



Best of Scotland's Distilleries Tour and Island Hopping

7 Nights

April – September 2017



Summary

While oenophiles might make their way to Burgundy or Bordeaux and beer lovers head to Belgium and Germany, there is no place for whisky connoisseurs like Scotland, the center of the single malt world. This eight-day best of Scotland's distilleries and island hopping tour will take you through Scotland's whisky-producing regions, from the eastern Highlands to the western islands, while showing off some of the most magnificent scenery in the entire country.

Overview

Dates: April – September 2017

Interest: couple - group - seniors

Level of Comfort: 5/5

Minimum # of passengers: none

Maximum # of passengers: none

Prices Include

Round trip ticket to Edinburgh return from Glasgow (economy class)

Round trip transfer: airport – hotel – airport

7-night accommodation at hotel

Meal: daily breakfast

English speaking local guides

All transfers in air conditioned motor coach

Tours and excursions as per the program

Assistance of our representative in the United Kingdom

Prices Exclude

Airport taxes

Fuel surcharge

DIP surcharge \$5/ticket

Visa fees

Travel insurance

All other expenses

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Day 1: Edinburgh

Upon arrival at Edinburgh Airport, meet greet and transfer by a private car through the route formerly used by whisky smugglers and illicit distillers to the famous region of Speyside, the heart of Scotland's whisky region. Here, you'll find more single malt distilleries than anywhere else on the island, and your tour of this remarkable area begins at the Edradour Distillery, reputed to be the smallest in Scotland with a weekly production of just 18 casks of Scotch a week.

The tour will give you a glimpse at how a small-scale distiller goes about plying their trade, from smoking the peat to making the mash to turning it into the final product, and it concludes with two drams of Edradour's single malt whisky and a nosing glass for you to enjoy them to the fullest. From here you climb the Highland ridges past the elegant white façade of Blair Castle. Then it's on to the famous Dalwhinnie Distillery, the highest distillery in the country, set in the spectacular mountain scenery that rises more than 1,000 feet above sea level.

Following the fascinating tour of this one-of-a-kind facility, you'll visit the world renowned Macallan Distillery, where an informative and engaging tour awaits.

Day 2: North to the Heart of the Highlands

Leave the Speyside region and venture inland to the center of the Scottish Highlands, where the rugged and romantic scenery is sure to take your breath and steal your heart. You'll visit one of the best known of the Highland distilleries at Glen Ord, the only single malt distillery left on the Black Isle, where they produce a 12-year old single malt that won the International Wine and Spirit Competition twice, offering a delightful mix of sweet and smoky that is truly sublime.

You then travel north of the Highland capital of Inverness and on to the rustic and stolid distillery of Dalmore, established in 1839 by a trader who made his money in the burgeoning British opium trade. Dalmore produces a 12-year single malt that has a thick mouthfeel and a rich, toasty taste, filling a gorgeous bottle dominated by a silver stag head.

Day 3: Heading Out to the Inner Hebrides

Today you set out for the western islands of Scotland, where you'll witness the sensational scenery and incomparable romance of the beautiful Isle of Skye. Head to the island's north to catch glimpses of some of the most dramatic geological formations in the country, including the craggy rise of The Storr, the longest landslip in Great Britain, and the otherworldly surroundings of the nearby Sanctuary, where you'll find the powerful monolith known as The Old Man of Storr. This craggy rock is best observed when approaching The Storr from the south.

After taking in this incredible landscape, you'll visit the only distillery on the Isle of Skye at Talisker, where the single malt is filled with peatiness almost unseen outside of the whiskies of Islay, caused by the high phenol level of the malt and the peaty flavor of the water used to produce the whisky. The taste is truly explosive and unforgettable, and its quality is attested by the fact that a Talisker 18-year old won "Best Single Malt in the World" at the 2007 World Whiskies Awards. After a visit to this famous whisky maker, you'll take in the dramatic rise of Dunvegan Castle, the seat of the chief of Clan MacLeod and the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland.

Day 4: Memorials to Famous Scots and the Country's Tallest Mountain

The day begins onboard a ferry, taking you from the Isle of Skye to Mallaig on the west coast of the Highlands. Once you arrive on the mainland, you'll board the renowned Jacobite Steam Train that takes you through scenery so breathtaking and picturesque, it was used by Warner Brothers for the real-life envisioning of the Hogwarts Express in the Harry Potter films. You'll wind your way through some of the most beautiful reaches of the Highlands, making your way alongside Loch Eil, over the awe-inspiring expanse of the Glenfinnan Viaduct, and past the eye-catching tower that serves as a monument to Bonnie

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Prince Charlie and his failed rebellion. It's topped with the statue of an unknown Highland warrior prepared to fight for his liege lord.

