

The Perfect Ireland and Scotland Itinerary

Planning an Ireland and Scotland itinerary can be full of pitfalls if you don't know the countries and have a limited time to spend. Most folks from the US and Canada will have a maximum of 2 weeks of vacation time to spend and will want to get the biggest bang for their buck on their holidays.

This Ireland and Scotland itinerary will help you plan the best trip and it won't take up all your time travelling to get to the places on your bucket list. First things first as these are two separate countries and it is important to know the major differences, which truth be told are not a lot logistically.

Tips on how to plan a trip to Ireland and Scotland

#1 currency – Scotland uses British sterling and Ireland uses the Euro – make sure you let your bank know where you are travelling to and you can use your credit or debit card in both countries. American Express is not as popular in either country but there are ATM's everywhere. Take a little of each currency with you so you have some cash available but you won't need a lot.

#2 with a Canadian or American passport you can spend up to 90 days in each country or split between the two, so for a two week Ireland and Scotland itinerary you are good to go – no visas required.

#3 pick the airport to fly into depending on what you want to see first and what is good value for your flights. From the US and Canada flights to Dublin are as easy to find as Edinburgh and Glasgow flights are.

#4 If [renting a car](#) arrange for pick up of the car when you need it. I don't recommend driving from the airport through any of these cities as you just don't want to drive in that kind of traffic. Take public transport from the airport to your hotel or a taxi then get your rental car when ready to leave.

#5 Renting a car in Ireland can be very expensive so double check if your credit card or existing insurance will cover you when renting. Often it does not and the additional insurances you require will add considerably to the bill. I highly recommend using [My Irish Cousin](#) as they will bring the car directly to you and you can arrange to leave it at various airports around Ireland.

#6 If you plan to fly to Scotland make sure you arrange the car drop off in Belfast or an airport in Ireland as this can add greatly to your rental costs.

#7 the weather in either country is changeable so make sure you have good walking shoes and are wearing layers you can add to or subtract from. Bring a rainproof jacket or coat and keep your wardrobe simple.

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The Perfect Scotland and Ireland Itinerary

What is the best time of year to go to Ireland and Scotland?

The best time to visit Scotland and Ireland is usually off-peak in the shoulder season between April-May and September-October if you can. Flights will be cheaper and the costs of accommodation will also be less expensive. There will also be fewer tourists battling to get into the sites you have on your bucket list. Getting Between Scotland and Ireland A trip of a lifetime to Ireland and Scotland can be done affordably and getting between the two countries is very easy. I would not recommend renting a car and taking a ferry as flights between the two countries can go as low as €25 euros.

I would book the trip to a major centre like Dublin or Glasgow/Edinburgh whichever you prefer and can find a deal on. For example, book a flight into Dublin and do the Ireland road trip and then book a flight out of an airport that you are close to at the end of your Ireland trip.

There are flights to Scotland as follows:

TO EDINBURGH

Belfast International to Edinburgh with EasyJet – approx cost 1 way £23.00

Cork to Edinburgh with Aer Lingus and Ryanair – approx cost 1-way €20.49

Dublin to Edinburgh with Ryanair and Aer Lingus

Derry to Edinburgh with Ryanair

Shannon to Edinburgh with Aer Lingus

TO GLASGOW

Belfast International to Glasgow with EasyJet

Derry to Glasgow with Loganair – approx cost 1-way £55.00

Cork to Glasgow with Aer Lingus

Donegal to Glasgow with Loganair

Dublin to Glasgow with Ryanair and Aer Lingus

Belfast City to Glasgow with Loganair

Links: [Aer Lingus](#), [Ryanair](#), [EasyJet](#), [Loganair](#)

You can also find flights to Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee depending on which airport you want to fly out of. Since Glasgow and Edinburgh are the main international airports you will probably want to book a flight out of either of those to get to your home airport.

Ireland and Scotland itinerary

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This day-by-day itinerary for Scotland and Ireland can be done in any order. I've tried to lay it out in what to me is a logical order that begins in Dublin but you could do the reverse and head to Scotland first. Just make sure you book your flights correctly – so fly into Dublin fly out of Edinburgh for example.

Ireland and Scotland Itinerary – Ireland road trip

Ireland will take a lifetime to explore but this part of the itinerary focuses on some of your potential bucket list places to see. These are some of the most iconic Irish attractions to see on your vacation.

