



# Secret Scotland

Last Updated: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020

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.

### 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 process. At the top of the webpage on Step 4 you are asked if you’ve “Got a promotional code”. You just click on that and enter the “?????” 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](#).

There is also the “**No.11 A**” JET bus service which runs between Inverness and Nairn via the Airport. From the airport to Inverness is a journey time of ~25 mins. [Click here](#) to view the 11A bus times (Page 33 in the timetable).

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:** Consult our Stopover Sheet for **Inverness and Black Isle** (See [Page 52](#)) 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.

From late June to early September, Inverness Pipe Band puts on a performance each Tuesday night on Inverness High Street (near the MacDonalds) from around 8pm – 8:30pm.

# Inverness Town Centre Map:

A9 North:  
Kessock Bridge  
Wick  
Black Isle

Longman  
Roundabout

Arnold Clark  
Rental Garage  
47 Harbour Rd,  
Tel: 01463 236200

Clachnaharry  
Inn

A862  
Beauly

A96 to  
Airport

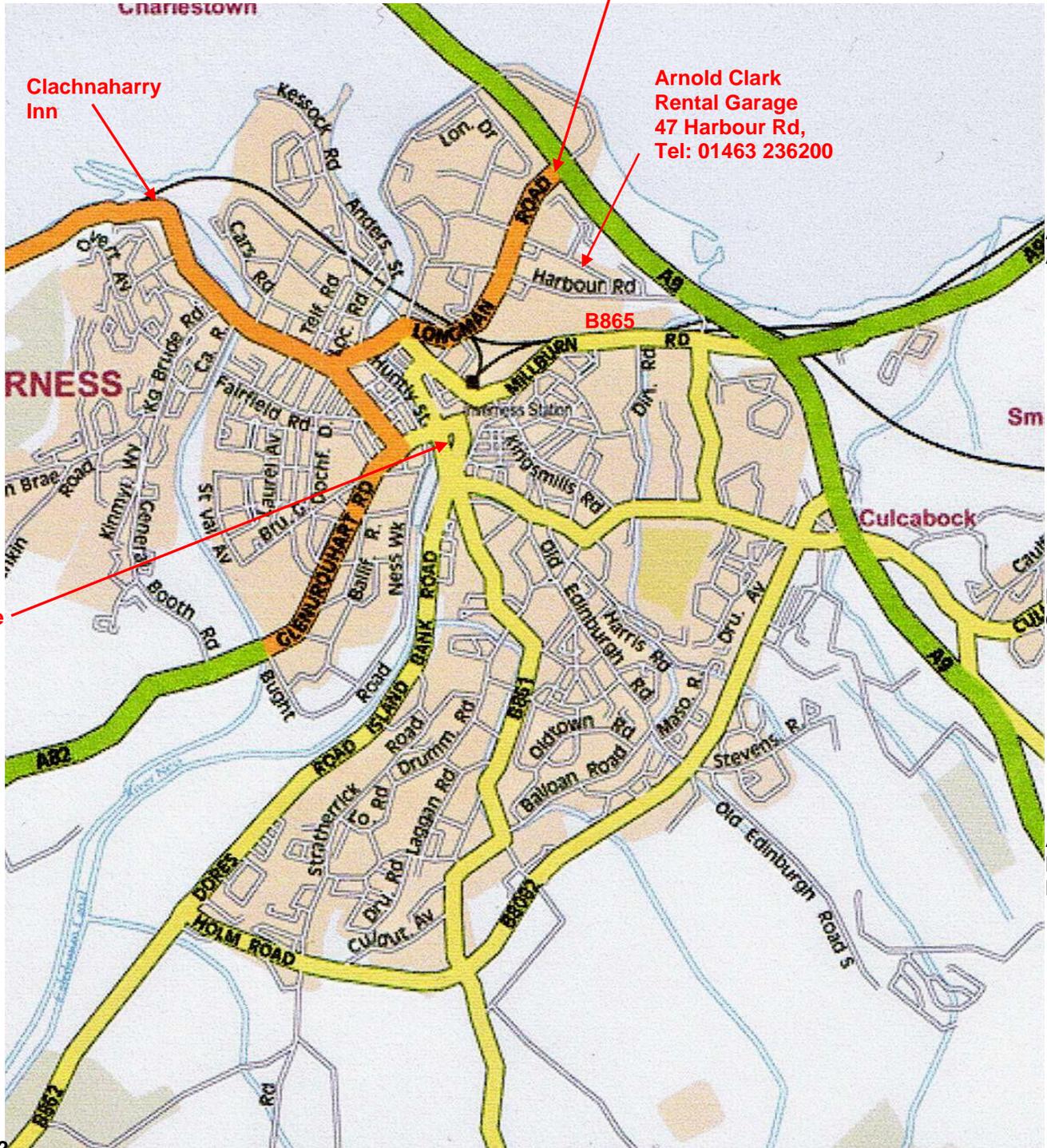
Castle

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 call or email the contacts below:

Tel: +44 (0)1343 545111, or [Book Online](#)

