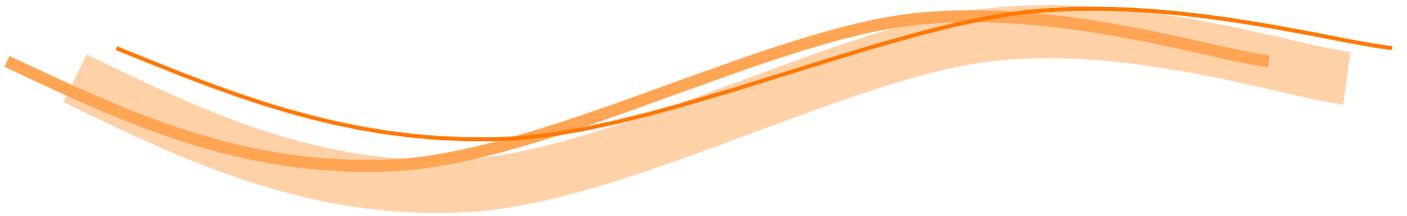




SCOTLAND with AIR CANADA





SCOTLAND	<p>Come with me across the Atlantic Ocean to a European country that boasts stunning scenery, fascinating history and a brave and enduring culture. And, as we will discover in these notes – delicious food and drink also await you when you visit. It's dear to the heart of many Canadians, who may even be able to trace their roots back to this magnificent country. Come to Scotland!</p>
Year of Food and Drink Scotland 2015	<p>In the Year of Food & Drink 2015, find out why Scotland is renowned for its unique produce from Stornoway Black Pudding to Arbroath Smokies. Scotland's food and drink comes from unspoilt habitats and varied weather, which are perfect for producing a wide variety of high quality fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, meat and much more.</p> <p>Breakfast There is everything from cold starters, including an assortment of juices, yoghurts, fresh fruits, preserves and cereals, to a steaming bowl of porridge, crispy toast, a full Scottish breakfast and a cup of tea or coffee.</p> <p>Full Scottish breakfast A full breakfast usually consists of a link sausage, bacon, eggs, tattie scone (potato scone), fried mushrooms, grilled tomatoes, baked beans, buttered toast and the Scottish favourite - black pudding. It certainly is a very complete meal, which will leave you feeling rather full when you finish your last bite. Served typically at breakfast time, but it is also common to feature on the menus as an 'all day' dish.</p> <p>Porridge No Scottish breakfast would be complete without the ubiquitous dish of porridge. Traditionally made with oatmeal and water and cooked with a touch of salt, it's stirred with a wooden spurtle, which prevents the porridge from congealing, and served hot in a bowl. It is also popular to add a little milk and toss in some dried fruits as well as sweeten it with a generous sprinkle of light brown sugar.</p> <p>Kippers You may also come across strongly flavoured kippers (cold smoked herring) served for breakfast. Once the quintessential British breakfast food in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, kippers are now enjoying a revival. Split in butterfly fashion, from tail to head, they are salted in brine and smoked over smouldering woodchips, and with only 125 calories per fillet and packed with protein, they provide a healthy way to start a day. Find out more about Scottish seafood.</p>

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Main Dishes

Black pudding

Essentially, black pudding is a mixture of suet, oats, blood, barley and a special blend of spices stuffed in a length of protein casing. You'll often find it in a Scottish breakfast served in B&Bs up and down the country, but it has recently become popular on the menus of top-class restaurants. It combines very well with pork, chicken, game and seafood as well as fruit such as pears, apple and rhubarb. Such is its importance that Stornoway Black Pudding has been awarded special protected status.

Haggis

Scotland's national dish is another type of savoury pudding and has been immortalised by Robert Burns' famous poem, 'Address to a Haggis.' Its origins are similar to that of the black pudding, with the main ingredients consisting of minced offal of a sheep, pig or cow mixed with suet, onions, oatmeal, spices and seasoning. Traditionally it was boiled in the stomach of the slaughtered animal but today synthetic casings are more widely used. Slightly spicy with an oaty texture, it is traditionally eaten with neeps and tatties (swede and potato) but it appears in Scottish restaurants and pubs in many other forms, from burgers to bon bons. Sometimes it'll come as part of a Scottish breakfast, or often you can pick up a haggis supper from a chip shop. Find out more about haggis.