For the first day of your Scotland and Ireland vacation, you will probably arrive in Dublin early in the morning. Take public transport or a taxi to your hotel and drop your luggage off until you can check-in. Make sure you changed your watch time to Irish and then simply relax and explore Dublin as if you didn't have jet lag. Book a hop on hop off bus ahead of time and bring your printed tickets with you.

On the hop on hop off buses, you can simply relax and see the lay of the land and if you feel up to it jump off and visit the sites you want to. I like to take the full route and then on the second way around jump off at the specific sites I want to see. I find that this is a great way to see what sites are close enough to walk to.

Ireland and Scotland itinerary day 1: Explore Dublin

Here are some stops you don't want to miss in Dublin:

- St. Patrick's Cathedral
- Molly Malone Statue
- Ha'penny bridge across the Liffey
- Temple Bar
- Christ Church Cathedral
- Trinity College Library
- St. Stephens Green

Articles on exploring Dublin

[Dublin off the Beaten Path](#)

[34 Great things to do in Dublin](#)

[20 Famous Pubs in Dublin for a pint and some craic](#)

[15 tips for celebrating St. Patrick's Day in Dublin](#)

[15 Dublin Don'ts – a little bit of Irish craic for you](#)

[Dublin Airport tips & tricks from a local](#)

Day 2 – Newgrange, Wicklow Mountains, Glendalough Ancient East tour

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Grab your rental car and head up to [Newgrange](#), [Tara](#) and Loughcrew you can spend the morning exploring these ancient Irish sites and then easily head to [Glendalough National Park](#) in the afternoon which is around an hours drive. I would book a hotel near Glendalough and you can find some recommendations here, and then the following day head out to visit the [Powerscourt Estate](#) in the morning and then onto Kilkenny for the afternoon.

Day 3 – Kilkenny, Rock of Cashel onto Killarney

In Kilkenny you can explore sites like [Kilkenny Castle](#), the [Medieval Mile](#) if you fancy visiting the [Rock of Cashel](#) the drive from Kilkenny is around an hour long and highly recommended. If you can stand another couple of hours in the car head to Killarney and find your hotel here.

Day 4 – Killarney and the Ring of Kerry

The next day you can explore [Killarney](#) and do the [Ring of Kerry tour](#). This will probably wear you out and you can head back to your hotel for the night.

Day 5 & 6 – Bunratty Castle, Doolin, Cliffs of Moher, Galway

Onwards to see [Bunratty Castle](#) near Limerick and after that tour head up to the [Cliffs of Moher](#). I would book a hotel in Doolin for the night and the following day you will have time to take a drive along the Wild Atlantic Way through Dunghaire up to Galway.

Book your hotel for Galway and spend a day or so exploring the area and making a visit to [Galway City](#) where you want to stay overnight and get to some of those traditional pubs for some authentic Irish music.

Day 7 – Galway City to Shannon

Head to Shannon airport where you can catch a flight to Edinburgh for around €25 euros one way. Make sure you have arranged to drop of your rental car at Shannon Airport before your flight. If you have time before your flight you could visit Adare It is renowned as one of Ireland's prettiest villages and enjoy some great restaurants and relax for a few hours.

Ireland and Scotland Itinerary – Scotland road trip

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Flying into Edinburgh again I would suggest taking a taxi or public transport to your hotel and getting checked in or leaving your luggage until check-in time and exploring the city on foot. I suggest 2 days in Edinburgh as there is just so much to see and then from there heading out to explore more of Scotland.

Days 1-2: Explore Edinburgh

Edinburgh, the historic capital of [Scotland](#), is home to historic sites, modern restaurants, pubs, and nature. Although Edinburgh is on many travellers' radar, it isn't filled with tourists like major cities of Paris or [London](#). A two day visit to Edinburgh is perfect for travellers looking for a low-key, historic, culture-filled city. You also can't go wrong finding amazing Harry Potter sites to visit when in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Castle

Edinburgh Castle dates back to the 12th century and has a long, crazy history. The castle holds the Crown Jewels of Scotland among other historic artefacts and the National War Museum of Scotland.

Holyrood Palace

Opposite Edinburgh Castle, you will find the Palace of Holyroodhouse. This palace was Mary Stuart's and now is one of the Queen of England's second homes which she stays at for a few days every year.

The Royal Mile

The Royal Mile is the beating heart of Edinburgh's Old Town. At the bottom, it begins at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and goes up to Edinburgh Castle. The Royal Mile is around 1.8 km long. Its name comes from its tradition as a processional route for kings and queens for the last 500 years.

