



TIMBERBUSH  
TOURS

## **2-DAY TOUR to LOCH NESS, INVERNESS and the HIGHLANDS**

### **DAY 1**

Our tour starts at the top end of the **Royal Mile** in Edinburgh's '**Old Town**'. We now travel west to Scotland's largest city, **Glasgow**. We will pick up our other passengers in the centre of the city.

Leaving Glasgow, we drive through the town of **Dumbarton**, and come to **Loch Lomond**. This is the third longest (37 km) & third deepest loch in Scotland and has the largest surface area of any loch or lake in Britain. We will make a stop at **Luss**, an attractive small village on the shore of Loch Lomond. There is a pleasant short circular walk through the village, down to the lochside and then along the beach and back to the car-park: there is also a café and shop.

We will leave Loch Lomond and drive through attractive **Glen Falloch** to the next village, **Tyndrum**, where the road divides and we head north into a very sparsely populated area. Soon pretty **Loch Tulla** comes into view and then we climb up onto **Rannoch Moor**, a huge 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. We pass **Buachaille Etive Mor** ("the great shepherd of Etive" in Gaelic), an impressive mountain that guards the east end of the glen. Soon we reach the narrow part of Glencoe where there are three mountains on the left, all similar to each other and called the Three Sisters of Glencoe. Glencoe has been used in many films and one part of the glen was used in the final part of the most recent James Bond film, "Skyfall".

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 twelve days beforehand. Even today the Campbell name is remembered for their treachery and their 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 !

Beyond Glencoe we come to two *sea-lochs*, **Loch Leven** & **Loch Linnhe** and at the north end of the latter is **Fort William**. Behind it is **Ben Nevis**, the highest mountain in Britain at 1344 metres.

Before long 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 has 3 lochs. After driving alongside **Loch Lochy** and then **Loch Oich** we reach **Fort Augustus** at the south end of Loch Ness. As we drive over the canal



TIMBERBUSH  
TOURS

in the middle of the village you can see five locks which allow boats to go up or down between the different levels of the canal.

We now drive up the whole length of 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 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 evidence of our world-famous monster.

We drive through **Invermoriston** and as we cross the river you will have a lovely view downriver if you are on the right of the bus while those on the left will see a very fine old bridge, built in 1813. Soon we reach **Urquhart Castle**, large and ruined but still very impressive, on the edge of the loch. Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> c., it changed hands several times over the next 400 years and it is around here that Nessie has been seen most often.

Beyond Loch Ness we come to **Inverness**, 'Capital of the Highlands' and the only town of any size in the north of Scotland. It lies beside the Moray Firth, part of the North Sea, and the river Ness flows through it with a 19<sup>th</sup> c. castle up above the river. Inverness is a lively town and is our overnight stop with a good choice of restaurants and pubs.

## **DAY 2**

A few kilometres east of Inverness is **Culloden Moor** where, on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1746, the Jacobite dream of regaining the throne following the exile of King James II, came to an end with a very heavy defeat for Bonnie Prince Charlie's army by a government force. The **Battle of Culloden** was the last battle to be fought on British soil. There is a Visitor Centre with a good shop & café or you can wander round the battlefield and imagine yourself as either a Jacobite or government soldier!

Close to Culloden is an ancient burial site, **Clava Cairns**, which dates back to about 4,000 years ago. We drive on from Clava to our next stop, **Tomatin Distillery\***, where you can learn how whisky is made and also try a wee dram. On the road again, soon the impressive **Cairngorm mountain range** will come into view in the distance. These mountains are part of the largest national park in Britain and five of the six highest mountains in Britain are here: it also has the largest of our five ski centres.

We will stop for lunch somewhere in or near **Aviemore** which is a popular ski resort all the year round. Further on we stop at **Ruthven Barracks**, built up on a small hill.



TIMBERBUSH  
TOURS

Further on **Blair Castle** is on the left - it is home to the Duke of Atholl, the only person in Britain allowed to keep a private army (it is about 100 strong and is only for ceremonial occasions !) Next we drive above a deep gorge, the **Pass of Killiecrankie** where a battle took place in 1689, before driving around **Pitlochry**, a very pleasant town which has two distilleries, a brewery, a theatre. **Loch Faskally**, which we drive over was created by the building of a large dam on the river, alongside which is a salmon ladder (a series of pools) to allow salmon to get above the dam on their journey up-river.

A little further on we will stop at the **Hermitage** for a gentle walk through a typical Scottish woodland as far as a very attractive waterfall. Very close by is **Dunkeld**, an attractive little town that sits beside the river Tay, Scotland's longest river and beside it is the village of **Birnam** which featured in 'Macbeth', one of William Shakespeare's most famous plays.

Soon we come to the city of **Perth** : close beside it is Moot Hill where, for several centuries, new Scottish kings were crowned while sitting on a large flat stone called the '**Stone of Destiny**'.

We then cross over the Firth of Forth, and return to Edinburgh.

\* The visit to Tomatin Distillery is an optional extra