Stovies

The basic ingredients of this winter warmer are meat, onions and potatoes. This stew was traditionally made from the leftovers of a Sunday roast dinner but you'll find it very easy to make from scratch. Recipes can vary, using chicken, beef, lamb or even tinned corned beef as the meat, and some versions include diced up carrot or swede. Often it is served up with oatcakes and pickled beetroot on the side.

Lorne sausage

Lorne sausage is sometimes referred to as sliced or square sausage for obvious reasons; sausage meat, either pork or beef, is set into a square shape and thinly sliced into portions. Grilled or fried, it is usually eaten in the morning as part of a full Scottish breakfast or in a soft roll.

Scotch pie

This savoury snack is a small, double-crust meat pie filled with minced meat. This traditional Scottish pie has an outer shell of hard crust pastry allowing you to hold the pie while eating it which makes it popular with

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take-away restaurants, bakeries, and at outdoor events such as football matches. The type, quantity and quality of the ingredients used by an individual piemaker are a closely guarded secret. This gives the scotch pie its distinctive individual character that separates it from a scotch pie made by another producer.

Bridie

A bridie or Forfar bridie is a type of meat pastry or pie, originally from the town of Forfar. The filling consists of minced beef, onions and seasoning. Forfar bakers traditionally use shortcrust pastry but similar products on flaky pastry or puff pastry are occasionally found.

Fish and chips

Fish and chips are one of the nation's most popular takeaway dishes. The dish consists of battered cod or haddock deep-fried and served with chips. You will find chip shops or 'chippies' in almost every town across the country, the best often found in coastal towns within sight of the fishing boats tied up in harbour. Made before your eyes, fresh and hot in your hands, it's an incomparable takeaway feast.

Desserts

Cranachan

This simple Scottish dessert comprises of fresh raspberries, whipped cream, honey and toasted oats. For an added punch, a dram of whisky can be added. Top chefs such as Delia Smith and Nigel Slater have put forward their own recipes of how this traditional dish should be prepared and served while Jamie Oliver and Heston Blumenthal have even suggested cranachan sundae recipes.

Atholl Brose

In recent years Atholl Brose has become another name for the popular dessert cranachan. Alternatively, it can be a traditional Scottish cocktail. The drink, named after the 1st Earl of Atholl, shares many of the same ingredients as cranachan such as honey, cream, whisky and oatmeal brose - oatmeal water.

Tablet

Tablet is a traditional Scottish sweet made from sugar, condensed milk and butter. This sugary confection is similar to fudge but with a harder, grainy texture. It is often flavoured with vanilla, and sometimes has nut pieces in it.