St. Giles Cathedral

Located on the Royal Mile, St Giles' is a stunning Medieval gothic cathedral and is the oldest religious building in the city. It was built in the 12th century but had to be re-built in the 15th because of the terrible fire that destroyed much of Edinburgh in 1385.

Victoria Street & the Grass Market

Victoria Street in the Old Town has to be one of the most photographed locations in the city. Its gentle curve and colourful shopfronts make it a favourite spot for tourist photos, postcards and TV adverts. Grass Market Don't forget to stop by the Grassmarket for a fabulous lunch or some great artisanal beer tasting.

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Princes Street Gardens

Princes Street Gardens are two adjacent public parks in the centre of Edinburgh. If you need to take a break from visiting Edinburgh Castle you will find the gardens at the foot of the castle. The Gardens were created in the 1820s following the long draining of the Nor Loch and building of the New Town, beginning in the 1760s.

Hike Arthur's Seat

If you enjoy hiking, you must go to Holyrood Park. A short bus ride from the city centre (or a longer walk) is a large park with walking trails. This isn't extreme hiking like you would experience in Colorado, but it can get to be a steep walking path that is rocky. It is best to come prepared with comfortable clothing and good shoes.

Calton Hill

Calton Hill is a hill situated beyond the east end of Princes Street and included in the city's [UNESCOWorld Heritage Site](#). Views of, and from, the hill are iconic images of Edinburgh.

Harry Potter Tour

The [Harry Potter Tour in Edinburgh](#) is a magical 2-hour walking tour of Edinburgh where you can discover the city where the world of Harry Potter was conceived. Test your knowledge with an audio-visual quiz, find out your Hogwarts House, and visit Tom Riddle's grave.

Tours of the Highlands and the Isle of Skye

Any of these tours can be done with Get Your Guide or you can rent a car and use the itinerary to plan your own tours of the Highlands and other sites you want to visit in Scotland.

1 day Loch Ness, Glencoe, Highlands & Ben Nevis Tour

Out of bed early and get your rental car so you can head up to the Highlands. Or you can take an [organized tour by Get Your Guide](#) which includes the luxury coach vehicle so you don't have to drive. You will depart Edinburgh early and drive cross country where you will pass by Stirling Castle and hear the stories of William Wallace of Robert the Bruce.

Callander Town

Nestled at the foot of the Trossachs National Park your visit will include Loch Lomond and tales of Roby Roy MacGregor.

Glencoe

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Follow in the footsteps of James Bond and Harry Potter as you travel through the jaw-dropping Valley of Glencoe. Learn about the Campbell and Clan MacDonald massacre.

Fort William

On your way to Loch Ness, you will drive by the incredible Ben Nevis which is the United Kingdom's highest mountain. Loch Ness In the Village of Fort Augustus with its cafes, shops and restaurants you could take a cruise on the Loch to see if you can spot Nessie.

Commando Memorial

Admire the impressive Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge with views of the Nevis Range.

Cairngorms National park

Enter the Cairngorms National Park and discover "Monarch of the Glen" country. Drive along Loch Laggan before the roads climb above the Grampian Mountains. Travel over the Pass of Drumochter, linking the northern and southern Central Highlands. Experience the majesty of a mountain pass created by glacial activity during successive Ice Ages. Finally, stop briefly in the beautiful Victorian town of Pitlochry before heading back to Edinburgh city centre, arriving at approximately 8:30 PM.

3 day tour of the Isle of Skye and Highlands

Discover the best of the Highlands and the Isle of Skye on this 3-day tour from Edinburgh. Visit Eilean Donan Castle, explore the Highlands and Culloden Battlefield, take a Loch Ness cruise, tour Urquhart Castle and enjoy a whisky tasting on Skye. This is another [guided tour by Get Your Guide](#).

Tour the Scottish Highlands and explore the Isle of Skye on a 3-day guided tour from Edinburgh. You'll see castles, craggy mountains, picturesque towns, and maybe even a monster on this excursion. Stay overnight in B&B accommodation.

Day 1: A Spectacular Route North to Skye

On the way to Skye, your route takes you past beautiful Stirling Castle, across the brooding expanse of Rannoch Moor, and through Glen Coe. As you near the coast, you'll see Eilean Donan Castle (optional tour available), which was featured in the film Highlander. Overnight stay in Inverness.

