Churchyard was a refuge for the Highlanders who were evicted from their crofts during the Highland Clearances of Glencalvie in 1845. [Messages have been carved into the glass](#) panes of the church's east window and it is thought that these are messages that the evicted Highlanders left before deportation to the New World. It is quite a long round trip detour of ~20 miles and it will take **over an hour** to drive there and back from Ardgay. We feature Croick church [in this video](#) if you jump to 15:55.

Directions:

- i. About 1 mile after crossing Bonar bridge, you enter the small village of **Ardgay** where you find signposts for a right turn to **Croick**.
 - ii. Follow the signposts to **Croick** and you will be guided along a single-track road that brings you to the austere little Croick church (~10 miles from Ardgay).
 - iii. You can return via the same road, or you can return via the road on the south side of the river by crossing the river at the modern bridge (which is at the 2nd road on right after leaving church).
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 on your left.
 - ✓ **[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. Tel: 01862 892 477
 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:](#)
Travel time: 45 mins / 34 miles



[View Map](#)

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

DETOUR: to [Tarbat Ness Lighthouse](#) – [View Map](#)

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](#). Allow at least **75 mins** for this detour plus the walk out to the lighthouse.

Directions:

- i. About 2 miles south of Tain on the A9, look for signs to **Portmahomack**.
 - ii. Turn left onto the **B9165** and follow the road to Portmahomack.
 - iii. When you arrive at Portmahomack, turn right to follow signs to Tarbat Ness Lighthouse. The lighthouse is ~9 miles from the A9.
 - iv. To get back to the A9, you can either retrace your route OR follow the road signs to Tain.
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**.
 - ✓ **[Fyrish Monument](#)** – Continuing on the A9 after Nigg roundabout, look to skyline of the hills on your right. If it is not too dull, you should be able to make out the silhouette of a structure that looks a bit like standing stones. This is actually the Fyrish Monument which is a replica of the Gate of Negapatam in India. The monument was built in 1782 to provide labour for the Highlanders that were being evicted from their crofts.
 - ✓ **[Storehouse of Foulis](#)** – On your left as you approach Arduillie Roundabout and the bridge over the Cromarty Firth, you can find the Storehouse of Foulis, an exhibition centre that tells you all about life at the end of the 18th century, about clans and about the wildlife of the area. There is also a good farm shop and tearoom which serves homemade cakes, bread and soups. Open Monday to Saturday 9 am to 5 pm / Closed on Sundays.

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

DETOUR: to Strathpeffer – [View Map](#)

We suggest a trip to Strathpeffer, a typical Victorian Spa resort with a village centre that hasn't changed much since the late 1800's. Victorian houses and hotels are clustered around the Spa Pavilion, which used to be where treatments were performed. You can visit a small museum in one of the old pumping houses and, if you dare, sample from a choice of foul-tasting mineral water from local springs.

Strathpeffer is also home to the "[Eagle Stone](#)" which has an interesting legend. The stone is said to have been erected on the spot where a battle between two clans took place, and it was placed there by the victors in memory of their brave opponents. The other good story with the Eagle Stone concerns a 17th century prophecy that says the valley will be flooded and ships will moor by the stone should the stone fall over 3 times! The stone is now set in cement, just to be safe!

Directions: *Travel time: ~30 mins / 22 miles*

- i. From **Ardullie roundabout** take the 2nd exit for the **A862** into Dingwall.
 - ii. After passing the supermarket in Dingwall, you arrive at traffic lights where you turn right onto the **A834** signposted to Strathpeffer and Ullapool.
 - iii. Strathpeffer is 3 miles down that road.
 - iv. To return to Inverness continue on the **A834**, descending the hill into Contin.
 - v. 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.
 - ✓ **Leakey's Second Hand Bookshop** - Located in an old church building on Church Street, which is the street that runs between the main Academy Street (B865) and Bank Street (the street beside the river). This is claimed to be the largest secondhand bookshop in Scotland, and it is a lovely place to relax with a book on a wet day.
 - ✓ **Old High Kirk** – located at the north end of Church Street in Inverness, and near Leakey's Bookshop. It is easy to miss this as it is accessed via a flight of steps on Church Street. The church that you see today dates from the 1770's but a church has stood here since the 12th century and the graveyard retains some old tombstones. An information board explains the role of the church as a place for holding Jacobite prisoners after Culloden. The information board also gives you directions to find the gravestones that were used for the execution of prisoners. Sadly, it is also a place that some people use as a drinking spot so you might find cans littering the graveyard.
<https://www.oldhighstephens.com/>