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	<p>Shortbread Scottish shortbread is a luxurious biscuit that you can really sink your teeth into. It is made using a generous amount of butter which gives it a crumbly, melt-in-the-mouth texture. They are traditionally baked in a round, flat shape, pricked with a fork and sprinkled with caster sugar.</p> <p>Cloutie dumpling A cloutie dumpling is a rich fruit pudding made with flour, breadcrumbs, dried fruit (sultanas and currants), suet, sugar, spice, with some milk and sometimes golden syrup to bind it. This classic Scottish dessert is best served with a drizzle of cream and a dram of whisky.</p>
Location	Larger than Nova Scotia, Scotland is two-thirds the size of England and Wales - the other two countries that constitute the kingdom of Great Britain – with a tenth of the total population. It is surrounded by sea on three sides: to the west and north by the Atlantic Ocean and on the east by the North Sea. Its only land border runs for approximately 96 km along the line of the Cheviot Hills in the north of England.
Geography	Scotland divides into three regions: the Islands and Highlands in the north, the Central Lowlands in the middle and the Southern Uplands to the south. Rising to 1,344 metres above sea level, Scotland's highest point is the summit of Ben Nevis, in Lochaber, while Scotland's longest river, the River Tay, flows for a distance of 190 kilometres. The land area of Scotland is 78,772 km ² roughly 30% of the area of the United Kingdom. The mainland of Scotland has nearly 10,000 kms of coastline.
Name	Scotland is derived from the Latin Scoti, the term applied to Gaels, people from what is now Scotland and Ireland, and the Dál Riata who lived on the islands and lands on either side of the the Irish Sea. By the 11th century at the latest, Scotia was being used to refer to Gaelic speaking Scotland north of the river Forth, alongside Albania or Albany, both derived from the Gaelic Alba. The use of the words Scots and Scotland to encompass all of what is now Scotland became common in the Late Middle Ages.
Population	There are 5.2 million Scots living in Scotland, but many more around the world, particularly in Canada, trace their roots back to the country. There are 1.8 million Ontarians with Scottish ancestry and over 150,000 in Quebec too. In total, there are over 4 million Canadians whose families originated in Scotland.
Language	English Despite a revival, the Gaelic (a Celtic language) is considered a “vernacular” spoken only by 3% of Scots. There is, however, a rich colloquial vocabulary in common usage. Examples are: bairn (child), loch (lake), lassie (girl), wee (small), ken (to know/to have knowledge), ceilidh (gathering, usually with traditional music), ben (mountain), and dram (shot of whisky).

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Currency	The British Pound is the local currency, even though some of the bank notes are very Scottish – it's still the same currency! Currently the Canadian Dollar is at 0.54 against the Pound (as at April 2015)
Tipping	There are no definite rules for tipping. If you feel that you have received good service then you may wish to leave a tip. This is most common in restaurants, where it is normal to leave 10% of the total bill but you should check to see if a service charge has already been included. Tipping in hotels is also at your discretion. It is not normal to tip bar staff.
Government	Scotland has partial self-government within the United Kingdom as well as representation in the UK Parliament. Executive and legislative powers have been devolved to, respectively, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh. The United Kingdom Parliament retains power over a set list of areas, including, for example, levels of UK taxes, social security, defense, international relations and broadcasting. The Scottish Parliament has legislative authority for all other areas relating to Scotland, as well as limited power to vary income tax. The Scottish people have recently voted against independence from Britain in a nationwide referendum.
Documentation	Passports are required for Canadians visiting Scotland.
Time zone	Scotland is 5 hours ahead of EST, Ontario and Quebec.
Health	Good medical care is widely available. Visitors who become ill while in Scotland are eligible for free emergency treatment at National Health Service Accident and Emergency hospital departments. Don't forget travel insurance for all trips outside your home province.
Safety tips	Scotland is one of the safest countries in the world even at night, when people may walk alone with confidence.

CLIMATE	
General climate	<p>Scottish weather isn't always the best and is extremely variable, but give it time and the sun will soon be shining. You might come across the odd 'dreich' day, where the weather is wet and overcast, but soon enough you'll be able to see the bright blue skies of Scotland and the sun sits proudly in the sky.</p> <p>July and August are normally the warmest months with average temperatures of 15-19°C. The days are very long in summer as Scotland is significantly further north than Toronto and Montreal. The driest months in Scotland tend to be between April and June, when temperatures average around 15° C, they even reach 28C at their peak</p>
Today's weather	Edinburgh has sun and clouds today (17 th April 2015) and a temperature of 17C.
Best time to visit	Scotland has a milder climate in winter than Eastern Canada due to the warming effects of the Gulf Stream, so you can visit any time of year. The summer months are the warmest and the most popular, but spring and autumn are often glorious times to visit Scotland too.