Day 2: A Full Day on Skye

You'll have the full day to explore the Isle of Skye. If you like, you can take it nice and easy but still see all the sights. Highlights include the craggy Cuillin Mountains, the dramatic hills of the Quiraing, and the stunning

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Trotternish Peninsula. You might see seals out in the waves as you walk along the coast, or a stag standing on a hillside. Return to Inverness for your overnight stay.

Day 3: Monster Spotting on Loch Ness

Drive along the banks of Loch Ness where you can take a boat tour to Urquhart Castle or do a bit of monster hunting from the shore. As you head back to Edinburgh, your route will take you through Inverness, the Cairngorms, and Pitlochry. At the Culloden battlefield, the site of the defeat of the Jacobites, there is the option of taking a tour. Continue on through the stunning Cairngorm Mountains and stop to explore the picturesque town of Pitlochry.

5 day tour of Iona, Mull, and Isle of Skye

Spend 5 spectacular days exploring the unruly beauty and fascinating history of the Scottish west coast, and visiting 4 of its beautiful islands with [Get Your Guide](#). On your second day, take a ferry to explore the dramatic coastlines of the island of Mull, and then continue to the island of Iona to visit its ancient abbey and craggy cliffside. Take advantage of the opportunity to take a small boat to Staffa to explore its beautiful basalt columns, and spend the majority of your third day exploring the famous Isle of Skye.

Day 1: Loch Lomond – Oban

Your first day of the journey takes you north past Stirling Castle, and then west to Scotland's first National Park near Loch Lomond. Travel through the mountains of the West Highlands, passing the magnificent white-washed town of Inveraray, and spend the afternoon in the heart of Argyll before arriving to the bustling town of Oban, the gateway to the islands, for your 2-night stay.

Day 2: Oban – Mull – Iona

Begin early with a ferry ride across the Mull and spend the morning exploring the island's dramatic coastlines and wild beauty, before taking the small ferry to Iona – the birthplace of Celtic Christianity and the ancient burial ground of Scottish Kings. Visit the historic abbey and its intricate carved crosses or explore the rocky headlands and sandy coves of this island gem. There is also an opportunity to take a small boat out to the island of Staffa (except Saturday departures in September) and view the dramatic basalt columns immortalized by Mendelssohn in his Hebridean Overture "Fingal's Cave". You then return on the ferry to Oban for your second night.

Day 3: Oban – Glencoe – Plockton

Today takes you north along the west coast around Appin, passing the impregnable Castle Stalker and Glencoe, scene of the infamous massacre of the MacDonald clan in 1692. You then pass through Fort William

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nestling in the shadow of Ben Nevis which at 1,344 meters is the highest mountain in the British Isles. The tour continues through the Great Glen, a natural fault in the earth's crust that runs through Scotland and on through Ireland. From here you travel north to the picturesque fishing village of Plockton. You are then dropped off at your accommodation in the early evening.

Day 4: Quiraing Mountain Pass, Kilt Rock, Dunvegan Castle

A flexible Day with many possibilities (depending on the weather). Your driver/guide will use his/her local knowledge to decide on the best day out for the group, which could include travelling north to the stunning Quiraing mountain pass for a walk through some of Skye's extraordinary geological scenery or a visit to the Kilt Rock, composed of basalt columns and cascading waterfalls. After lunch, you may travel to Neist Point for a walkout to the lighthouse at the most westerly point on Skye, or you may pay a visit to Dunvegan Castle, the ancient ancestral seat of the Clan McLeod, returning to your accommodation in Plockton in the late afternoon to enjoy a free evening in the village.

Day 5: Loch Duich – Loch Ness – Edinburgh

You will be collected from your accommodation and travel south through the Cuillin Hills, stopping to visit the famous stronghold Eilean Donan Castle, before travelling east to take in the stunning views over Loch Duich and the 5 Sisters of Kintail. Onto Loch Ness for lunch and the possibility of spotting "Nessie," and then head south through the Grampian mountains and long Loch Laggan, passing Dalwhinnie, home to Scotland's highest whisky distillery. Stop in at Perthshire for some refreshments before heading back to Edinburgh over the Forth Road Bridge, arriving at approximately 19:00.

Day 7: Depart from Edinburgh

On the last day of your Scotland and Ireland vacation, travel back to Edinburgh and either fly home from there or fly back to Dublin to fly home. I hope this itinerary will help plan many trips to Ireland and Scotland. They are both such amazing destinations and I know you'll love them

Whether you decide to drive to the Isle of Skye on your own or take this guided tour the choice is yours. Hopefully this two week Ireland and Scotland itinerary will help you plan your travels to these two fabulous locations.