**Oct – Mar:** Mon - Fri (excluding Christmas and New Year) 10am – 4pm (last tour 3pm)

**Apr – Sep:** Mon - Sat 9.30am – 5pm (last tour 3.30pm). Open Sundays Jun - Aug 10am – 5pm (last tour 3:30pm)

- **Benromach "Classic" Tour** - £8 per person and includes a tour of the distillery, followed by a dram of Benromach 10 Years Old. Duration ~1 hour and doesn't need to be pre-booked (10:30, 12:00, 13:30, 15:00)
- **Benromach "Contrast" Tour** - £20 per person. A more in-depth tour followed by a tutored tasting. Duration ~1.5 hours. **Pre-booking advised.** April to September, tours run Daily at 10:00, 12:00 and 14:00.

During October to March tours are only available on Mondays to Fridays and need to be pre-arranged.



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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
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.
    - ✓ **Recommended Pub - Cawdor Tavern** is a nice quiet pub / restaurant in the middle of the village.
  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 16<sup>th</sup> century Tower House full of art and antiques, lived in by the Brodie family until the late 20<sup>th</sup> 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.
  - ✓ The town of Forres is now by-passed by the A96, but it has an attractive town centre of Georgian and Victorian buildings and is 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.
  - ✓ **Peppermill Restaurant** – On the High Street of Forres and just opposite the graveyard of St Laurence Church. Menu is good for lunchtime snacks and they do a very good steak.
  - ✓ **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.
14. The B9011 arrives at a roundabout on the A96. At this roundabout, take the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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**

### [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 with a Buccaneer jet bomber parked outside. These aircraft used to operate from the nearby air base at RAF Lossiemouth.
  - ✓ **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.
3. Follow the A941 to **Lossiemouth**. From the centre of Lossiemouth, you drive west along the main street following the **B9040** that leads to **Burghead**.
  - ✓ **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.

4. On the **B9040**, about 5 miles after Lossiemouth, you will pass the B9012 side road where you could take a left turn for a 4 mile detour to visit **Duffus Castle**.
  - ✓ **Duffus Castle** - The castle is about a mile south east of the village 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](#).
5. The B9040 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. We've had reports that the owner is rather surly and can be rude to guests, but it is still worth a visit as this is 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**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**
- 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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.
  - ✓ **Johnstons of Elgin** – Woollen Mill and visitor centre is near 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. 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.
  - ✓ **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 south east 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**. The road to Fort George is well signposted from the A96. The Fort is at the end of the road that takes you to Ardersier.
- 17:35** 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.

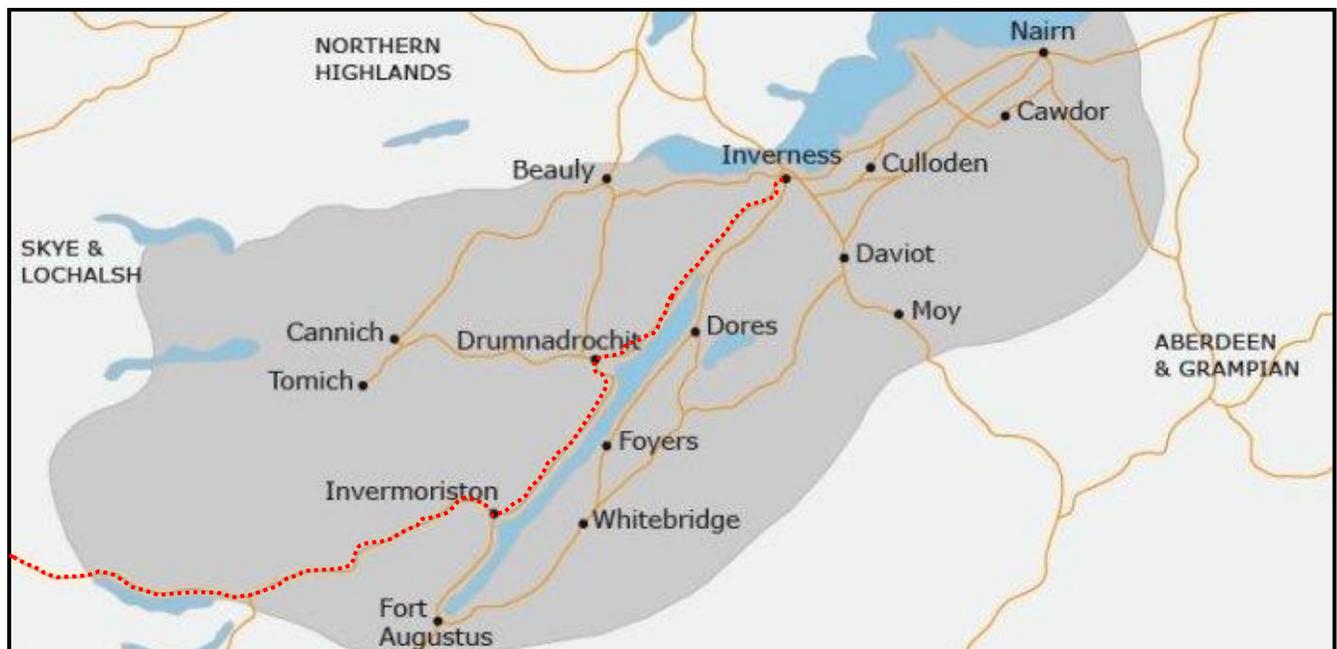
From Invermoriston the road climbs through Glen Moriston to Loch Cluanie before descending through Glen Shiel to the shores of Loch Duich where you will see the iconic **Eilean Donan Castle**. The castle is a must for a photo stop, however, most of the castle is a re-construction from the 1930's and you don't get to see a lot of the original 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**. You can [watch our video](#) for more about this.

