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HIGHLANDS ROAD TRIP BY CAR · 5 DAYS, EDINBURGH TO GLASGOW

Scotland – 5 Day Self-Driving Rental Itinerary

Crowning the top of Britain, Scotland is a destination rich in history and natural beauty. It's also perfect to discover by road thanks to its forests and lochs, as well as the many charming towns along the way. To get in touch with the country's intrepid spirit, jump in a hire car and set out on your very own Scottish road trip with a little help from the good people at DriveNow.

On this journey, you'll travel in a loop around the heartland of Scotland, starting from either Edinburgh or Glasgow whichever may take your fancy. Whichever way you decide to go, you're in for a real treat with iconic Scottish locations such as St Andrews, Inverness, Aberdeen, the Isle of Skye and Loch Lomond.

DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 1,015 km (630 mi)	5 days, 5 drives	One way, Edinburgh Airport to Glasgow	About 15 h by car

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE
365 km (225 mi), Aberdeen to Portree	Car or motorhome



Loch Lomond, day 5 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (Environment Agency, EU-DEM, SRTM).

Picking up at Edinburgh Airport

Bring your physical driver's licence, a card in the main driver's name and your booking confirmation to the counter, and check the car against its condition report before you drive away. See what to bring to the counter and checking the car at pick-up. More on car hire at Edinburgh Airport.

DRIVE

230 km (140 mi) from Edinburgh Airport

about 3 h 30 min by car · about 4 h 15 min by motorhome | Via **A90**

DAY 1

Edinburgh to St Andrews to Aberdeen

PICK-UP

Welcome to Scotland! If you've landed at Edinburgh Airport, one of the first things you'll need to do is pick up your rental vehicle. Fortunately, if you book your Scotland hire car with DriveNow this should be a breeze. Simply cruise on over to your hire car provider, pick up your pre-arranged vehicle and take the wheel to head towards the centre of town on the A8, which turns into Glasgow Road.

Once you're here, there's plenty to do in Edinburgh. Get a hearty Scottish breakfast from Mimi's Bakehouse or Urban Angel to start your day, before taking your pick of attractions. Arthur's Seat is a perennial favourite for locals and visitors alike, and grants one of the most picturesque views of Edinburgh. When you've come back down to earth, pop by the Scottish National Gallery to admire the world class collection, or swing by the wonderful Edinburgh Castle.

After spending the morning in Edinburgh it's about an hour and a half drive to St Andrews. Head out on the A90 and you cross the Forth Rd Bridge across the Firth of Forth onto the M90. At Junction 2A take A92, turning right at the junction with the A921. Take the first exit left at the next three traffic roundabouts to join the A915 before it becomes the A916. As you approach Craigrothie, take the fork left onto the B939 which will take you all the way into St Andrews.

Spend your afternoon visiting St Andrews castle, which served as a bishop's palace during the Protestant Reformation. Catch the sea breeze down at West Sands beach and grab some lunch at one of the great local pubs. If you already ate on the road, you can always enjoy a spot of afternoon tea in town. (Rocca, the restaurant this itinerary suggested for it, has closed.) Afterward, you'll be taking the A91 and A92 through Dundee all the way up to Aberdeen via the A90.

DRIVE

365 km (225 mi) from Aberdeen

about 5 h 15 min by car · about 6 h 30 min by motorhome | Via **A939**

DAY 2

Aberdeen to Inverness to Portree

We hope you had a restful night in Aberdeen, as today you'll want to set off early to make the drive through the Cairngorms National Park en route to Inverness. One of Scotland's most scenic routes, the Old Military Road through the park is a peaceful way to explore the mountains and pastoral fields. Once you emerge onto the A9 on the other side of the park, it's smooth sailing all the way to Inverness.

Take the opportunity to stop for lunch and stretch your legs with a stroll along the Ness River. On the way to your next destination in the Isle of Skye, you'll be driving via the A82 past the renowned Loch Ness. Stop by the centre to catch a close up view of the loch (and maybe even a glimpse of Nessie!) before continuing along the A82 until you reach the turnoff for the A887. Watch as the countryside transforms before your eyes as the A887 becomes the A87, which takes you over the Skye Bridge and into Portree, your final stop of the day.

