Join our year-long celebrations in 2014
Scotland.
Welcome to our life.
The warmest of welcomes awaits you in Scotland at historic castles such as Stirling, among the grand Highland scenery of Glen Coe and Torridon, and right out on the white sandy beaches of the Outer Hebrides. Choose to visit in 2014 for The Ryder Cup, for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, and for Homecoming Scotland, a year-long programme of events and activities that will showcase everything that’s great about Scotland.
In winter, when snow dusts the mountains, Homecoming Scotland 2014 begins with the warming cheer of a traditional Hogmanay. Celebrations continue in January in honour of Robert Burns at The Big Burns Supper in Dumfries, the world’s largest Burns Night event with music, literature and dance.

Scotland’s landscapes come alive with wildlife during spring when it’s possible to admire soaring puffins in the skies and bottlenose dolphins swimming close to shore. In April there will be nature events held across the country during the John Muir Festival, which commemorates the Scots-born naturalist and founder of America’s National Parks.

Summer’s long daylight hours lend themselves to outdoor events such as our unique Highland games. In July the eyes of the world turn to Glasgow as it hosts the XX Commonwealth Games and in September The Ryder Cup golf tournament in Gleneagles will welcome golfers to The Home of Golf.

The beautiful autumn scenery provides the perfect backdrop to events such as the traditional music at Perthshire Amber - the Dougie MacLean Festival, and whisky tasting at the Autumn Speyside Whisky Festival. Prepare to party as winter returns and the famous festivities, including Winter Festivals, get underway again.

Scotland’s cultural spirit

What makes Scotland so distinctive? There are some things that are uniquely Scottish but, in truth, there’s no single element that defines the country. Rather, it’s a subtle blend of our many different ingredients that have been added to the mix down through the centuries. With a year-round programme of festivals and events, the nation celebrates its culture with spirit and style, in drama, song, poetry, dance and more.
Scotland’s culture certainly involves reaching out. That’s why, for instance, Glasgow’s Celtic Connections (held in January) showcases both native talent and also performers from across the Celtic areas of Europe, while the city becomes the centre of the world of piping during the Piping Live! International Piping Festival.

While high profile events such as the Edinburgh International Festival, along with the Fringe, Book and Film Festivals and the stirring Military Tattoo, inevitably command attention, other parts of Scotland also stage prestigious cultural events. For example, the Perth Festival of the Arts every May brings a huge choice of music and other art forms to this handsome Scottish town on the River Tay. The annual Braemar Highland Gathering in September is Scotland’s premier Highland games because of the attendance of Britain’s royalty – but is only one event in a games programme right across Scotland.

It’s easy to dip into Scotland’s traditional music in informal settings. Musical get-togethers called ‘ceilidhs’ are often advertised locally in advance, especially in smaller places. Ask your accommodation provider or check with your local VisitScotland Information Centre. Folk music sessions in local pubs can even happen spontaneously, while at city venues such as Hootananny in Inverness or Ghillie Dhu in Edinburgh regularly-changing programmes make it easy to sample the vitality of Scotland’s musical culture.
Scotland’s great cities – Edinburgh

Edinburgh is pure theatre, with its spires and battlements, crags and classical columns. From Edinburgh Castle, look over an exciting, cosmopolitan European capital city, whose dramatic medieval and elegant Georgian architectures have made it a World Heritage Site. It is also UNESCO’s first City of Literature.
Edinburgh Castle and the city skyline at dusk, photographed from Salisbury Crags, Edinburgh.

For more on what to see and do in Scotland’s capital city, for accommodation, clubs, bars, restaurants and retail therapy, check out www.visitscotland.com

Edinburgh Castle is at the heart of the nation’s story, symbolised by the ‘Honours of Scotland’ – Scotland’s Crown Jewels – as well as the famous Stone of Destiny, the ancient crowning seat of Scottish monarchs. Edinburgh’s Old Town is centred on the upper part of the Royal Mile, a historic thoroughfare linking the Castle with the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

Though Castle and Palace head a long list of heritage sites, museums and art galleries, Edinburgh is a compact city. It’s easy to explore on foot or via an excellent bus network. Explore the revitalised port of Leith with its historic waterfront and great choice of top restaurants. Or take a walk through Holyrood Park to discover another world, the village of Duddingston tucked behind Arthur’s Seat. (One of Scotland’s oldest pubs is here too!)

There is also plenty to see within easy reach of the city: for example, panoramic views from the Pentland Hills that overlook the city, the neo-classical elegance of stately homes such as Hopetoun House, and the wild beauty of the East Lothian coastline.

Back in the city, August sees Edinburgh’s cultural life at its most vibrant. The Edinburgh International Festival and The Edinburgh Festival Fringe are at the core of this high-profile annual arts gathering. However a year-round programme of events means that there is always a great festival atmosphere in the city.