If going via Falls of Shin, Dunrobin Castle and Dornoch, a possible schedule for today would be:

- 09:00 Depart Ullapool (or Kylesku)
- 09:30 Arrive at Ledmore Junction and start to follow the **Longer route** option going via Dunrobin Castle as detailed on **Page 45 - 46**.
- 10:30 Arrive **Falls of Shin** and maybe follow the [woodland trail](#) here.
- 11:30 Depart Falls of Shin to head to Dunrobin Castle
- 12:10 Arrive **Dunrobin Castle** – you could get a light lunch in the castle tearoom
Falconry display takes place in the castle gardens at 2:30pm,
- 15:00 Depart Dunrobin Castle to head to the pretty village of **Dornoch**.
- 15:20 Arrive Dornoch
- 16:30 Depart Dornoch
- 17:30 Arrive **Inverness**

If going via Falls of Shin, Croick Church and Glenmorangie, a possible schedule for today would be:

- 09:00 Depart Ullapool (or Kylesku)
- 09:30 Arrive at Ledmore Junction and start to follow the **Shorter route** option detailed on **Page 46 - 47**.
- 10:20 Arrive **Falls of Shin** and maybe follow the [woodland trail](#) here.
- 11:20 Depart Falls of Shin
- 11:30 Arrive at Ardgay where you can start on the detour to **Croick Church** (a round trip of ~ 1 – 1.5 hrs). [We feature Croick Church in this YouTube video, skip to 16 mins in.](#)
- 12:30 Arrive back at Ardgay and head to Glenmorangie Distillery
- 12:45 Arrive at **Glenmorangie Distillery** to join the 13:00 “Original Tour”. You ought to [pre-book](#) this via the distillery website.
- 14:00 Depart Glenmorangie – if you are desperate for lunch you could head into Tain, but we are suggesting you drive a bit further down the road for this.
- 14:30 Arrive at [Storehouse of Foulis](#) where you can get a late lunch. They do excellent cakes.
- 15:00 Depart Storehouse of Foulis
- 15:30 Arrive **Inverness**, or follow our directions for a tour to the pretty village of **Cromarty** on the Black Isle.

Haste ye back!!

GPS INFORMATION:

We have driven all the routes that feature in our guides, and we take careful notes of signposts, junction layouts and landmarks to create detailed driving directions. We have strived to make the directions as accurate as possible, but the layout of some road junctions may have been changed since our last update.

We prefer not use GPS systems for directions as they tend to guide you via the mains roads that often bypass places of beauty and interest. The main roads can also be much busier with traffic, but we understand that you may wish the security of having GPS to back up our directions. For this reason, we have provided the following list of tourist attractions and their postcodes. Please note that GPS systems aren't always accurate enough in the more rural areas so you can't rely on them 100%

Abbotsford House	TD6 9BQ	Dalwhinnie Distillery	PH19 1AB
Aberdeen Maritime Museum	AB11 5BY	Deep Sea World	KY11 1JR
Aberlour Distillery	AB38 9PJ	Dewar's World of Whisky	PH15 2EB
Alford Valley Railway	AB33 8XX	Dirleton Castle	EH39 5ER
Archaeolink Prehistoric Park	AB52 6QP	Discovery Point	DD1 4XA
Ardbeg Distillery	PA42 7EA	Doune Castle	FK16 6EA
Arduaine Gardens	PA34 4XQ	Drum Castle	AB31 5EY
Armadale Castle	IV45 8RS	Dryburgh Abbey	TD6 0RQ
Arran Brewery	KA27 8BD	Duart Castle	PA64 6AP
Auchindrain Township	PA32 8XN	Dundrennan Abbey	DG6 4QH
Balmoral Castle	AB35 5TB	Dunkeld Cathedral	PH8 0UW
Baxters Highland Village	IV32 7LD	Dunnottar Castle	56.946,-2.196
Benmore Botanic Gardens	PA23 8QU	Dunrobin Castle	KW10 6SF
Black Watch Museum	PH1 5HR	Dunstaffnage Castle	PA37 1PZ
Blackness Castle	EH49 7NH	Dunvegan Castle	IV55 8WF
Bladnoch Distillery	DG8 9AB	Duthie Park	AB11 7TH

The rest of this Index has been removed for the purpose of this Sample.

