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CAMPERVAN ROAD TRIP · 14 DAYS FROM EDINBURGH AND BACK

Scotland by Campervan — 14-Day Self-Drive Itinerary

Scotland rewards those who take their time. This 14-day campervan itinerary is designed to do exactly that — moving through the country's most spectacular regions at a pace that lets you stop when something extraordinary appears around the corner, which in Scotland happens constantly. Starting and finishing in Edinburgh, the route takes you north through Perthshire and the Cairngorms National Park, west to Inverness and the Highland capital, then anticlockwise around the full North Coast 500 — east coast up, north coast across, west coast down — before three nights on the Isle of Skye and a final night's drive back through Glencoe and Loch Lomond.

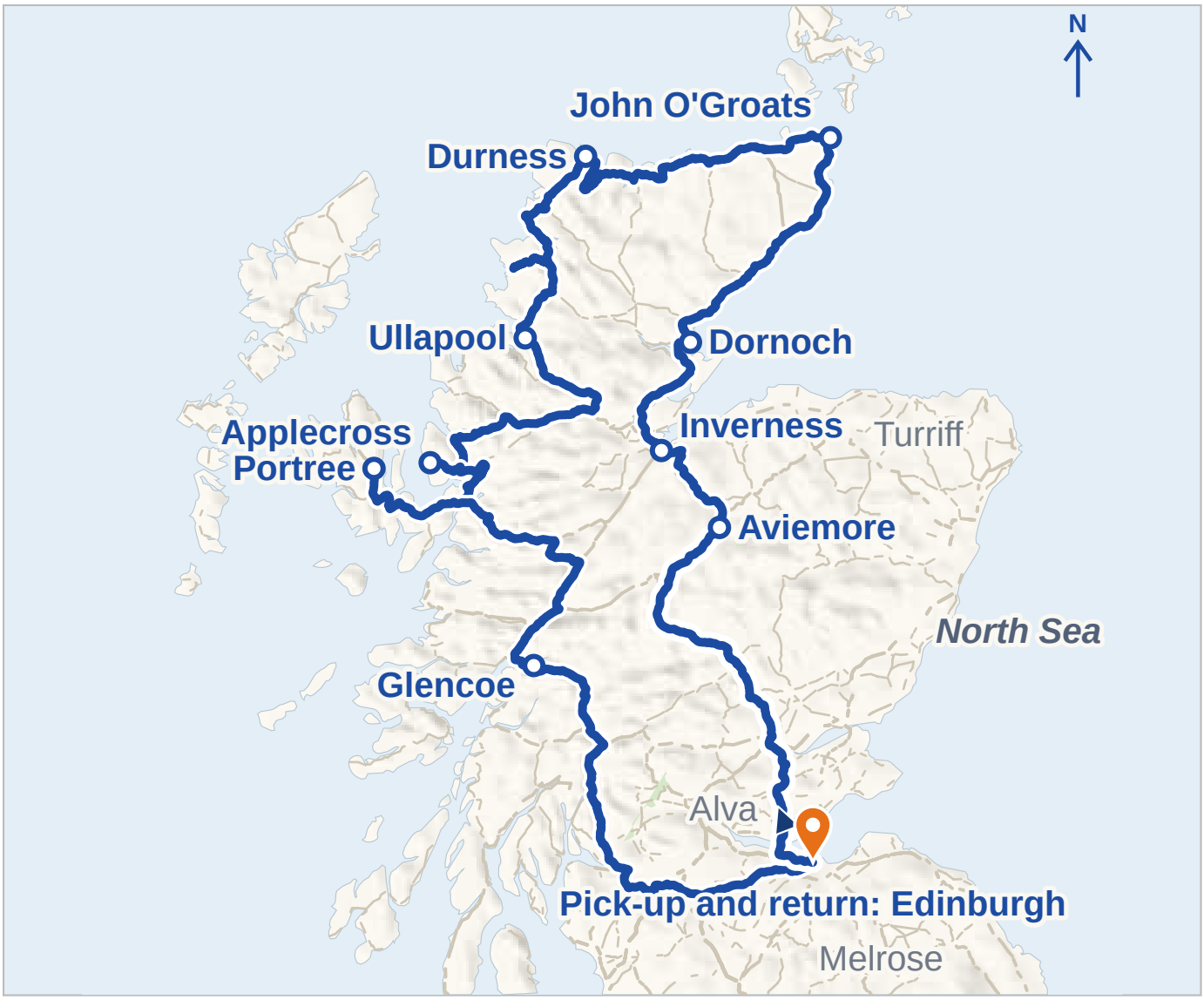
Total distance is about 1,445 kilometres (895 miles), with two built-in rest days — one in the Cairngorms and two slow loop days on Skye — so the driving never feels like a chore.

DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 1,445 km (895 mi)	14 days, 10 drives	Round trip from Edinburgh	About 25 h by campervan

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE
220 km (140 mi), Glencoe to Edinburgh	Campervan



Fairy Pools, Isle of Skye, day 12 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (Geoscience Australia, SRTM).

Picking up in Edinburgh

Allow time at the branch for the handover: staff walk you round the van, record any existing damage and show you how everything works before you set off. See what happens at the vehicle inspection and demonstration. More on campervan hire in the UK.

DRIVE

205 km (125 mi) from Edinburgh | **about 3 h 15 min** by campervan | Via **A9**

DAYS 1–3

Edinburgh to Perthshire to Cairngorms National Park

PICK-UP | 2 NIGHTS IN THE CAIRNGORMS

After collecting your campervan from the Edinburgh depot, the route heads north on the A9 through Perthshire — one of Scotland's most underrated regions. Pitlochry makes a perfect first night: a proper Highland town with a Festival Theatre, a salmon ladder at the dam where you can watch fish leap upstream, and the ancient Douglas-fir gorge at Dunkeld just 20 minutes south. From there it's a short drive further north through the dramatic Pass of Drumochter to Aviemore and the Cairngorms National Park, where two nights gives you time to swim in the sandy-shored Loch Morlich, walk in the ancient Caledonian pine forest of Rothiemurchus, and spend a morning on the Speyside Whisky Trail — Glenfiddich and Dalwhinnie are both within easy reach. The Cairngorms are a genuine highlight that many Scotland itineraries rush past. Don't.

DRIVE

55 km (34 mi) from Aviemore | **about 1 h** by campervan | Via **A9**

DAY 4

Cairngorms to Inverness

A short, unhurried morning drive brings you into Inverness, the Highland capital. Before you arrive, make time for Culloden Battlefield six miles east of the city — the site of the last pitched battle on British soil is one of the most moving places in Scotland. In Inverness itself, walk the River Ness, explore the Victorian Market and stock up on provisions at the last major supermarket you'll see for a while. Loch Ness is just 20 minutes south on the A82 if the legend calls you. Tonight's campsite looks out across the Beauly Firth to the Black Isle — a fine preview of what lies north.

DRIVE

69 km (43 mi) from Inverness | **about 1 h 10 min** by campervan | Via **A9**

DAY 5

Inverness to Dornoch

The NC500 begins in earnest today. Head north on the A9 past Dunrobin Castle at Golspie — an extraordinary French-chateau-style building sitting improbably on the Sutherland coast, its turrets reflected in formal gardens above the sea. It's worth two hours of your time. Continue to Dornoch, a quietly refined town with a 13th-century cathedral, an award-winning beach and Royal Dornoch Golf Club

alongside it, consistently rated one of the finest links courses in the world. Tonight you sleep on the beach.

DRIVE

125 km (79 mi) from Dornoch | **about 2 h 10 min** by campervan | Via **A9**

DAY 6

Dornoch to John O'Groats

The A9 becomes the A99 as you push north through Caithness, Scotland's far north. Make time for Castle Sinclair Girnigoe — a ruined clifftop fortress so dramatically sited it seems designed by a film director — and the Whaligoe Steps, where 365 hand-cut stone steps descend to a tiny, improbable harbour at the base of a sea cliff. John O'Groats awaits at the end: the northernmost mainland signpost, entirely photogenic, slightly underwhelming, absolutely mandatory. From your campsite you can see Orkney on the horizon.

DRIVE

150 km (92 mi) from John O'Groats | **about 2 h 50 min** by campervan | Via **A836**

DAY 7

John O'Groats to Durness

The longest drive day, and one of the most spectacular. Head west along the A836, stopping at Dunnet Head — the actual most northerly point of mainland Britain, with puffin-lined cliffs and clear views to Orkney on a good day — before passing through Thurso, crossing the extraordinary Kyle of Tongue causeway at low tide, and winding west through the vast emptiness of north Sutherland. The day ends at Sango Sands above Durness, a cliff-top campsite above one of Scotland's finest beaches with a pub two minutes' walk away.