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**.
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”.
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.
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 start from the Tomnahurich Bridge on the outskirts of Inverness. It is a white painted metal swing bridge where the A82 crosses the Caledonian Canal. A range of cruises lasting from 1 hour to 6.5 hours.
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”** – the first attraction about Nessie. A bit poor 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 Booking office near the “Nessieland” Exhibition at Drumnadrochit. They only take 12 passengers at a time so it is wise to pre-book a space: [www.lochness-cruises.com](http://www.lochness-cruises.com)
  - ✓ **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. Take first right after crossing the bridge and right again at the Hoseasons Chalets and you can get onto the old bridge.
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 (Petrol Station)**. 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** – instead of visiting the touristy café at the castle, follow the A87 across the causeway towards Skye. After crossing the bridge, look for a left turn to Ardelve. Drive along this side road and you come to the quirky bakery with its cute wee “fairytale” houses.

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.

**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

- 📍 **Waterside Restaurant** (Lochalsh) – A small seafood restaurant located in the old waiting rooms of the train station (down beside the harbour) in Kyle of Lochalsh. Tel: 01599 534813
- 📍 **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 the modern building on your left. We recommend the Cullen Skink soup. Open: 10 - 5 Mon – Fri / 11 – 4 on 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 very small village with one shop and not many tourist facilities other than [sealife cruises](#) from the pier. There are, however, some dramatic views of the Cuillin Hills from here. About 15 miles from the A87.
  - ✓ The road to Elgol passes the ruins of **Cil Chriosd** (Christ's Church) a picturesque little 16<sup>th</sup> century church and graveyard that stand on a small rise of land beside the road.
  - ✓ 🚶 **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.

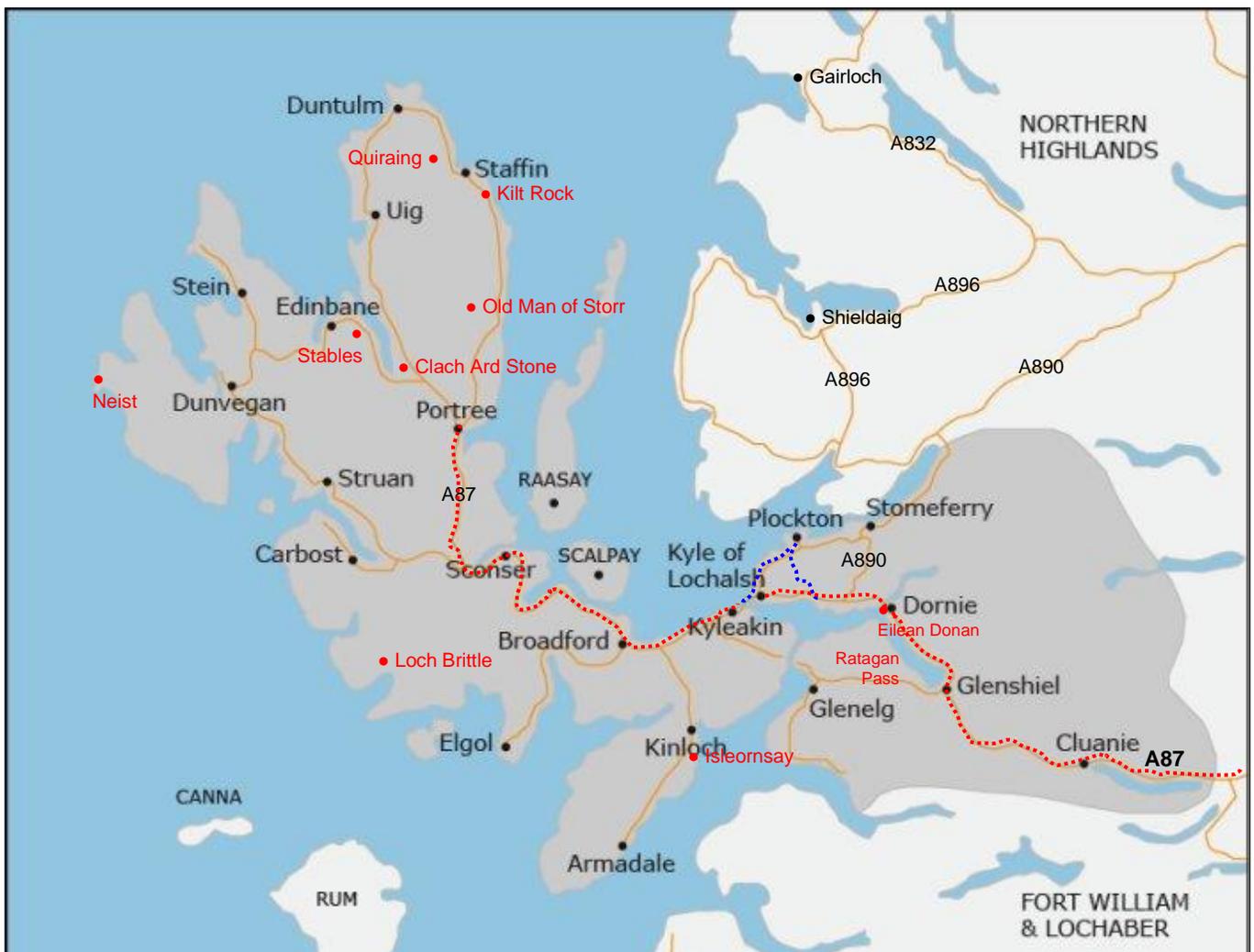
## ENTERTAINMENT:

If you stay in the Lochalsh area, you should head to the [Plockton Inn](#) on a **Tuesday & Thursday night** as that usually is a live music night in the bar.

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
- 11:20** Arrive at **Eilean Donan Castle** and stop for a tour of the castle
- 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 - 26
• Alternative Day Trip around Loch Alsh	27 - 28
Day 3 – Skye Bridge / Plockton to Gairloch	29 - 34
Gairloch Day Trip Options	
• Day trip 1: Hillwalking around Gairloch	35
• Day trip 2: Fishing Boat Experience	36

# DAY 4: Gairloch to Ullapool & Inverpollaidh

We have planned a gentle day's driving along a route with some great beaches. If the weather is good you might want to pack some food for a picnic.

Some of the highlight beaches in this area are:

- **Redpoint Beach** – this is located to the south of Gairloch and is at the very end of the B8056 side road that is signposted to Badachro. The road is single track and quite twisty in places so it is quite a slow drive to get to this beach. At the end of the road there is a car park where you can pick up paths that weave through sand dunes to the large expanse of pink coloured beach at Redpoint. You'll almost certainly have the beach all to yourselves.
- **Big Sand Beach** – the clue is in the name. This is an easy to access beach and it has a campsite just behind it. Consequently, this is a beach that you'll have to share with others, but it is never going to feel crowded. From the Hillbillies Café / Bookshop in Gairloch, you just drive north along the B8021 until you come to the campsite. From there, you can easily find the way down to the beach.
- **Mellon Udrigle** – probably our favourite beach in this area, far enough off the main road to feel secluded, but close enough for easy access. Lovely white sands and great views across the sea towards the mountains of Inverpollaidh, where you are heading today.
- **Gruinard Bay** – by far the easiest beach to access as the A832 curves around it. Gruinard bay is also the most sheltered of these beaches as it nestles between 2 headlands.

Ullapool is a great place to stay as it is quite a vibrant and photogenic little village. It was established as a fishing village in 1788 to capitalise on the abundant herring stocks in Loch Broom. Consequently the houses are clustered together as the inhabitants made their living from the sea and did not need land for farming. As you might expect from a community built on the fishing industry, Ullapool has an award winning Fish & Chip shop. In summer there is sometimes a stall that sells freshly prepared seafood, so you can have some take away Oysters.

From Ullapool, you could make a day trip around the Inverpollaidh Nature Reserve as detailed on [Page 40 – 42](#). You could also consider a half day climbing Stac Pollaidh mountain or a longer day trip to explore Handa Island. For more ideas, you might wish to [watch a video](#) that we did about the attractions in this area



## A possible schedule for today would be:

- 09:30 Arrive Inverewe Gardens (open at 09:30)
- 10:40 Depart the Gardens (Ideally, we'd suggest that you allow ~2 hrs here)
- 11:00 Arrive at Mellon Udrigle Beach, if you want to extend the time here, you can [follow a path](#) around the Rudha Beag headland. We assume you just stop for a wander on the beach and some photos.
- 11:15 Depart Mellon Udrigle
- 11:30 Arrive at car park for Gruinard Bay, we aren't scheduling a stop here this time
- 12:00 Arrive at Corrieshalloch Gorge and take walk down to the viewpoints above the waterfall.
- 12:45 Depart Corrieshalloch Gorge
- 13:00 Arrive Ullapool and get lunch... maybe try Fish & Chips from the award winning chip shop near the Seaforth Inn, or if the weather isn't good for eating outside you can head to the Arch Inn on the seafront.
- 14:00 Depart Ullapool to start on a tour of the Inverpolly Nature reserve as detailed on [Page 40 - 42](#)
- 14:25 You should be passing the starting point for hikes up the unusual little mountain of Stac Pollaidh. [Click here](#) for details of this climb.
- We assume that you don't do this hike, but instead continue to follow the directions for the drive up to Lochinver
- 15:15 Arrive at Lochinver – you might wish to stop in Lochinver to visit the [Highland Stoneware Pottery](#) or to take a short in the Culag Woods or visit the Kirkaig Falls just south of Lochinver village centre.
- 16:30 Depart Lochinver
- Lochinver direct to Ullapool via the A837 / A835 is just under an hour of driving.
- Alternatively, you could end the day in Kylesku and stay in the Kylesku Hotel which is located just beside the attractive modern road bridge that sweeps through a bend as it crosses the mouth of Loch Glendhu. Lochinver to Kylesku via the A837 / A894 is ~30 mins