Inspiration and creativity have always thrived in Edinburgh. Its literary heritage stretches back to before the days of Sir Walter Scott and encompasses contemporary writers such as JK Rowling of Harry Potter fame.
Scotland’s great cities – Glasgow

Scotland’s biggest city, Glasgow is a recognised centre for style, design and architecture. It is upfront, stylish, full of life and vitality – a shopper’s paradise as well as one of the friendliest places you are ever likely to visit.
Often called Britain’s finest Victorian city, Glasgow’s architecture reflects its distinctive personality. The impressive City Chambers is at its very heart, while Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum houses important art collections that have made a major contribution to Glasgow’s cultural life for over a century. An unmistakable element of the city’s style is the work of Glasgow-born Charles Rennie Mackintosh, a designer at the forefront of Art Nouveau in Scotland.

The 21st century architecture of the Riverside Museum displays a historic transport collection: a reminder of how Glasgow forged links across the world with its ships and railway locomotives.

As a retail centre, Glasgow is matched by few other British cities. Shop till you drop at chic Princes Square, as well as Sauchiehall Street, Buchanan Street and the Merchant City district which together make up Glasgow’s ‘Style Mile’.

In a typical week, more than 120 separate musical events take place here – more than justifying its recognition as a UNESCO City of Music. This non-stop, all-year, high-energy music scene takes place in venues that include traditional Scottish pubs, clubs, world class auditoriums and dedicated performance spaces cleverly converted from distinguished city buildings. Òran Mór, with its exciting music programme, is a good example.

In 2014 Glasgow welcomes athletes from around the world as they compete in the XX Commonwealth Games from 23 July – 3 August. The opening of the Games will coincide with the start of Festival 2014, a celebration of music, theatre and the arts, which will showcase Glasgow’s vibrant cultural scene.

The Commonwealth Games have been a permanent fixture in sport since 1930 and in 2014 you can be right in the action, witnessing top athletes compete for medal glory across 17 sports. The excitement continues with the year-long Culture 2014 festival which promises a fantastic creative celebration of music, theatre and the arts. Keep up-to-date with news of the games at www.visitscotland.com/glasgow-2014
Scotland – a touring adventure at your own pace

The sheer variety of landscape and townscape which Scotland offers makes touring especially rewarding. Lowland to Highland, east to west – without travelling great distances it is easy to experience breathtaking mountain scenery, romantic lochs and glens and just enjoy the fact that there are so many attractions on the way – whatever takes your interest: castles, standing stones, distilleries, gardens and lots more.
It’s easy to travel around Scotland. In addition to motorways and good main roads, there is an excellent network of lightly trafficked rural roads – notably in the Borders and Galloway, Fife, Angus, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

If city based, or without your own transport, then several operators offer guided tours, day trips or longer, to some of Scotland’s finest landscapes. It’s a good way of viewing areas such as beautiful Loch Lomond or the rugged grandeur of Glen Coe.

Public transport, with its integrated train, ferry and bus timetables, offers plenty of options. For example, the unforgettable rail journey from Fort William to Mallaig offers stunning island views. Then take the ferry to Armadale on Skye, bus to a choice of island places, admiring the awesome Cuillin Hills en route, before returning to Glasgow or Edinburgh via the Skye Bridge and Inverness. Altogether, a straightforward itinerary – but so rewarding.

Independent travellers with their own transport have an excellent choice of signposted national tourist routes and themed itineraries. The Galloway National Tourist Route takes in the places associated with Robert Burns, Scotland’s famous poet, as well as historic properties such as Threave Castle. While touring, check special discounts available through schemes such as Historic Scotland’s Explorer Pass if visiting several historic sites. Wherever you tour, look out for the brown ‘Thistle Signs’ by the road that point the way to all kinds of walks, trails, attractions and adventures.

▲ The sandy beach at Traigh an Iar, Isle of Harris, Outer Hebrides.
▲ Calanais Standing Stones, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides.
There are countless ways to explore Scotland. You can choose from 12 signposted National Tourist Routes or our themed itineraries. Here are two examples.

**ESSENTIAL SCOTLAND**

So many options: scenic splendour, castles, whisky, golf, ceilidhs, islands and lots more, including Scotland’s vibrant cities. Capture the essence of Scotland in this unforgettable journey.

**Day 1**
Explore Edinburgh, with its unrivalled cultural choice and the Old Town at its historic heart. Learn about Edinburgh’s place in Scottish history at free museums such as the People’s Story Museum and the National Museum of Scotland.

**Day 2**
Go north and east for St Andrews in Fife, via the picturesque ‘East Neuk’ fishing villages. There are popular fish and chip shops (Anstruther and Pittenweem) en route, and famous cakes and sweetmeats in a St Andrews bakery. Have a little adventure on the Chan Walk at Elie too – an exciting way of exploring the rocky coastline.