Once you arrive at Fort William, you'll be transported to the remarkable Ben Nevis Distillery, located deep within the shadow of soaring Ben Nevis, Scotland's tallest mountain. You'll get a tour of the facility and get a taste of the 10-year single malt, noted for its dryness and its tasty notes of toffee with a sweet finish reminiscent of caramel and chocolate. After visiting Ben Nevis, you'll get a glimpse of one of Scotland's best-known monuments, the Commando Memorial. You'll certainly be moved by this remarkable structure, situated in the heart of one of the most beautiful regions in the entire country.

Day 5: Back to Scotland's Wild West Coast

Today, travel south and west to board the ferry to the second-largest island of the Inner Hebrides, the captivating and breathtaking Isle of Mull. Here, humans have lived for nearly eight millennia, documented by the many ancient artifacts that have been found on Mull. You'll be wowed by the many miles of shoreline and the dramatic natural landscapes that dominate the horizon, including the dramatic rise of Ben More, towering more than 3,100 feet above the teeming surf on Mull's rocky shore. While in Mull, you'll visit the island's only distillery, Tobermory, where they've been distilling fine single malt whisky for nearly 200 years. You'll get a tour of the distillery, beautifully perched at the base of a steep hill, surrounded by multicolored houses that set a quaint and vibrant backdrop. The whisky itself is bright and crisp, smooth on the tongue with a fruity tang with stronger notes of fresh peat and wet smoke.

You'll pass by the beautiful Torosay Castle, featuring spectacular gardens, a statue walk featuring 19 sculptures in the style of Antonio Bonazza. Even more fascinating, a sideboard in the castle is where a pristine bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne from 1893 was discovered in 2008. The bottle is currently at display at the champagne makers visitor center in France is considered to be priceless. Your evening is spent in the elegant confines of Duart Castle, the ancestral seat of the MacLean Clan and one of the most picturesque castles in the region. You might recognize it as its a location in a number of feature films and TV shows.

Day 6: Into Islay, One of Scotland's Most Famous Whisky Regions

Leave Mull this morning and cross to the mainland to the town of Oban.

You'll start your tour of the nearby distilleries at Oban, one of the smallest distilleries in Scotland, running with only two pot stills. The whisky produced at this one-of-a-kind facility has been described as having a "West Highland" flavor profile, delicately balancing the lighter and sweet malts of the Highlands with the strong and smoky style of the Scottish Islands. The distillery also offers gorgeous views of the surrounding countryside and the nearby sea, placed on the main street of the town that sprung up after the distillery itself was founded. After this exciting experience, board the ferry to reach the mountainous island of Jura, covered by blanket fog and dominated by three conical quartzite mountains rising 2,500 feet in the opaque air and known as the Paps of Jura. Here you'll taste a whisky named after Eric Blair, pen name George Orwell, who was the island's most famous inhabitant before leaving Jura for the neighboring island of Islay, one of the most famous islands in Scotland widely renowned for the incredible whiskies that spill from its shores.

Start at Caol Ila, overlooking the strait between the two islands and producing a whisky that is one of the lighter of the Islay malts, filled with peaty and peppery notes and colored a paler amber than other whiskies from the islands. Your final stop is at the isolated distillery of Bunnahabhain, tempting the sea with its proximity and daring it to encroach, where they make a number of aged whiskeys that are among the finest in their class, from the soft and supple palate of the 12-year single malt to the complex nose and palate of the 18-year malt, filled with notes of sherry, wood spice and salt.

Day 7: The Twisting Fingers of Scotland's Western Peninsulas

Today you cross back to the fringes of the Scottish mainland, making your way down the peninsula of Kintyre, reaching no more than 11 miles from coast to coast at the formation's widest point. You make your way down this sliver of land to the village of Campbeltown, where the history of whisky making is stronger than perhaps any other town in the country. Campbeltown is located near the gorgeous headlands

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of the peninsula known at the Mull of Kintyre, sporting a historic lighthouse and views to the coast of Antrim in the far north of neighboring Ireland. This breathtaking scenery is sure to get you ready for your visit to one of the most celebrated distilleries in the country: the famed Springbank Distillery which produces one of only three Campbeltown single malts left in the world.

You'll get a chance to tour the impressive facility and taste two of the distillery's unique single malts. The Longrow is a 10-year whisky that is matured in casks formerly used for bourbon makers and characterized by a taste that is profoundly peaty and fiercely smoky; while the Hazelburn is triple distilled and features a nose filled with dried fruits, toffee and nuts and a palate that is rich and spicy, filled with notes of chocolate and coffee. The evening sees you crossing deep into the Scottish mainland to Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland and home to one of the best nightlife scenes in Scotland.

Day 8: Glasgow

Transfer to Glasgow's airport for your departure flight

Starting price per person In US\$

Hotel	Double
3* hotel	3210
4* hotel	3385
5* hotel	6885

- *Prices may change without prior notice and subject to availability at time of booking*

Flight Schedule

From	To	Flight No	Departure	Arrival
Beirut	Paris	AF 5105	02:05	05:45
Paris	Edinburgh	AF 1686	07:10	07:55
Glasgow	Paris	AF 1057	11:15	14:05
Paris	Beirut	AF 562	15:40	20:55

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