### [Route from Gairloch to Ullapool:](#) Travel time: 1 hr 45 mins / 55 miles



[View Map](#)

1. From the McColl's shop near the T junction of the **B8021** and the **A832**. Head north on the **A832** following signposts to **Poolewe**. Great views of Loch Maree to your right as you start to descend towards Poolewe.
  - ✓ **Poolewe Market – Every Tuesday** 10 – 2:30 from March – October in the village hall.
  - ✓ **Firemore Beach** - If you want an empty beach that is easily accessed, you can drive up to Poolewe and then take left onto the B8057 which goes into the village. Follow the B8057 for ~5 miles and you come to Firemore Beach (about 1 mile after Inverasdale).
2. Continue on the **A832** to Poolewe (~6 miles). Just after Poolewe you see signposts to the Inverewe Gardens, which are on your left.
  - ✓ **Inverewe Gardens** – recommended for a visit even if you aren't a keen gardener. The Gulf Stream provides Inverewe with an exceptionally mild climate all year round and this enables tropical plants to survive at a latitude where normally such plants would die. This is an idyllic spot on a sunny day and a popular tourist attraction. Despite the popularity of the gardens in summer, it is still possible to find a quiet corner.
3. Continue north on the **A832**. This is quite a twisty section of road. There are the remains of several WW2 gun emplacements in this area as Loch Ewe was a base for Arctic shipping convoys. After ~5.5 miles, the A832 passes the exit for **Aultbea** village.
4. Continue on the **A832**, and the road arrives at the small village of **Laide** (~14 miles from Gairloch).
  - 👁 **Mellon Udrigle Beach** – this is one of the best beaches in the area for its clean sands and views to the mountains of Inverpolly. [View Map](#)  
**Directions:** In Laide, just before the petrol station, there is a small road on the left that leads to Mellon Udrigle. Follow the road and you come to the beach after 10 mins / 3 miles. The beach is accessed by going through the campsite. From here, you can follow a gentle 3 mile [coastal path](#).

5. Continue on the **A832** and the road climbs uphill out of Laide.
  - ✓ **Gruinard Island** – the island that you can see on your left is Gruinard Island, which was used during WWII for the testing of the biological weapon “Anthrax” on sheep. The island was contaminated with the virus and kept under quarantine from 1942 until 1990.
6. About 4 miles after Laide, the **A832** emerges above the beach at Gruinard Bay, before making a long descent back down to the seashore.
  - ✓ **Gruinard Bay Beach** – wide open sands and great photo opportunities. There is a car park on the right-hand side of the road and access to the beach is very easy from here.
7. From Gruinard Bay, the **A832** climbs inland and soon rejoins the coast at Little Loch Broom.
  - ✓  **Ardessie Falls** – About 8.5 miles after Gruinard beach, this waterfall is near the A832 but the start of the path is hard to find. Park in a lay-by on your right that is beside a large modern metal shed (painted dark brown). From the lay-by walk east and the path starts on right just after crossing bridge. [Click here](#) for path details.
8. About 15 miles after Laide, the **A832** arrives at **Dundonnell** where there is not much other than a hotel.
9. After Dundonnell, the **A832** passes through the picturesque gorge at Dundonnell Forest. Following the climb up through Dundonnell Forest, there is a fast section of open road that crosses empty moors with great views of the Sgurr Breac / A' Chailleach mountain ridge to the south west. A'Chailleach is Gaelic for “The Old Woman”.
10. The A832 then makes a long fast descent to the Corrieshalloch Gorge (~13 miles after Dundonnell).
  - ✓  **Corrieshalloch Gorge & Falls of Measach** – Just before the A832 joins with the A835, you come to the Corrieshalloch Gorge. The big appeal of Corrieshalloch Gorge is the narrow suspension bridge and viewing platform that hang 45 metres above the Falls of Measach waterfall. The bouncy suspension bridge gives you a dramatic viewpoint, but it is not for vertigo sufferers. There is a Pay & Display car park and a steep path down to the bridge over the Gorge.
11. Continue on the A832 to the T junction with the A835. Turn left onto the **A835** signposted to **Ullapool**.
12. Continue on the **A835** and arrive in **Ullapool** (~12 miles from Corrieshalloch Gorge)
  - ✓ [Ullapool Market](#) Held on Saturdays in the village centre 9am – 5pm / Apr – Sep.
  - ✓  Recommended takeaway: the **Chippy**, voted best fish and chips shop in Britain 2005
  - ✓  Recommended restaurant: [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. Tel: 01854 612454

The [Recommended Accommodation](#) for tonight is in Ullapool or the quieter Lochinver area. **Accommodation is booked up early during the Loopallu festival which is held on the last weekend of September.**

The pubs in Ullapool all seem to be busy in summer and there is often [live music at the Arch Inn](#) and the [Ceilidh Place](#).