STOPOVER SHEETS

Stopover sheets included with this tour

INVERNESS AREA*

LOCHALSH AREA*

ISLE OF SKYE*

GAIRLOCH AREA*

ULLAPOOL AREA

*** (These Stopover Sheets have been removed).**

Stopover Sheet: Ullapool Area

Ullapool is one of the liveliest towns on the Northwest coast and you will almost always be able to find a pub with live music playing during the summer months. Lochinver is, by way of contrast, a place where you can go to experience the peace and quiet of the Assynt wilderness.

The village of Ullapool was developed in 1788 as a project by the British Fisheries Society who aimed to capitalise on the prolific stocks of herring in Loch Broom. As a result, the village is a neat array of wide streets of 18th century houses that run parallel to the shore front. The herring stocks started to decline in the 1830's, but fishing is still a contributor to the Ullapool economy, and you should be able to see some fishing boat activity during your visit.

Lochinver also owes its existence to fishing and it is now a more active fishing port than Ullapool. The village doesn't feel quite as quaint or homely as Ullapool as it is spread out over a wider area. However, Lochinver does have a great backdrop with the very distinctive dome of the Suilven mountain dominating the skyline when you look inland.

The best way to appreciate the scenery around Lochinver is to arrive via the single-track roads that approach along the coast from the south and north. This gives you a taste of how most of the roads in the Highlands used to be and that means very narrow and twisting in places. If you do take these roads, you will be rewarded with some of the best views of the very distinctive mountains of Stac Pollaidh, Suilven and Canisp, which emerge iceberg-like from flat expanses of moorland.

Heading a little further north will bring you to Kylesku where the A894 crosses the mouth of Loch Glencoul on a very elegant modern bridge. We don't normally get that excited by bridges, but the Kylesku bridge is almost a work of art in the way that it takes a sweeping curve whilst simultaneously spanning the channel below.

If you get to Kylesku, you will find that there is a very good restaurant and cosy bar at the Kylesku Hotel. During WWII, this hotel was a drinking den for the crews training on the midget submarines that would later be used in the attacks on the battleships "Scharnhorst" and "Tirpitz". There is a memorial to the submariners which is located in the car park on the north side of the bridge. This car park is also the best spot for taking pictures of the bridge.

Historic Sites & Castles:

- **Ardvreck Castle** – A crumbling ruin of a tower house castle on an easily accessed peninsula in Loch Assynt. There is a car park nearby on the A837. Watch out for the prolific rabbits in summer!
- **Clachtoll Broch** – an ancient, ruined dwelling house located on the road from Lochinver to Stoer. It looks like a pile of stones from far away but is an interesting place to visit in a beautiful setting. Park at the cemetery between Clachtoll and Stoer, and you can walk across open fields to the shore and then find the broch at the south end of the bay. [Click here](#) for details of an extended walk that visits the Broch.
- **Lyne Chambered Cairn** – There isn't much left of this Neolithic burial chamber, and it is easily missed despite being close to the A837. When heading north from Ullapool on the A835, you come to Ledmore Junction and turn left to join the A837 to Lochinver. About 1 mile after joining the A837, the road crosses a stream and the stones of the chambered cairn are on your right, standing about a metre high and ~15 metres from the road.

Scenic Spots:

- **Corrieshalloch Gorge** – About 8 miles south of Ullapool via the A835. This is a spectacular wooded gorge with a narrow suspension bridge crossing the river 150ft / 46m below. [Website](#)
- **Summer Isles** – A collection of small islands off the coast of Achiltibuie. The best viewpoint on the mainland is from the road that climbs out of Altandhu towards Achnahaird. Boat trips sail to the islands from Ullapool and Altandhu. [Website](#)
- **Inverpolly Nature Reserve** – A very scenic single-track road goes through the Inverpolly Nature Reserve, not suitable for long vehicles and a bit rough in places. Head north from Ullapool on A835 and, after ~9 miles, take road on left signposted to Achiltibuie.
- **Kylesku Bridge** – A great piece of modern engineering that combines form with function. The bridge was opened in 1984 and replaced the ferry service that ran for many years from the jetty in front of the Kylesku Hotel. The bridge is an elegant single span design with a curved road that sweeps across the entrance to Loch Glencoul. The best views are from the north end of the bridge. **About 1hr from Ullapool.**