**Day 3**
Travel north via Dundee to Aberdeen, home to Scotland’s official Castle Trail which highlights 17 fine castles, ruins and stately homes. Venture inside the boundaries of the rugged Cairngorms National Park, where the funicular railway offers great views of the UK’s highest summits.

**Day 4/5**
Head up the coast to Inverness and north to the ferry port of Scrabster. A trip to Orkney by ferry can extend your route by at least four days. The Heart of Neolithic Orkney is a UNESCO World Heritage Site including Skara Brae and the standing stones of the Ring of Brodgar. Pick up traditional crafts in the shops of Stromness and follow signs for the Orkney Craft Trail to see local artists at work. Take a ferry to Shetland to see further prehistoric monuments such as Mousa Broch and, like Orkney, spectacular seabird colonies.

Otherwise continue west on the mainland to explore the coastline and Smoo Cave. Stay overnight at Durness.

**Day 6**
Turn south, crossing the Kyle of Lochalsh Bridge, reaching Lochinver via the Drumbeag road. Lochinver has an award-winning pie shop. Continue through the wild landscape of Inverpolly to rejoin the main road and reach Ullapool. An afternoon is all you need for an adventurous scramble on the little mountain called Stac Polly.

**Day 7/8**
From Ullapool, take the ferry to Stornoway in the Outer Hebrides to view the mysterious standing stones at Calanais. Strongholds of Gaelic culture, these islands on the edge of Europe are a romantic destination, with dazzling beaches, big skies and spectacular sunsets. Travel south to Tarbert, the economic and political centre of Harris, and take the ferry to Uig in Skye.

**Day 9**
Skye’s rugged Cuillin Hills are best viewed by heading south from Uig, continuing through the island’s ‘capital’ Portree, and taking the A863 at Sligachan. Paths head into the famous hills from Glen Brittle. Nearby stands the iconic Durvagan Castle, the loch-side stronghold of the Chiefs of MacLeod.

**Day 10**
Head south and take the B8083 to Elgol for another breathtaking panorama, or travel down to the 20,000 acre estate of Clan Donald’s Armadale Castle. Cross Skye Bridge and travel south past Eilean Donan Castle on Loch Duich. Head through the Great Glen to Fort William, which sits beneath Ben Nevis, the UK’s highest mountain. Pass through Glen Coe with its perching Three Sisters summits, and cross the atmospheric Rannoch Moor. Journey through Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park to Stirling’s hilltop castle, Old Town Jail and striking Wallace Monument.

**Day 11**
From the Trossachs area, continue to Glasgow, Scotland’s largest city, with its great shopping, nightlife and cultural options. Track down an authentic ceilidh, a traditional Scottish get together with dance and song.

**SCOTTISH ISLAND-HOPPING**

Take a magical journey around some of Scotland’s most romantic islands. Each has its own heritage and story to tell – with its rhythms linked to the regular crossings and goings of the ferries. An excellent network of ferry services makes getting around straightforward and will give you the freedom to hop from island to island.

**Day 1**
Ardrossan is your departure point for the island of Arran. Visit Brodick Castle and enjoy the coastal circuit of the island, which is also noted for its food producers.

**Day 2**
Start at Brodick for luxury gifts from Arran Aromatics, or pick up some tasty cheese from a local shop on your way to Lochnanra Castle. The shore-side castle is associated with Robert the Bruce. Nearby, visit Isle of Arran Distillery before departing for Claonaig on the mainland. Head to Kenna Craig for the ferry to the island of Islay.

**Day 3**
Take in one of the famous malt distilleries such as Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig. Return to the north end of the island by way of the Islay Woollen Mill.

**Day 4**
Head for Port Askaig, passing Finlaggan, the former site of the power base of the Clan Donald, the Lords of the Isles. Distilleries such as Caol Ila and Bunnahabhain are also close by. Take the short ferry crossing for Jura, a wild island with just one road and one distillery!

**Day 5**
Leave Islay for Kenna Craig and take the road north for Oban. Argyll boasts many restaurants that serve locally sourced seafood as well as freshwater Scottish salmon. Dine on freshly caught fish by the port of Oban, the gateway to the islands on the western seaboard, before taking the ferry to the Isle of Mull.

**Day 6**
The Isle of Mull has many attractions, including Duart Castle, home of the chiefs of Clan Maclean, which overlooks the Sound of Mull. Tour westwards along the Ross of Mull for the island of Iona, sometimes called the ‘Cradle of Christianity’ in Scotland.

**Day 7**
Make a tour of the rugged western seaboard of Mull, by Loch Scridain and Loch na Keal, then return to Tobermory to leave the island for Kihoaon on Ardnamurchan. This rugged peninsula – almost an island – leads out to Ardnamurchan Point, the most westerly point in the UK mainland.