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GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	<p>Air Canada route feature the only non-stop flights from Canada to Edinburgh in 2015. Flights depart Toronto for Edinburgh four times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays from June 15 – Oct. 13, 2015.</p> <p>Air Canada's flight timings on the Toronto Edinburgh route are excellent. Flights depart Toronto at 18.55 and arrive in Edinburgh at 06.45 the next day.</p> <p>Flights depart Edinburgh at 08.20 and arrive in Toronto at 10.50 same day.</p> <p>Flight time is approximately 6 hours 50 minutes.</p> <p>Flights depart Toronto for Edinburgh four times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.</p>
Cities	<p>Edinburgh: has been referred to as Europe's prettiest city; the capital, it is so steeped in tradition and venerable in age it is listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Built on seven hills like Rome, its topography adds an extra beauty to the architecture, divided chronologically between the ancient streets and the looming castle of the Old Town, and the elegant, classical buildings of the New Town (which, in spite of its name, dates back to the golden age of the late 18th Century). Its population is 584,000.</p> <p>Glasgow: Scotland's largest city with a population of 1.2 million, Glasgow leapt to prominence in the 19th Century when it became one of the greatest commercial hubs in Britain, feeding the furnaces of the sprawling Empire. Today the city has reclaimed its fame as a centre of style and Britain's finest Victorian city, through stunning architecture, a thumping cultural pulse, and a sizzling restaurant scene. Glasgow has earned bragging rights as the UK's coolest city.</p>
Distances	Edinburgh to Glasgow: 72 km; Glasgow to Fort William: 173 kms, to Thurso: 469 km; to London: 650 km.
Ferries	Regular ferry services operate between the Scottish mainland and island communities. These services are mostly run by Caledonian MacBrayne, but some are operated by local councils. Other ferry routes, served by multiple companies, connect to Northern Ireland, Belgium, Norway, the Faroe Islands and also Iceland.
Cruises	Cruising Along the Caledonian Canal: In 1822, a group of enterprising Scots connected three of the Highlands' longest lakes (lochs Ness, Lochy, and Oich) with a canal linking Britain's east and west coasts. Since then, barges have hauled everything from grain to building supplies without having to negotiate the wild storms off Scotland's northernmost tips. Now cabin cruisers tote a different kind of cargo along the Caledonian Canal: people seeking a spectacular waterborne

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	<p>view of the countryside that was tamed centuries ago by the Camerons, the Stewarts, and the MacDonalds. Caley Cruisers, based in Inverness www.caleycruisers.co.uk , rents out skippered boats by the week.</p>
<p>Trains</p>	<p>Scotland's rail network is managed by Transport Scotland. The East Coast and West Coast Main Railway lines and the Cross Country Line connect the major cities and towns of Scotland with each other and with the rail network in England. Domestic rail services within Scotland are operated by First ScotRail. Furthermore, Glasgow has a small integrated subway system since 1896. Currently, 15 stations serve a daily ridership of just under 40,000.</p> <p>The East Coast Main Line includes that section of the network that crosses the Firth of Forth via the Forth Bridge. Completed in 1890, this cantilever bridge has been described as "the one internationally recognised Scottish landmark".</p> <p>The cost of rail travel in Scotland is often quite low, and trains are generally punctual. Timetables are available at all stations, with free timetables covering only certain regions available at various stations For information on rail travel in Scotland, contact First ScotRail, www.firstgroup.com .</p> <p>The Royal Scotsman www.royalscotsman.com is one of the most luxurious trains in the world. The train passes by ancient mountains and mysterious lochs, through glens and across villages as you live in sumptuous surroundings. It's like being the guest at a private party. The train carries a maximum of 36 guests, each passenger enjoying plenty of space. Plush beds and opulent bathrooms are the order of the day. The classic tour calls for 4 nights aboard, and goes from the panoramic Southern Highlands to the more rugged grandeur of the Western Highlands. Superb cuisine and a long list of fine wines and choice malt whiskies are more reasons to hop aboard.</p>
<p>Car Rental</p>	<p>All major international car rental companies are available. Driving is on the left, remember!</p>
<p>Buses</p>	<p>The cheapest means of transport from London to Scotland is the bus and it's also the least expensive way to travel within Scotland. All major towns have a local bus service, and every tourist office can provide details about half- or full-day bus excursions to scenic highlights. If you want to explore a particular area, you can often avail yourself of an economical bus pass.</p> <p>Many adventurous travelers like to explore the country on one of the postal buses, which carry not only mail but also a limited number of passengers to rural areas. Ask at any local post office for details. A general timetable is available at the head post office in Edinburgh.</p> <p>Scottish Citylink Coaches are a good bet. They link the major cities (Glasgow and Edinburgh) with the two most popular tourist centres,</p>