- **Achmelvich Beach** – Just a few miles north of Lochinver and signposted on the B869 that leads to Stoer. Unfortunately, the popularity of the NC500 has resulted in this beach getting a bit too busy for our liking and the single track road that leads to the beach can be a pain to drive on sunny days when everyone wants to go to the beach.
- **Clachtoll Beach** – Just a few miles north of Achmelvich beach and easily accessed via a campsite on the B869. This beach is popular but doesn't get quite as busy as Achmelvich and has just as much going for it in terms of clean white sand. It is also located near the interesting "Split Rock", which is a rocky peninsula that appears to have snapped cleanly in two like the hull of a sinking ship.
- **Clashnessie Falls** – From Lochinver, follow the B869 clockwise passing through Stoer and then you arrive at the small cluster of houses beside Clashnessie Bay (~25 - 30 min drive). Park your car in the large lay-by beside the beach and walk back along the road looking on your left for the wooden sign marked "Route to Falls". It's a 15 minute walk and quite boggy in places, but you can get right up to the base of the waterfall which is like a miniature Niagara falls.
- **Loch Glencoul** - The scenery around Glencoul is some of the most beautiful to be found anywhere in Scotland. It was in this remote area that the British Navy trained the "X-craft" mini submarine crews that attacked the German battleship "Tirpitz" at its moorings in a Norwegian fjord. There is a memorial to the sailors at the north end of the Kylesku Bridge. **About 1hr from Ullapool.**
-  **Oldshoremore Beach**, near Kinlochbervie – One of the remote, but well-known beaches on the North West coast. From Rhiconich on the A838, you follow the B801 to Kinlochbervie and then take right onto a single-track road signposted to Oldshoremore. After ~2 miles, you see a signpost for a left turn to a Car Park. The sideroad then descends to a cemetery that overlooks the beach. [Full walk details here](#). **About 1.5hrs from Ullapool**
-  **Sandwood Bay** – If you don't mind a 2-hour hike, the beach at Sandwood Bay is one of the most stunning expanses of brilliant clean sand to be found anywhere in Scotland. The car park where you start the hike is just a mile or so beyond Oldshoremore. In summer, the car park can get very busy, and spaces might be limited (there is a toilet and water pipe at the car park so the campervans flock here). The path to the beach crosses bleak moorland, but is well defined and easy to follow, although you have some stepping stones to cross. Near the beach, you see the haunted ruins of Sandwood Cottage. The ghost is well documented if you want to read more. You are unlikely to have the beach to yourself, but it is so large that you'll never feel crowded. [Full walk details here](#).
- **Cape Wrath** – About 2 miles south of Durness the A838 joins the seashore and there is a road that leads to Keoldale and the small passenger ferry to the starting point for walks or bumpy minibus trips towards Cape Wrath. Something to consider if you have the time (allow 2.5 hours) and want to get into the barren wilderness. It is very remote, but there is a café at the lighthouse! **Over 2hrs from Ullapool** <http://www.visitcapewrath.com/>

Tourist Attractions & Wet Day Activities:

- **Ullapool Smokehouse** – when travelling north from Ullapool on the A835, you pass a small industrial estate (on your right) just as you leave the village. The smokehouse is located in here. You can buy their various smoked fish and cheeses from a stall that they run at the Ullapool village market, which is held in the Seaforth car park (beside the Tesco supermarket) on every Saturday from late April to September.
- **Ullapool Leisure Centre** – If it's too wet to consider anything else, the swimming pool in Ullapool is actually very good and it has dry rooms where you soak up some heat if the weather outside is Baltic.
- **Highland Stoneware** – a distinctive style of pottery that is produced in Lochinver and now Ullapool too. You might wish to visit their shops to get some holiday gifts. [Click here](#) for the website.
- **Inverewe Gardens** – famous collection of sub-tropical plants that can grow in this sheltered bay that is warmed by the Gulfstream. About 1 hr south from Ullapool on the A832.
- **Smoo Cave**, Durness – An impressively large cavern with guided tours of ~20 minutes that take you deeper into the cave network. About a 2-hour drive north from Ullapool.

Outdoor Activities: Ullapool is very much an area for the outdoors enthusiast, so if planning on staying here several nights you need to bring your hiking boots and be prepared with waterproofs.

-  **Stac Pollaidh** – One of the most distinctively shaped mountains in Scotland. Easily accessed from the road between the A835 and Achiltibuie. The ascent to the ridge between the west and east summits is a steep climb, but can be done in 80 – 90 minutes. The true summit at the west end of the ridge is more difficult to get to as there is a challenging section where rocks need to be climbed. [Click here](#) for full walk details.
-  **Clachtoll Beach and the Broch** – a short walk that takes in the sandy beach of Clachtoll and its crumbling Broch, and views across to the Atlantic Ocean. [Click here](#) for full walk details.