These are just two possible itineraries, but there are many more routes to download on www.visitscotland.com

*The Croft House museum, near Boddam, Shetland.*
A flavour of Scotland

Scotland’s dining scene is flourishing as more and more chefs realise the potential of the quality ingredients that originate in Scotland. Grass-fed beef and lamb from Aberdeenshire, venison from Highland hills, whitefish from the North Sea, shellfish of all kinds from the pure environment of the inshore waters of the western seaboard, game birds such as pheasant – these are just some of the choices for a main course.
Add soft fruits from Angus, greens and herbs from productive fields and kitchen gardens, plus traditional ingredients such as oats, and it becomes the basis for much kitchen creativity and an authentically Scottish modern cuisine.

Haggis is the best known of Scotland’s traditional dishes and sometimes appears as a starter or as part of a main dish. To sample Scotland’s tradition of soup making, try Cullen Skink, a fish soup made from smoked haddock and potatoes. Oatmeal, a traditional Scottish staple, means porridge, oatcakes and desserts including cranachan (toasted oats, honey, whisky, cream and berries).

Other examples of authentic tastes include Scottish cheeses, such as Lanark Blue and Ross-shire Caboc; various smoked fish of which the Arbroath Smokie is the most famous; clootie dumpling (made with dried fruit and spices); and a range of bakery goods, most notably the buttery, close relative of the French croissant!

Scottish fast food with a traditional slant means fish and chips. The very best of these outlets are certainly the most economical way to sample Scotland’s fresh fish and there are many award-winning establishments achieving fame beyond the communities they serve. And there is even a mobile fish and chip van in Tobermory, Mull, notable for serving delicious fish only a few paces from where it is landed! Freshness guaranteed.

Scotland’s farmers’ markets are also thriving. From small beginnings, these gatherings, where local producers sell direct to consumers, have gained momentum right across the country. Many Scottish towns have monthly markets on Saturdays, while Edinburgh’s market operates weekly.

However, good food is only one element in Scottish hospitality. In a country where looking after guests is part of a long tradition, Scotland has a superb choice of accommodation of all kinds. Long-established country house and castle hotels head a list that also includes chic boutique-style hotels and restaurants with rooms, as well as guest houses and B&Bs where home-baking may be another reminder of the traditions of hospitality.


We assess the presentation, quality and service of food in every kind of eating establishment in Scotland giving you a reliable and authoritative guide to eating out in Scotland. Look out for our Taste Our Best logo.
Scotland – The Home of Golf

Scotland is The Home of Golf and boasts a fascinating golfing history which dates back over 600 years. With high profile events including The Ryder Cup, attractive courses available for all abilities, and a range of discount passes, 2014 is an ideal year to visit, play and watch golf.
With over 550 courses including championship links courses like St Andrews, Turnberry, and Muirfield, as well as local 9-hole greens, classic parklands and challenging heathland, Scotland offers diverse play for all standards of golfer.

Enjoy stunning views at coastal links such as Machrihanish and watch out for natural obstacles including the grazing sheep that act as green keepers! The Carrick, on the banks of Loch Lomond, has excellent waterside views whilst on the Banchory course, watch out for the River Dee which comes into play as a water hazard.

Scotland’s long daylight hours in summer mean that late tee-times are possible. Courses are well maintained, often playable for most of the year, with average fees as little as £40.

The Ryder Cup is returning in 2014 to Gleneagles, the venue of the first matches ever played between professional British and US golfers in 1921, which acted as the precursor to the first Ryder Cup in 1927.

Other great events on the 2014 golfing calendar include the Scottish Hydro Challenge at Spey Valley in June, the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open at Royal Aberdeen in July, and both the Aberdeen Asset Management Ladies Scottish Open at Archerfield and the Scottish Hydro Senior Open at St Andrews in August. In October, the competition season closes with the annual Dunhill Links Championship at Carnoustie, St Andrews and Kingsbarns.

In 2015 The Open Championship is in St Andrews and in 2016, at Royal Troon, giving you the chance to watch this prestigious event on Scotland’s top courses, as the best golfers in the world fight for the Claret Jug.

In September 2014, the golfing world’s attention will centre on Scotland, The Home of Golf, as we host The 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles in Perthshire. So there’s no better time to start planning that golf break to Scotland; and with over 550 courses, there’s always going to be a tee time available to fit into your plans. Visit our dedicated Ryder Cup pages: www.rydercup2014.com

For more information on over 550 courses across Scotland, special golf passes and great deals, check out www.visitscotland.com/golf
Come walk in the footsteps of your ancestors

To ‘walk in your ancestors’ footsteps’ is no cliché but an experience easily realised, thanks to Scotland’s genealogical resources and ancestral events. During Homecoming Scotland 2014 you can experience first-hand where your ancestors lived and worked. What will you discover?
Track down your clan tartan, touch the walls of your family castle, or see if your ancestors were listed in the Poor Law records – a reminder that not all Scots were living the high life! Take that first step to explore your past and your Scottish homecoming will be a personal, fascinating journey.