**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.

**If you plan to spend 2 nights in the Ullapool area, you can use the route on [Pages 40 - 42](#) as a guide for spending a full day touring around the Inverpolly Nature Reserve.**

## [DIRECT Route from Ullapool to Lochinver:](#)

**Travel time: 55 mins / 36 miles**

To get to Lochinver follow the **A835** north for ~17 miles until it meets the A837 at Ledmore Junction. At the T junction, turn left to follow the **A837** into **Lochinver**.

## [SCENIC Route from Ullapool to Lochinver via Inverpolly Nature Reserve:](#)

[View Map](#)

**Travel time: 1 hr 15 mins / 30 miles**

🚫 **Avoid this route if you are not happy with driving on single track roads.**

1. Starting from Ullapool, head north on the **A835**.
2. About 9 miles after Ullapool, turn left onto the road that is signposted with a brown sign to **Achiltibuie & Summer Isles**. This is a narrow and twisting road not suitable for caravans or camper vans.
  - ✓  **Stac Pollaidh** (613m) & **Cul Beag** (769m) – these dramatic mountains and their neighbours Cul Mor (849m) and the distant Suilven (731m) were formed when the older and softer Red Torridonian sandstone was forced up by younger harder rocks passing under them at a fault line known as the Moine Thrust. The exposed sandstone was then eroded to leave the distinctive pillar mountains that we see today. Stac Pollaidh is the peak that you appear to be driving towards and Cul Beag is on your right. Footpaths start from the car park that you pass. Stac Pollaidh is an excellent hike with a good path and you can reach the ridge within 75 – 90 mins, but reaching the highest point on the western summit is scary as it involves climbing over a “tower” with sharp drops on either side. [Click Here](#) for details of the path.
3. Continue to follow this road for ~8 miles and you come to a road junction, with a red letter box, where you turn right to follow signposts to **Lochinver**.

**DETOUR: To Althan Dubh & Summer Isles – [View Map](#) - About 45 minutes driving time.** 

- i. Continuing straight on at the letter box, you come to a T junction after ~3.5 miles. At this junction turn right following signposts to **Altan Dubh**.*
  - ✓ **Achnahaird Bay** – As you approach the T junction you can see the sands of Achnahaird beach on your right. Soon after turning right you can find the start of a path that leads down to a car park by the beach.
  - ii. Approximately 3 miles after the junction, the road starts to descend into Altan Dubh and you have good views across to the Summer Isles.*
  - iii. Continue into Altan Dubh and bear left to follow the road through the village.*
    - ✓  **Fuaran Bar** – A cosy pub in an old cattle byre. On your left, look out for the signs that indicate the bar. Food served too.
    - ✓ **Summer Isles Cruises** – 3 miles after the Fuaran Bar, the road passes signposts for the small ferry boat that takes visitors on short cruises to the Summer Isles. There is a small beach near the ferry which is a nice (but often popular) spot for a picnic. More details at their website <http://www.summerisles-seatours.co.uk/>
  - iv. At the next T junction turn left to follow signposts to Lochinver.*
  - v. After 2 miles turn right onto the road signposted to Ullapool. Follow this road back to the junction with the red letter box that you passed earlier and either*

**A) turn left to follow signs to Lochinver,**

**OR**

**B) go straight ahead to retrace your route back to Ullapool.**

4. Following the signposts to **Lochinver** and you head north. This next section of road passes through some attractive woodland of Rowan, Hazel and Birch trees.
5. After crossing a metal bridge, you come to a sort of “Y” junction where you bear right. The next 2 miles of the road are narrow and should be driven with care.

6. As the road approaches **Lochinver** it widens from single track to a 2-way road and then arrives at a T junction.
  - ✓ **Culag Woods** (~ ½ mile before the T Junction) – If you have time to kill in Lochinver, you can explore the woodland trails in the Culag Woods. There are 2 car parks on your left, one before and one after Lochinver Primary School (which stands on your right beside a loch). In the car parks, you can collect a leaflet with details of the various paths to follow. Good trails for children.
7. At the T junction, turn right onto the **A837** and enter **Lochinver**.
  - ✓ **An Cala Café** - Located to the left of the T junction near the harbour. It is the white building behind the playing field. A modern café that does an excellent bowl of Cullen Skink soup, which is a traditional Scottish soup made with smoked haddock.
  - ✓ **Peet's Restaurant**, Located near the harbour and just beside the much larger Culag Hotel. The menu offers a wide choice, but seafood is what they do best. Their seafood chowder starter is packed full of good stuff. Reasonably priced. Best dinner option in Lochinver. Tel: 01571 844085
  - ✓ **Highland Stoneware Pottery** – Drive through Lochinver on the A837 and then take the road on your left that crosses a bridge and is signposted to Baddidarach. There are signposts to the pottery which is a good place to find a wide variety of gifts.
  - ✓ **Achmelvich Beach** – 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. **Directions:** drive out of Lochinver on the **A837**, and then take the **B869** on left. Achmelvich beach is signposted from the **B869**, approximately 15 mins / 3 miles from Lochinver.