-  **Culag Woods** – If you have a couple of hours to kill in Lochinver, we recommend that you explore the woodland trails in the Culag Woods. There are 2 car parks accessed via the Inverkirkaig road near Lochinver Primary School. In the car parks, you can collect a leaflet with details of the various paths to follow. The community created the trails and have tried to make it appealing for children by placing features like giant spiders, wigmans, troll bridges, wishing trees etc. at various points along the trail. There are meant to be wild but friendly pigs in the woods, but we've never yet seen them. [Website](#)
-  **Achmelvich Beach and Alltan' abradhan** – this walk starts from the car park at the beach and follows the coast to an abandoned mill. The only problem with Achmelvich beach is the amount of traffic on the single-track road that leads to it. [Click here](#) for full walk details.
-  **Old Man of Stoer** – From the car park at Stoer Lighthouse, it takes ~45 mins to walk to the first viewpoint of the stack, and ~90 minutes to walk to the nearest point on the cliffs beside the sea stack. The route hugs the coastline and there is the slim possibility of spotting dolphins and whales. The path can be quite muddy in places so do wear proper hiking boots. [Click here](#) for full walk details.
- **Boat trip to the Summer Isles** – Boats sail from Ullapool www.summerqueen.co.uk and near to Altandhu www.summerisles-seatours.co.uk/.
- **Eas Coul Aulin Waterfall cruises** – Eas Coul Aulin (or “Eas a Chual Aluinn” depending on who you talk to) is 650 feet high and thus the highest waterfall in the British Isles. In summer, a ~75 min cruise departs at 10:30 12:00 and 13:30 (summer only) from the pier in front of the Kylesku Hotel ([See website](#) or call the Kylesku hotel to enquire 01971 502231).
- **Handa Island** - if you enjoy birdwatching, then you have probably heard of Handa Island, one of the largest seabird colonies in Northwest Europe and a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve. The ferry to the island departs between 09:00 – 13:30, Mon – Sat from April to start of September (weather depending). When you arrive on the island, you are met by the volunteer wildlife wardens who give you a briefing. The island has a good circular path route that you can walk in ~2 hours if you aren't stopping to watch the birds. Puffins nest here from May to July, but you can't get too close to their nests. Amazing high cliffs that are home to thousands of birds and a lovely, sheltered beach to explore whilst you wait for the return ferry. The fare is ~£20 per adult / £10 child return (under 5's free) Payment in **cash only**. The last return journey leaves the Island at 5 pm. There is a toilet on the island, but no food facilities so bring a picnic. Tel: 07780 967 800. [Watch our video about Handa Island](#) starting at 7:43

Events: Ullapool has a lively music scene in its pubs during the summer so check with the local Tourist Information office for details.

- **Ullapool Pipe Band** – Every Thursday during June to August at 7.30pm (weather permitting) the band give a performance in the car park at the harbour.
- **Gairloch Highland Gathering** – Usually last Saturday in June or first Saturday in July. A local gala day with a Ceilidh thrown in on the Friday night and a Gig on the Saturday night after the day's events. [Click here](#) for details.
- **Blas Festival** – A celebration of Gaelic Culture with music events all over the Northern Highlands. Usually held during a week in early September (2024 dates to be confirmed). See [website](#) for details.
- **Ullapool Guitar Festival** – Held on the 4th – 6th October 2024. See [website](#) for details.
- **Argyll Hotel Bar & Ferry Boat Inn** – If you visit the bars in either of these hotels, you will likely find **live music** going on in one of them on most nights from March – October. It might be anything from traditional Scottish, to Blues or Country & Western.
- **Ullapool Market** - held in the Seaforth car park from 9am – 5pm on every Saturday from late April to September.
- **Poolewe Market** – Held in the village hall at Poolewe every Tuesday 10:00 – 14:30 from last Tuesday in March – end October. Stalls selling a variety of local crafts and some food produce. About 1.5 hrs from Ullapool.
- **Scourie Craft Market** – Held in the village hall (at south end of village) every Thursday 10am – 2:30 pm during the summer months.