Fuel	Fill your fuel tank at Tongue — there is no fuel between Tongue and Durness, and none south until Ullapool.
Season	Sango Sands has limited facilities over winter (from November to March), when it takes campervans and motorhomes only, so check before you go.

DRIVE

145 km (89 mi) from Durness | **about 2 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **A894**

DAY 8

Durness to Ullapool

The NC500 turns south into Assynt — a landscape so geologically ancient and visually bizarre it feels like another planet. Isolated mountains — Suilven, Quinag, Stac Pollaidh — rise without warning from flat bogland in shapes found nowhere else in Europe. Stop in Lochinver for the best fish and chips on the route, then continue south to Ullapool, the finest small town on the NC500. With Michelin-recommended restaurants, a ferry to the Outer Hebrides, and views across Loch Broom to the Summer Isles, Ullapool earns a proper evening.

Check first:
The B869 Drumbeg loop between Lochinver and Kylesku is breathtaking but not suitable for motorhomes — the A894 runs parallel and is perfectly scenic in its own right.

DRIVE

150 km (94 mi) from Ullapool | **about 2 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **Bealach na Ba**

DAY 9

Ullapool to Applecross

BEALACH NA BA

The drive south through Wester Ross passes Corrieshalloch Gorge — a 60-metre box canyon with a suspension bridge above a waterfall — and Torridon, where ancient red sandstone mountains rise from the shore with a drama that feels geological rather than merely scenic. The day's centrepiece is the Bealach na Ba, a single-track pass climbing to 626 metres through a series of hairpin bends that would not look out of place in the Alps. For vehicles under six metres it is one of the great drives of Europe. At the top, the Isle of Skye appears across the water. Applecross village below has one of Scotland's most celebrated pubs.

Book ahead:
Book dinner at the Applecross pub before you leave Ullapool.

DRIVE

120 km (76 mi) from Applecross | **about 2 h 10 min** by campervan | Via **Skye Bridge (free)**

DAYS 10–12

Isle of Skye (3 nights)

3 NIGHTS

Three nights on Skye is the right amount — enough to do the island justice without rushing the things that deserve time. Cross the Skye Bridge from Kyle of Lochalsh (free since 2004) and settle in at Sligachan below the Black Cuillin mountains for night one. Day 11 is for the Trotternish Peninsula: the Old Man of Storr at dawn before the car parks fill, the Quiraing for the most surreal landscape in the British Isles, and Kilt Rock for a five-minute stop at sea cliffs that genuinely look pleated.

Day 12 heads west for the Fairy Pools — turquoise waterfalls at the foot of the Cuillins — then Dunvegan Castle, the Coral Beach (white shell-sand, views to Harris), and Neist Point lighthouse at the island's westernmost tip. Talisker Distillery at Carbost, the oldest whisky distillery on Skye, rounds out the afternoon. Portree harbour makes a fine base for both evenings, with coloured houses reflected in the water and excellent seafood restaurants worth booking ahead.

DRIVE

200 km (125 mi) from Portree | **about 3 h 30 min** by campervan | Via **A87**

DAY 13

Isle of Skye to Glencoe

Leave Skye on the A87 east through Glen Shiel, a long, narrow valley flanked by the Five Sisters of Kintail — a ridge so dramatically proportioned it stops drivers in their tracks. Fort William sits at the foot of Ben Nevis and deserves a brief stop; from here the road south on the A82 enters Glencoe. Scotland's most famous valley needs no introduction, but it earns its reputation — the dark walls of the Three Sisters closing in on either side as you drive through. Stay in the valley tonight at the Red Squirrel campsite on the River Coe, and walk to the Lost Valley in the morning before leaving.

DRIVE

220 km (140 mi) from Glencoe | **about 3 h 45 min** by campervan | Via **A82**

DAY 14

Glencoe to Edinburgh

RETURN

The final morning in Glencoe earns a walk — the Lost Valley (Coire Gabhail) is a hidden glacial bowl concealed behind the Three Sisters, reached in about an hour on foot and quite unlike anything else on

the route. Drive south via the western shore of Loch Lomond, stop briefly at Luss for the postcard view across the water, and arrive back in Edinburgh in time to return the van and check into a final night hotel on the Royal Mile. You've earned it.

Returning in Edinburgh

Before you hand the van back, refuel, empty the toilet cassette if your van has one, tidy up, and aim to reach the branch well before it closes. See the drop-off checklist in Returning your campervan.

Enjoy Scotland at its own pace.

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