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	<p>Inverness and Aviemore. Travel is fast and prices are low. For example, it takes only 3 hours to reach Aviemore from Edinburgh, and Inverness is just 3.5 hours from Edinburgh. A direct Scottish Citylink overnight coach makes the run from London to Aviemore and Inverness at reasonable fares.</p> <p>Coaches offer many other popular runs, including links between Glasgow and Fort William, Inverness and Ullapool, and Glasgow and Oban. For details, contact Rapsons www.rapsons.co.uk , or Scottish Citylink www.citylink.co.uk</p>
<p>Passes</p>	<p>The Scottish Freedom Pass provides unlimited transportation on trains and most ferries throughout Scotland and discounts for bus travel. It includes access to obscure bus routes to almost forgotten hamlets, free rides on ferries operated by Caledonian MacBrayne, and discounted fares with P&O Scottish Lines. The ferries connect to the Western Islands, the islands of the Clyde, and the Orkneys. The Freedom Pass covers the entire Scottish rail network and is usable from Carlisle, England (near the western Scotland-England border), and from Berwick-upon-Tweed, England (near the eastern Scotland-England border). In addition, if you have to fly into London and want to go straight to Scotland from there, a reduced rate is available for a round-trip ticket between London and Edinburgh or Glasgow for Travelpass holders.</p> <p>The 2015 Freedom Pass is available for 4 days' travel over an 8-day period for \$273 and 8 days' travel over a 15-day period for \$367.</p> <p>BritRail Passes allow unlimited travel in England, Scotland, and Wales on any British Rail scheduled train over the whole of the network during the validity of the pass without restrictions. BritRail Consecutive Pass allows you to travel for a consecutive number of days for a flat rate. Seniors (60 and over) qualify for discounts in first-class travel. Passengers 25 and under qualify for a 2nd Class Youth Pass. One child (under age 15) can travel free with each adult or senior pass by requesting the BritRail Family Pass when buying the adult pass. Additional children pay half the regular adult fare. BritRail Passes and vacation packages can be found at www.britrail.com</p> <p>Note that Eurailpass is not valid on trains in Great Britain.</p>
<p>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</p>	<p>Bed and Breakfasts: These are ideal for connecting with the locals and are very good value.</p> <p>Castle Hotels: e.g. Glenapp Castle, Ballantrae, Girvan, Ayrshire</p> <p>The castle is a spectacular example of the 'Scottish Baronial' style of architecture, set in magnificent private gardens and grounds high on a hill looking out over the Irish Sea to Arran, Ailsa Craig and the Mull of Kintyre.</p>