[Direct Route from Lochinver to Ullapool:](#)  
 Travel time: 55 mins / 36 miles



[View Map](#)

1. From **Lochinver** take the **A837** inland. As you drive inland from Lochinver you should be able to see the range of mountains that form a wall of rock called the “Quinag” (pronounced like “Coon – Ack”).
2. On the A837, about 10 miles after leaving Lochinver, you pass the start of the A894 which leads north to Kylesku

**DETOUR: to Kylesku –**



[View Map](#)

About 10 miles from Lochinver and a short distance before the ruins of Ardvreck Castle, you can take a left turn onto the A894 which is signposted Kylesku, Scourie.

**After 7 miles** you arrive at the Kylesku Bridge. Just before the bridge, turn right to drive down a hill and into the village of Kylesku.

- ✓ **Kylesku Bridge** – This is a really beautiful piece of graceful engineering and the sweeping arch of the bridge has been a popular subject for photographers since it was built in 1984. The best viewpoint of the bridge is from the lay-by on the north side.
  - ✓ **Kylesku Hotel** – This small hotel beside the pier where the old ferry service landed is a favourite of ours. The hotel has a nice bar that serves a great bar menu at reasonable prices. Sadly, most of the staff aren't local so they can't tell you much history about the area. It is also a place that we would recommend you to consider staying the night in.
  - ✓ **Loch Glencoul** - The scenery around Glencoul is some of the most beautiful to be found anywhere in Scotland. It was in this remote area in World War 2 that the crews of the “X-craft” mini submarines were trained to attack the German battleship “Tirpitz” in Norway.
  - ✓ **Eas Coul Aulin Waterfall** – 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. Not visible from Kylesku, but in summer, a ~2 hr cruise departs at 11:00, 13:00 (June – August) from the pier opposite the Kylesku Hotel ([See website](#) or call the Kylesku hotel to enquire 01971 502231). **Only sails at 11am during April, May, September.**
3. Continue on the **A837** as it follows the shores of Loch Assynt.
    - ✓ **Loch Assynt** and **Ardvreck Castle** – The castle, which dates from around 1490, stands on a peninsula in the Loch. It is easily accessible by path (a bit muddy in places) from the nearby car park. There is not much to see other than ruins, but if you are a photographer then this castle and the views from the island provide some dramatic images.

4. Continue on the A837 and, ~18 miles after Lochinver, you arrive at **Ledmore Junction** where you turn right to take the **A835** signposted to **Ullapool**.
  - ✓ **Knockan Crag Visitor Centre** – about 5 miles after Ledmore Junction. Stop here for a visit if you want to understand how the geology of the region formed. Not the most exciting visitor attraction and it's a cold place on windy days as the visitor centre is a sort of circular stone shelter.
5. Follow the **A837** back to **Ullapool**.