Start at one of the archives which are located across the country, such as the ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh. There are also excellent archives at local registrars’ offices and libraries throughout Scotland, as well as genealogical specialists.

This year is the perfect time to come home to the land of your forefathers as Homecoming Scotland 2014 offers a year-long programme of events to help you discover the tales of your ancestors and meet local Scots and clansmen from around the world. The amazing programme will feature hundreds of events, festivals and Highland games.

At Bannockburn from 28 – 30 June, people will gather from around the world to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the famous battle. Don’t miss three days of battle re-enactments, medieval villages, music, theatre and local produce. On 27 June, Scotland welcomes pipers, drummers, dancers and clan members from across the world to take part in Pipefest Stirling which includes a parade through the city of Stirling.

Visit www.visitscotland.com/ancestry to plan your own personal ancestral journey. Find out about your clan, tartan and ancestral home, download clan touring itineraries, check out our Ancestral Welcome members and sign up for our e-newsletter. Don’t just learn about your Scottish heritage – live it!
A sense of space

Scotland’s beautiful countryside offers wide and varied landscapes to explore, whether by foot, bike, or boat. In Scotland, everyone is entitled to their right to roam, meaning that you are free to explore the land, as long as you consider other countryside users by following the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
The country has an excellent range of signposted paths and nature trails through a variety of landscapes. You can use Scotland’s Countryside Ranger Service, nature reserve wardens, walking holiday operators and walking festivals to join organised walking and wildlife activities for a whole range of levels. If you are a good walker, you could even take on one of the 282 Scottish mountains classified as Munros, which are all over 914m in height.

Scotland also has a variety of official long distance footpaths which can be sampled in short sections over one day. Most popular is the West Highland Way between the outskirts of Glasgow and Fort William. This year will see the launch of the John Muir Way, a newly extended 130-mile trail running from Dunbar on the east coast to Helensburgh in the west. You can travel across the country by bike using the National Cycle Routes, and will find plenty of paths and dedicated mountain biking areas. Tentsmuir Forest on Fife’s east coast is an ideal place for a gentle afternoon ride, with picnic spots and viewpoints along the way. The Nevis Range by Fort William has a great reputation for mountain biking, and hosts the annual UCI Mountain Bike World Cup.

An important part of enjoying the outdoors is encountering Scotland’s wildlife. On even short walks at places like Glen Muick on Royal Deeside, you can expect to see red deer, widespread in the Highlands. Many rare animal species have been re-introduced to their natural habitats, such as the sea eagles which can be spotted from the island of Mull. Another re-introduction success is to be found on the Red Kite Trail round Loch Ken where these birds are thriving.

To admire Scotland’s beautiful coastline and spot puffins, seals and seabirds you should take a boat trip. From Oban you can enjoy an excursion to the famous Corryvreckan Whirlpool at the north end of Jura. Look out for whales and dolphins on the way. Try sea kayaking as a fun, environmentally friendly way of getting close to wildlife.

To find out more about walking, cycling and watersports in Scotland, visit

www.visitscotland.com
Scotland on screen

Scotland’s spectacular landscapes, quality of light, its people and its stories have long been immortalised on the silver screen. For many, it’s been the next best thing to being here but the only way to really appreciate the magic and beauty is to see it for yourself.

The dramatic hills of Glen Nevis and Glen Coe were the setting for Braveheart, the portrayal of one of the country’s most iconic figures, featuring Mel Gibson as William Wallace and detailing the struggle against English occupation in the 13th century. Highlander, starring Christopher Lambert and Sean Connery, featured these same landscapes alongside romantic Eilean Donan Castle, also recognisable for its appearance in the James Bond movie The World Is Not Enough. More recently Glen Coe provided the backdrop to dramatic scenes for Skyfall.

In The Eagle, Channing Tatum and Jamie Bell uncover the truth behind the disappearance of the Ninth Legion in 120 AD on the ascending ridges of Bidean nam Bian in Lochaber, one of the highest and most scenic mountains in the country, and in the magnificent area of Applecross in Wester Ross.

Hitchcock’s The 39 Steps showcases dramatic action on the Forth Rail Bridge outside of Edinburgh, whilst Wigtownshire in the south west is the backdrop for the cult film The Wicker Man.

Scotland’s sparkling coastline has also been featured in well-loved films such as Chariots of Fire, filmed on the West Sands beach at St Andrews, and Local Hero, on Camusdarach beach in Morar. More recently, Oscar-winning biopic The Queen was filmed at the Balmoral Estate in Royal Deeside while The Da Vinci Code showcased Rosslyn Chapel, just outside of Edinburgh.

Scotland’s beautiful but compact capital city has proved the perfect location for a number of projects, including animated feature The Illusionist, which brings 1950s Edinburgh to life, and the adaptation of David Nicholls’ best-selling novel One Day. Starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess and detailing their lives as friends and lovers over 20 years, the film features iconic locations such as Calton Hill and the Georgian architecture of the city’s New Town.