Where to Eat & Drink:

[The Arch Inn](#), Ullapool IV26 2UR – Our favourite place in the village and always our first choice. The Arch Inn has traded as an Inn since the 1800's and stands on the seafront of Ullapool, a few hundred yards after passing the pier. **Tables can't be pre-booked for dinner so it is wise to go early** in order to get a table as after 7pm you will almost certainly have to wait your turn. The bar is also a frequent venue for [live music](#). Tel: 01854 612454

[Ceilidh Place](#), Ullapool IV26 2TY – The restaurant has won awards in the past, but we feel that standards have slipped a bit recently. The service can be a bit hit and miss (that said it does get very busy) and the prices are quite expensive. Still worth a shot if you can get a table at the Arch Inn which is nearby. On the plus side, it has a nice open bar area where you often get **live music** at weekends. Tel: 01854 612103

The Chippy, Ullapool – Award winning fish & chip shop in town centre beside the Seaforth Inn.

[Seaforth Inn](#), Ullapool – Located in the town centre next to “The Chippy”. If you can't get into the Arch Inn and don't want to walk as far as the Mariners at the Morefield Hotel, we'd recommend that you try the Seaforth. It used to be more of a pub that did food but has now become much more focused on being a restaurant. Tel: 01854 612122

[Peet's Restaurant](#), Lochinver – Located near the harbour and just beside the much larger Culag Hotel. This is a popular place and in summer you need to book a table a few days in advance. The menu offers a wide choice, but the seafood is what they do best. Their seafood chowder starter is packed full of good stuff. Reasonably priced too. Our only criticism is that the décor cheapens the feel of the place a bit and the Scottish movie theme seems a bit out of place. That aside, the service is always good even though they get very busy. Best dinner option in Lochinver. Tel: 01571 844085

[An Cala Café](#), Lochinver – Located at the harbour end of the village behind the playing fields, and not far from Peet's. An Cala is a cafe that is well worthy of a mention and it also does evening meals. They serve one of the best bowls of Cullen Skink (traditional Scottish soup made with smoked haddock) that we've ever had, and they give you big chunks of homemade bread too. The décor is simple, but quite stylish in a functional minimalist way.

[Lochinver Larder](#), Lochinver IV27 4JY – Located on your right as you enter Lochinver on the A835. A less elaborate menu, than Peet's Restaurant. Has built its reputation on its pies, but they offer a menu with much more exotic options than just pies. Tel: 01571 844356

[Kylesku Hotel](#), Kylesku IV27 4HW – A great location below the Kylesku bridge and beside the old jetty for the ferry service that used to cross Loch Glencoul. The hotel has had a very stylish makeover and the new restaurant is very modern and “funky”. If booking a table in advance, it is worth asking for a window seat as the views will make your meal even more memorable. We had a great meal here in 2018, but the dinner menu has become a lot more expensive since new owners took over in 2021. Main courses start at £21 (it used to be £13). The food is good, but we feel the owners are exploiting the lack of competition with their prices. Tel: 01971 502 231

[Shore House Seafood Restaurant](#), Tarbet, near Scourie IV27 4SS – You'll only find this place if you are looking for it as it is at the end of the single-track road that leads to Tarbet and the pier where you catch the ferry to Handa Island. It is only a 10-minute detour from the A894 about 3 miles north of Scourie (23 miles south of Durness). The restaurant is a family business, and all the fish comes from their own boat. This is a real treat for seafood lovers, but the menu is exclusively seafood. Open Monday to Saturday until 7pm (Closed Sundays) from Easter to the last Saturday in September. Tel: 01971 502251 or email: eat@shorehousetarbet.co.uk

Useful to Know: This is a sparsely populated area, and you can't take facilities for granted so we've highlighted where to find some of the things that you might need.

Cash Machines –

- **Ullapool** – This is the best served village when it comes to facilities and there is a reasonable sized Tesco supermarket in the village centre where you find a cash machine.
- **Lochinver** – There is a cash machine at the village hall and inside the Spar shop near to the petrol station. However, the Spar shop shuts around 6:30pm.
- **Scourie** – There is a Spar Shop in Scourie that has a cash machine inside, and it is open from 06:30 – 19:30 most days.

Petrol Stations –

- **Ullapool** has a petrol station that you pass when you arrive / depart on the A835
- **Lochinver** has a petrol station in the village centre near the Spar shop.
- **Scourie** has an automated petrol station in the village near the Spar shop.

Laundry Facilities –

- **Ullapool** – there is a laundry near the Tesco in the middle of Ullapool. You'll see it signposted from a corner of the supermarket's car park.
- **Lochinver** – On the village seafront near the Old Bakery B&B.

