



TIMBERBUSH
TOURS

2-DAY TOUR to EILEAN DONAN CASTLE, LOCH NESS & the WEST HIGHLANDS

DAY 1

We leave Edinburgh and head west on a motorway that links the capital to Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland and its industrial heartland.

From Glasgow, we pass Stirling on the right, the site of the **Battle of Bannockburn** where, in 1314, a Scottish army under **King Robert the Bruce** won a crucial victory against the English. Dominating the town is **Stirling Castle** which sits high on a large volcanic rock.

Prominently sited on a hill close to Stirling is the **Wallace Monument**, our first stop of the day. It is 67 metres high and was built in the 1860's to commemorate our great freedom fighter, **William Wallace**, who led an army against the English and defeated them at the **Battle of Stirling Bridge** in 1297. He was immortalised in the 1995 film 'Braveheart'. You will have the chance to visit the monument* and the museum inside which has Wallace's massive sword (1.7 metres long) on display. There are excellent views from the top.

At Stirling we head west. Soon we cross over the river Teith and as we do so, on the right, is the very imposing **Doone Castle**. Next we drive through **Callander**, and in the area where the Clan MacGregor reigned in the Middle Ages : the clans were extremely powerful at that time and the best known MacGregor was **Rob Roy** who was born in 1671.

At the next village, **Tyndrum**, the road divides and we head north into a very sparsely populated area. Soon pretty **Loch Tulla** comes into view before we drive up onto **Rannoch Moor**, a vast desolate area of moorland, small lochs & boulders that extends for a long way to the east (to the right of the road) while to the west are impressive mountains.

Now we are approaching **Glencoe**, the best known of all Scottish glens and full of atmosphere - beautiful, mysterious or menacing, depending on the weather and the light. Soon we reach the **Three Sisters of Glencoe** while up on the right is the **Aonach Eagach ridge** ("the notched ridge").

It was here in the winter of 1692 that the **Glencoe Massacre** took place. Under orders from the government, a troop of the Campbell clan massacred 38 of the Macdonalds of Glencoe even though they had been given hospitality by the MacDonalds for 12 days beforehand. Even today the Campbell name is associated with their treachery and abuse of the hospitality they had received. Near the west end of the glen there's a hotel where there is a notice saying that Campbells are not welcome!



TIMBERBUSH
TOURS

Beyond Glencoe we come to **Fort William**. Behind the town is **Ben Nevis**, the highest mountain in Britain at 1344 m. After a lovely drive we arrive at **Glenfinnan**. As well as its magnificent splendour, with **Loch Shiel** and the mountains surrounding it, this place has other attractions. It was here in 1745 that Bonnie Prince Charlie met the clans who agreed to support him in a Jacobite Uprising against the government in an attempt to regain the throne for his father : this followed a rebellion in 1688 that had forced his grandfather, King James II, off the throne. Also, there is a magnificent railway viaduct that was used in early Harry Potter films. There is a monument, associated with the Jacobites, that you can climb* but the best viewpoint for both the loch and the viaduct is on the hill behind the visitor centre, reached by an uneven, and often muddy, path.

After our visit to Glenfinnan we will return to Fort William for our overnight stay in the town.

DAY 2

As we leave Fort William we drive into the **Great Glen**, a major geological fault line cutting across the Highlands from Fort William to Inverness. It is 96 km long and contains 3 lochs. In the first half of the 19thc. a huge engineering project linked the lochs together by canals and also linked the lochs to the open sea on the east & west sides of Scotland, thereby providing a short-cut for ships. It is called the **Caledonian Canal** and was designed by a famous Scottish engineer, Thomas Telford. We will cross over the canal at 3 different places today and it may be that we will have to stop at least once when the bridge over the canal opens to allow boats through.

After driving alongside **Loch Lochy** we are into a large uninhabited area, full of beautiful scenery with mountains and lochs. Down below us is **Loch Garry** followed later by **Loch Loyne** and then **Loch Cluanie**.

After Loch Cluanie we drive through **Glenshiel**, one of the most beautiful glens in Scotland, with mountains towering above us on both sides. Beyond the glen we reach Loch Duich, a sea-loch, and we now come to one of Scotland's most impressive & photogenic castles, **Eilean Donan**. The name means "Donan's island" in gaelic (Donan was a 7th century holy man who lived on the tiny island) and the castle was built in the 13thc. to guard this part of the coast against Viking raids. It had a turbulent history and in 1719 it was almost completely destroyed by English warships. However the castle was restored about 100 years ago by the **Clan Macrae**, who still own it, and you will have the chance to tour the castle if you wish.*

We reach the famous **Loch Ness** so keep watching out for **Nessie, the Loch Ness Monster** ! The loch is 37 km long and is the second deepest in Scotland. There have been regular sightings of Nessie, the first recorded one being in 565. She is thought to be a plesiosaur and to be about 18 metres long with



TIMBERBUSH
TOURS

one large hump, a long neck (1.8 m) and a small head. There have been many scientific expeditions, some using mini-submarines and sonar, looking for confirmation of our world-famous monster although already we have quite strong evidence and over 1,000 sightings.

We will make a stop in the next village, **Fort Augustus** at the south end of Loch Ness. As well as being on the edge of the loch, the village has the Caledonian Canal going through the middle of it and you can see five locks which are like a giant staircase, transporting boats up or down between higher & lower levels.

Further on we pass **Blair Castle** on the left before driving into **Pitlochry**, a very pleasant town where we may make a short stop.

Next we pass by **Dunkeld**, an attractive little town that sits beside the river Tay, Scotland's longest river. Soon we come to the city of **Perth** and close by is **Scone Palace**: beside the palace is Moot Hill where, for several centuries, new Scottish kings were crowned while sitting on a large flat stone called the '**Stone of Destiny**'.

To return to Edinburgh we cross over the Firth of Forth, an inlet of the North Sea and you will see our famous **Forth Bridges**. Once over the Forth Road Bridge we return into Edinburgh.

* This is an optional extra – the cost for this attraction is not included in the price you have paid for the tour.

** Unfortunately the drive to Glenfinnan is not possible during the winter due to the reduced daylight hours at that time of year.