Scotland’s myths and legends have inspired film makers for generations, and in 2012 Scotland was the land that inspired Disney•Pixar’s Brave. The story follows the flame-haired heroine Merida battling to change her fate and though Brave is set in a fictional medieval Scotland, Pixar’s animators were deeply influenced by the real country’s sheer rugged variety. Highland games, standing stones and clan culture are just a few of the firmly Scottish sights in this stunning lighthearted adventure.

Create your own movie magic by checking out our film itineraries on www.visitscotland.com
Music, dance, culture...and much more

Scotland is known for its world-class programme of events and in 2014 it’s greater than ever before. Events include The Ryder Cup and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, as well as Homecoming Scotland 2014 which is a year-long programme of events and activities showcasing all that’s great about Scotland. There will be arts, nature and ancestral heritage events as well as Highland games, historic events like Bannockburn Live and food and drink celebrations including Whisky Month.

For a full listing, check out www.visitscotland.com/events

JANUARY

1 January
THE BA’, Orkney
Historical street football game with around 400 players.
www.bagame.com

1-3 January
TURNER IN JANUARY, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh
Annual exhibition of Turner watercolours.
www.nationalgalleries.org

16 January-2 February
CELTIC CONNECTIONS, Glasgow
A celebration of traditional music.
www.celticconnections.com

25-27 January
BIG BURNS SUPPER, Dumfries
The World's Biggest Burns Night Celebration featuring a carnival parade with a cast of over 2,000 who will reignite the spirit of Homecoming in the Southern Capital on Burns Night.
www.bigburnssupper.com

28 January
UP HELLY AA, Lerwick, Shetland
Viking festival culminating in a torch-lit procession and the burning of a galley.
www.uphellyaa.org

FEBRUARY

1 February-30 November
SCOTTISH DIASPORA TAPESTRY, across Scotland
Created by volunteers in 25 countries around the world, depicting the experiences of migrant Scots over the centuries.
www.scottishdiasporatapestry.org

February - March
SNOWDROP FESTIVAL, across Scotland
Be charmed by the abundance of snowdrops across different venues at this blooming marvellous winter festival.
www.visitscotland.com/snowdrop

6-16 February
ELECTRIC GLEN, Rouken Glen Park, East Renfrewshire
The event showcases the diverse natural beauty of the park while characters from the past share their unique stories bringing the heritage and history of the park to life.
www.electricglen.co.uk

20 February-2 March
GLASGOW FILM FESTIVAL
Showcase of movies from around the world.
www.glasgowfilm.org/festival

MARCH

1-14 March
INVERNESS MUSIC FESTIVAL
Instrumental, speech, dance and vocal competitions.
www.invernessmusicfestival.org

5-9 March
STANZA, St Andrews
Scotland’s International Poetry Festival – a celebration of poetry.
www.stanzapoetry.org

14 March - 5 April
GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL
The twelfth Glasgow International Comedy Festival will present an exciting programme of the very best stand-up, comedy theatre, film, workshops and kids shows.
www.glasgowcomedyfestival.com.uk

APRIL

5-20 April
EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL
Stunning science for all ages.
www.sciencefestival.co.uk

6-12 April
ST ANDREWS GOLF WEEK
A week of golf in St Andrews “The Home of Golf”.
www.standrewsgolfweek.com

11-12 April
CORAL SCOTTISH GRAND NATIONAL FESTIVAL, Ayr Race Course
The highlight of the jumps season in Scotland.
www.ayr-racecourse.co.uk

11-12 April
MELROSE SEVENS
Rugby 7s tournament.
www.melrose7s.com

11-13 April
ORKNEY CEILIDH WEEKEND
A weekend of Traditional Dance Workshops and Ceilidhs.
www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/otda

17-26 April
JOHN MUIR FESTIVAL, across Scotland
A celebration of the life and legacy of John Muir, taking place along the length of the John Muir Way, a new national pathway that stretches from Dunbar in the East to Helensburgh in the West.
www.snh.gov.uk

30 April
BELTANE FIRE FESTIVAL, Edinburgh
A celebration of the arrival of summer.
www.beltane.org

MAY

1-4 May
SHETLAND FOLK FESTIVAL
Presenting the best folk music from around the globe.
www.shetlandfolkfestival.org

1-3 May
SPIRIT OF SPEYSIDE WHISKY FESTIVAL
Spiritied, Inspiring, Scottish, 300 events over 5 days. Discover the passion behind the world's finest whiskies.
www.spiritspeyside.com

1-31 May
WHISKY MONTH, across Scotland.
A month-long celebration of Scotland's national drink with whisky festivals and events across the country from the Highlands to the Isles, the lowlands to Speyside.
www.homecomingscotland.com