DRIVE

195 km (120 mi) from Portree

about 3 h by car · about 3 h 30 min by motorhome | Via **A863**

DAY 3

Portree to Fort William

Waking up in the Isle of Skye certainly has its benefits. You're in the heart of this wonderful Scottish Isle, whose very hills are alive with centuries of history. The sparseness of the countryside shelter wonders

such as dinosaur footprints, churches and 2000-year-old Iron Age broch towers.

Once you've spent the morning admiring the beauty of the rugged and isolated Isle of Skye, you can head further afield to discover Dunvegan Castle - the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland and seat of the head of the Clan MacLeod. Heading south from Dunvegan on the A863 and the B8009, you'll find the enchanting Fairy Pools in Glen Brittle. When you're ready to move on, you'll need to take the A851 down to Armadale. From here, you can catch a car ferry across to Mallaig on the mainland.

> **Book ahead:**
> Book the Armadale to Mallaig car ferry (CalMac) before you go, especially in summer. The crossing takes about 30 minutes.

Head along the A830, also known as the Road to the Isles, a scenic drive through the highlands to Fort William, which is the gateway to the UK's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. It's here in the shadow of this magnificent peak where you'll be spending the night.

DRIVE

135 km (85 mi) from Fort William

about 2 h by car · about 2 h 20 min by motorhome | Via **A82**

DAY 4

Fort William to Loch Lomond

Take your time to explore this beautiful area's attractions such as the West Highland Museum, Lochaber Park and the Jacobite Steam Train - a real-life working steam train which moonlighted as the fictional Hogwarts Express in the Harry Potter films.

After a lunch at one of the excellent restaurants or pubs here, find the A82 again and follow it down all the way to Loch Lomond where you'll stop off for the night.

DRIVE

92 km (57 mi) from Loch Lomond

about 1 h 20 min by car · about 1 h 40 min by motorhome | Via **A811**

DAY 5

Loch Lomond to Glasgow via Stirling

RETURN

Loch Lomond is Britain's largest inland lake (Loch to Scots), and a beautiful one at that. Take your time to soak in the natural beauty of the area before you climb back into your trusty hire car for the next leg down the A811 en route to the historic town of Stirling. Complete with cobbled streets, a magnificent castle and well preserved Old Town, Stirling is a must-see on your way to Glasgow.

Stop here for lunch before making the final leg into Glasgow. As you roll into the city, you'll have your pick of incredible attractions to discover, from the People's Palace to the Glasgow Cathedral. The Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum is another top pick, set up in a Victorian era building that houses fine art and animal exhibits alike - don't forget to say hi to the elephant!

> ⚠ **Check first:**
> The People's Palace has been closed for refurbishment since April 2024 and isn't expected to reopen before 2029, so check before you plan a visit.

In addition to being one of the UK's best shopping destinations, Glasgow is also a treat for foodies with a dynamic culinary scene - don't miss The Ubiquitous Chip, a renowned eatery showcasing modern Scottish cuisine. There are also some fine craft breweries here such as The Vintage at Drygate. Grab a pint at the end of your epic Scottish road trip - you've earned it!

> ⚠ **Check first:**
> We couldn't confirm that The Vintage at Drygate is still trading under that name, so check it's open before you go.

Returning the car in Glasgow

Plan to return the car on time with the fuel level your agreement asks for, and if your return time changes, call the branch as soon as you can. See returning your car and late and early returns. More on car hire at Glasgow Airport.

Enjoy the drive, from the Firth of Forth to Loch Lomond.

DriveNow Disclaimer

DriveNow receives no money or commission for any hotel, restaurant, cafe, pub, tour or attraction named on this page. We include them because they suit this road trip, and we check them from time to time.

DriveNow's suggested itineraries help you plan your own trip. Distances and times are from mapped routes and are a guide only; campervan driving times are car times plus about 20%. Road conditions, closures, opening hours and prices change, so check them before you travel. Any reliance on this itinerary is at your own discretion.

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