**If doing the drive around Inverpolly as a day trip, a possible schedule would be:**

- 09:00 Depart Ullapool to start on a tour of the **Inverpolly Nature reserve** as detailed on **Pages 40 – 42**
- 09:30 You should be passing the starting point for hikes up the unusual little mountain of **Stac Pollaidh**. [Click here](#) for details of this climb. The ascent & descent to the mountain's ridge takes ~ 3hrs if you include time for a picnic at the summit. [Watch our video](#) for some shots on Stac Pollaidh
- Actually, the true summit of Stac Pollaidh is very difficult to climb to as the ridge to the highest point (at the west end of the ridge) is blocked by a rocky outcrop with sharp drops on either side. The clamber over this outcrop makes the ascent of the summit one of the most challenging climbs in Scotland and you shouldn't attempt it unless you are confident in your rock-climbing abilities.
- The slightly lower eastern summit of the ridge is quiet easy to access and gives you great views.
- 12:00 We assume you don't linger long at the summit so you should be back at your car around Noon and ready to set off on the drive to Lochinver where you can get some lunch.
- 13:00 Arrive at **Lochinver** – and get some lunch at the An Cala Café or [Peet's Restaurant](#).
- Whilst in Lochinver to visit the [Highland Stoneware Pottery](#) or explore the forest trails in the [Culag Woods](#) which you pass as you enter Lochinver from the south.
- If you are driving direct from Lochinver to Ullapool via the A837 / A835, it will only take 1 hour to cover the 37 miles so you could spend a relaxed afternoon around Lochinver.
- 14:00 **If you want to extend this day trip** and don't mind driving on challenging single track roads, you can do the **B869** road that heads north from Lochinver through Assynt to Kylesku. [See more about this area in our video](#).
- This schedule assumes you follow the B869 to Kylesku and then travel south to Ullapool.**
- The drive from Lochinver to Kylesku via the B869 is ~24 miles, but it takes ~75 mins due to the number of blind bends. The road is also part of the NC500 route so it is busy with slow campervans.
- About 2 miles along the B869, you arrive at the side road that leads down to [Achmelvich Beach](#). Achmelvich beach can get very busy and the twisty narrow road to this beach is difficult to drive.
- 14:20 Arrive Clachtoll - Stay on the B869 for ~5 miles and, after some twisty hairpin descents, you come to **Clachtoll** where there is another lovely beach. When you get to Clachtoll, turn left to drive past the campsite and you arrive at a small car park where you can leave the car to take a short walk down to the beach.
- Clachtoll beach** is beside the "**Split Rock**" which is a large rock out crop that has neatly split in two. It looks a bit like a ship that has run aground and broken its back.
- 14:50 Depart Clachtoll
- 15:00 Arrive Clashnessie - From Clachtoll, the B869 heads inland and passes the start of the path to **Clashnessie Falls** (10 mins from Clachtoll) before rejoining the shore at Clashnessie Beach. The walk to the waterfalls only takes 30 mins round trip, but it is muddy in places.
- The next section of the drive has some very steep ascents and descents. If you can take your eyes off the road, you will be able to enjoy views of the Quinag ("Coon-ack") mountain ridge
- 16:20 Arrive at **Kylesku**. We suggest you cross the bridge and stop at the lay by on the north side to get some pictures. If you want to stay for dinner, there is a lovely restaurant at the [Kylesku Hotel](#).
- 16:30 Depart Kylesku. Kylesku direct to Ullapool via the A894 / A837 / A835 is ~33 miles and just under an hour of driving.
- 17:30 Arrive back at **Ullapool**

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

The removed pages covered the following sections:

Pages

Day 5 – Ullapool to Inverness

43 - 48

## 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 North West 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 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 road that approaches from the south. This route is 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 this road you will be rewarded with some of the best views of the very distinctive mountains of Inverpolly (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.
- **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.
- **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 doesn't get 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 Store 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 [Full walk details here](#). **About 2hrs from Ullapool**
-  **Sandwood Bay** – If you don't mind a 2 hour hike there and back, 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 its 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.
- **Hydroponicum Gardens**, Achiltibuie – A wide variety of plants that are grown in specialised greenhouse conditions without soil. Open Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm, Easter – end October. [Click here](#) for details.

**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 would 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, wigwams, 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.
-  **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 view point 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](http://www.summerqueen.co.uk) and near to Altandhu [www.summerisles-seatours.co.uk/](http://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 ~2 hr cruise departs at 11:00 (Apr – Sep), and 13:00 (June – Aug) from the pier opposite 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 North West Europe and a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve. The ferry to the island departs between 09:00 – 14:00, 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 ~£15 per adult / £5 child return, and 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

**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 late November but the 2021 dates were still to be confirmed at time of writing. See [website](#) for details.
- **Ullapool Guitar Festival** – Held on the 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2021. 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

**Mariners Steak Restaurant**, Ullapool IV26 2TQ – Located in the Morefield Hotel which is not the easiest place to find as it is in the middle of a housing estate in the more modern part of Ullapool. The restaurant is looking a bit tired in terms of its décor and style, but the food is very good value and they serve very good seafood. Popular with the locals so it is wise to pre-book. Tel: 01854 612161

**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

**Salt Seafood Kitchen**, Achiltibuie IV26 2YJ – Salt is the sort of place that we love to find, small, friendly, personal and run by locals who have a passion for what they do. Suzie MacGregor learnt her trade at another well known seafood restaurant in the Highlands and has applied her experience to establish a very good restaurant in a modest little "cabin" in the remote village of Achiltibuie. It is located ~ 25 miles / 45 – 50 mins drive from Ullapool. Children's menu is also available. Tel: 01854 622380

**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

**Choc-a-Latte**, near Stoer Lighthouse – After doing the walk to the Old Man of Stoer, you should make a refueling stop at this lovely and informal little café which you will pass on the road back. The café is run by a Belgian couple who have brought their love of all things chocolate to this remote corner of Scotland. The café is tiny and is located in the front room of an old croft house, but there are tables outside with great views over the Inverpollaidh hills. Open from 11am to 4pm.

**Kylesku Hotel**, Kylesku IV27 4HW – One of our favourite places. Stylish, laid-back and great food. A great scenic location near the Kylesku bridge and beside the old jetty for the ferry service that used to cross Loch Glencoul before the bridge. If booking a table in advance, it is worth asking for a window seat as the views will make your meal even more memorable. The serving staff are all very good at giving efficient, but friendly and relaxed service. Dinner main courses priced around £15 – £20, but the menu extends up to generous seafood platters for ~£35. 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](mailto: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 also 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 supermarkets car park.
- **Lochinver** – On the village seafront near the Old Bakery B&B.