2-4 May
40TH GIRVAN FOLK FESTIVAL
Concerts, ceilidhs, competitions and sessions throughout the weekend.
www.girvanfolkfestival.co.uk

22-25 May
ORKNEY FOLK FESTIVAL
www.orkneyfolkfestival.com

22 May-1 June
PERTH FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS Annual arts festival.
www.perthfestival.co.uk

23-31 May
ISLAY FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND MALT
Feis ille is unique taste of Islays heritage, culture, hospitality as well as our world famous whisky.
www.theislayfestival.co.uk

24 May-8 June
TWEEDLOVE BIKE FESTIVAL 2014, Tweed Valley, Scottish Borders
The UK’s fastest growing cycling festival, held every year in the beautiful Tweed Valley.
www.tweedlove.com

30 May-1 June
GARDENING SCOTLAND, Edinburgh
Scotland’s national celebration of gardening and outdoor living.
www.gardeningscotland.com

JUNE

1 June-30 August
RETURN TO THE RIDINGS, Scottish Borders
The festivals surrounding these ride outs are steeped in tradition and celebrate borders history.
www.returntetheridings.co.uk

5-8 June
ANGUS GLENS WALKING FESTIVAL
This award-winning festival has walks to suit all tastes and abilities.
www.angusglenswalkingfestival.com

7 June
TASTE OF GRAMPIAN, Inverurie
Sample the wide range of quality produce from the north east of Scotland.
www.tasteofgrampin.co.uk

7-8 June
UCI MOUNTAIN BIKE WORLD CUP, Fort William
A stunning celebration of 2 wheeled action in the Highlands.
www.fortwilliamworldcup.co.uk

8 June
ARDROSSAN HIGHLAND GAMES, Memorial Playing Fields, Ardrssossan
www.ardrossanhighlandgames.org.uk

19-22 June
ROYAL HIGHLAND SHOW, Edinburgh
The highlight of the Scottish country calendar.
www.royalhighlandshow.org

28-30 June
TASTE OF GRAMPIAN, Inverurie
www.tasteofgrampin.co.uk

27-29 June
SCOTTISH TRADITIONAL BOAT FESTIVAL, Portsoy, Aberdeenshire
Festival with a special emphasis on boat building, restoration and sailing and on associated traditional crafts, music and art.
www.stbfportsoy.com

JULY

4-6 July
GWCT SCOTTISH GAME FAIR, Scone Palace, Perthshire
Demonstrating the importance of game and other wildlife to the Scottish countryside.
www.scottishfair.com

August
ST ANDREWS GOLF WEEK
www.standrewsgolfweek.com

September
TASTING OF SCOTLAND
www.tastingscotland.com
Your travel guide

Getting to Scotland is simple and straightforward and once you get here, some of the world’s most breathtaking landscapes are within easy reach.

Choose from a selection of nonstop flights from the US or Canada, or a wide range of connections through European hub airports including London, Amsterdam, Paris, Frankfurt and Dublin.

London is around an hour’s flight to Edinburgh or Glasgow, and Scotland’s other main airports enjoy a regular service from London and other UK cities. Onward travel from Scotland’s airports to the nearby city centers is quick and well co-ordinated.

Travelling around the country is effortless too, thanks to an extensive road network, excellent rail links and a comprehensive bus system. There’s also an efficient ferry service, taking passengers to and from Scotland’s islands.

NON-STOP FROM THE US AND CANADA

Air Canada Rouge
Toronto to Edinburgh
Tel: 1-800-247-2262
www.aircanada.com/rouge

Air Transat / Canadian Affair:
Calgary, Vancouver and Toronto to Glasgow
Air Transat
www.airtransat.ca
Toll Free: 001-866-847-1112

Europe Airpost
Halifax to Glasgow
Tel: 1 866 670 6059
www.europeairpost.com/en

Canadian Affair
Toll Free: 1-877-8 FLY2UK
www.canadianaffair.ca

Europe Airpost:
Halifax – Glasgow
Toll Free: 001 866 670 6059
www.europeairpost.com

United Airlines
Newark to Glasgow and Newark to Edinburgh, year round.
Chicago to Edinburgh, commencing May 2014, summer service
Tel: 1-800-864-8331
www.united.com

US Airways
Philadelphia to Glasgow, May to October.
Tel: 1-800-428-4322
www.usairways.com

Virgin Atlantic (via London), year round.
New York to Edinburgh and Aberdeen
Tel: 1-800-862-8621
www.virgin-atlantic.com

British Airways
US cities to London Heathrow with daily connections to Scotland
Tel: 1-800-247-9297
www.britishairways.com

Icelandair
Flights from Boston, DC, Denver, Minneapolis, New York, Orlando, and Seattle to Glasgow via Reykjavik.
Tel: 1-800-223-5500
www.icelandair.us

Virgin Atlantic
Tel: 1-800-862-8621
www.virgin-atlantic.com

Aer Lingus
US cities to Dublin Ireland with daily connections to Glasgow and Edinburgh.
Tel: 1-516-622-4226
www.aerlingus.com

INDIRECT FLIGHTS FROM THE US AND CANADA

British Airways
US cities to London Heathrow with daily connections to Scotland
Tel: 1-800-247-9297
www.britishairways.com

Icelandair
Flights from Boston, DC, Denver, Minneapolis, New York, Orlando, and Seattle to Glasgow via Reykjavik.
Tel: 1-800-223-5500
www.icelandair.us

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Where you stay is often as important as what you see. You name it, we’ve got it. Everything from five star hotels and exclusive lodges to bed and breakfasts, backpacker hostels and camping grounds by mountain streams. What about a castle, a lighthouse, a croft house, a haunted house, or even a wooden wigwam? No matter what your budget we’ll have something that’s right for you.

### Hotels
Scotland offers a very broad choice of hotels from smart, modern, boutique hotels in city centres to traditional, country house hotels. Outside of the peak season (from June to September), hotels may offer special prices so it’s worth asking about this when you book.

### Guest Houses and Bed & Breakfasts
Guest houses and bed & breakfasts are similar in style and can be found in cities, towns and villages and in the countryside where farmhouses are also available. They usually have a few rooms and they are normally run by the owners.

### Inns and Restaurants with Rooms
We have a range of inns and restaurants with rooms in Scotland. Inns offer a more traditional stay with the bar and informal dining very much at the heart of the business, whilst a restaurant with rooms will focus primarily on the dining experience.

### Castles and Historic Houses
It is possible to stay in a castle or historic house in Scotland. Choose from a range of high quality serviced or self-catering properties.

### Self-Catering
From traditional cottages to modern chalets and city apartments. The rental is arranged in advance and is normally on a weekly basis starting and ending on a Saturday.

You’ll be surprised where our search for quality takes us
VisitScotland, under the Scottish Tourist Board brand, runs the star grading schemes. We visit the length and breadth of Scotland to visit thousands of different properties every year and grade them on the things we know matter to you. Things like the standard of hospitality, service, and customer care to help you make a more informed choice. Look out for establishments carrying the VisitScotland quality award. VisitScotland Quality Assurance. Quality you can trust.

Establishments awarded gold stars have consistently achieved the highest levels of excellence within their star grading.

### Our Welcome Schemes
Our Welcome Schemes complement the star schemes. They tell you about establishments who pay particular attention to the specific needs of these visitors. As well as our Walkers Welcome and Cyclists Welcome schemes, there are similar schemes for anglers, bikers, classic cars, golfers, children, field sports, groups and ancestral tourism.

### Access all areas
Our access scheme enables visitors with physical disabilities to assess if businesses are suitable for their requirements.

- Unassisted wheelchair access
- Assisted wheelchair access
- Access for visitors with mobility difficulties

### Taste Our Best - food and drink award
We assess the presentation, quality and service of food in every kind of eating establishment throughout Scotland. Our new food and drink scheme ‘Taste Our Best’ gives a reliable and authoritative guide to eating out in Scotland.

You will be assured of a quality experience in businesses that have this award. Their menus feature Scottish produce; giving you increased choice.

You will also see EatScotland awards, our previous scheme which is being phased out and replaced by Taste Our Best. You can expect a quality dining experience in establishments with EatScotland awards.

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**Talk to our friendly experts!**

VisitScotland operates a national network of Information Centres staffed by experts who can provide you with everything you need to know about Scotland. They can help you with bookings for accommodation, attractions, activities, events and transport as well as supplying maps, guidebooks and advice on itinerary planning. They can even give you tips on anything from the best local walking or cycle routes to the best bar, café or restaurant. Keep an eye out for this sign or visit [www.visitscotland.com/wheretofindus](http://www.visitscotland.com/wheretofindus) for a full list of centres.

For information on VisitScotland Quality Assured properties throughout Scotland visit [www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com) or for information and advice to help you plan and book your next holiday e-mail info@visitscotland.com
Discover Scotland’s celebrated capital with our five star tours

GET OUR FREE APP!

edinburghtour.com

Some tours are not available over the Winter season, please check our website for details.
Scotland welcomes the world in 2014 and you’re invited to the party! Packed with brilliant moments, the Year of Homecoming will serve up a fantastic mix of events and festivals that celebrates the very best of Scotland: our breathtaking scenery, our mouthwatering food and drink, as well as our rich culture, creativity and ancestral heritage. Throughout the year and across the country, you’ll be very welcome so join us and be part of Homecoming Scotland 2014!

www.homecomingscotland.com

Glasgow 2014 XX Commonwealth Games
23.07-3.08.2014

17 SPORTS, 11 DAYS OF COMPETITION, 1 PLACE TO BE

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