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LIFESTYLES	
Kids & Teens	<p>Children generally delight in exploring spooky old castles, heading up to the Highlands - where there are all those bagpipe players - and looking for the Loch Ness Monster near Inverness. So here are some ideas: Start at Edinburgh Castle at the beginning of the Royal Mile in the Old Town. Kids may be a bit bored with the State Apartments where Mary Queen of Scots once lived, but they will delight in the spooky 18th century prisons and the batteries of cannons that used to protect the fortress. Kids also enjoy the nearby Outlook Tower and Camera Obscura. At the Scott Monument, it's fun for the whole family to climb the 287 steps for the most panoramic view of the city. Before the afternoon ends, spend at least an hour and a half taking in Our Dynamic Earth, whose exhibits have been compared to an interpretation by Walt Disney. Kids push buttons to simulate everything from earthquakes to meteor showers.</p> <p>Take your kids aboard the luxury yacht Britannia, once used by Queen Elizabeth II herself. After that, a visit to Edinburgh Zoo, with its more than 1,500 animals, including some endangered species is recommended. End the day by wandering through The Real Mary King's Close, which stays open until 9pm in summer. This was the once-thriving underground part of the Old Town, where the "deepest secrets" are hidden in the warren of almost buried streets, or "closes." Kids seem to expect Robert Louis Stevenson's "Mr. Hyde" to emerge at any minute.</p> <p>Deep Sea World is Scotland's most comprehensive and dramatic menagerie of water creatures, including its most ferocious sharks. Allow 90 minutes for this attraction, which is 19km west of Edinburgh's centre. Stirling, an ancient town, lying between the rivers Forth and Clyde, is famed for its castle. Here the attraction is Stirling Castle, where Mary Queen of Scots lived as an infant monarch. Children especially enjoy going through the on-site Museum of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, with all the pipe banners and other paraphernalia. Visit Bannockburn nearby, where Robert the Bruce once summoned his "Braveheart" army to defeat Edward II in 1314. Kids find the audiovisual presentation of this violent story at the Bannockburn Heritage Centre as fascinating as Mel Gibson's own Braveheart movie.</p> <p>In Glasgow, the Waverley, the world's last seagoing paddle steamer, will carry you to scenic places along the Firth of Clyde. You can have lunch aboard. Back in Glasgow visit the Glasgow Science Centre, a kid-friendly favorite complete with a Space Theatre and plenty of hands-on activities for children. The Museum of Transport has lots of ship models which intrigue kids.</p> <p>Further north, drive through the hauntingly beautiful Glencoe, scene of</p>

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	<p>the famous massacre of 1692, when the Campbells did in the MacDonalds. Kids are fascinated by the audiovisual presentation shown at the Glencoe Visitor Centre.</p> <p>And then there's Loch Ness: stop at the little village of Drumnadrochit to see the official Loch Ness Monster Exhibition. With its lasers and visual effects, this exhibition is definitely a kid pleaser. After you've seen the exhibition, it's great fun for families to explore the ruins of Urquhart Castle, which overlooks the loch. It is from here that most sightings of the Loch Ness Monster are reported.</p> <p>You can explore the Culloden Battlefield, where Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Jacobite army were crushed by the English. Kids also like to walk the ramparts, a distance of 1.6km, found at the Fort George and Queen's Own Highlanders Regimental Museum in Inverness.</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>Stay in a castle, cruise gently along a Highlands loch, take a picnic lunch on a hike over the heathered moors, take in a sunset over a Western Isle, ride a deserted Scottish beach or skip barefoot across the sands...there's so many ways to kindle romance in Scotland!</p>
<p>Genealogy</p>	<p>If you hail from Scotland - trace your roots. Don't just learn about your Scottish heritage - live it! Experience first-hand the places your ancestors lived and worked. Try on the kilt of your clan, touch the walls of your family castle and see the very documents that chronicle their lives.</p> <p>Scotland has an unrivalled range, depth, quality and accessibility of ancestral archives and historical resources across the country. Visit one of the local family history centres, registrars offices or historical buildings to access their records. You'll receive a friendly welcome from one of the local experts and you can ask them any questions you might have.</p> <p>The main centre you can visit in Edinburgh - ScotlandsPeople – which has one of the largest online sources of original genealogical information; with almost 80 million records to access there is every chance that you will be able to connect with your own Scottish ancestry. Check out www.Scotlandspeople.gov.uk to start your search.</p> <p>The www.Ancetralscotland.com website is the official ancestral tourism website of VisitScotland - this unique online resource provides a wealth of information for those wishing to make that trip 'home' to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors. Start planning your own personal ancestral trip now with the clan surname search and clan touring itineraries.</p> <p>Other useful genealogy websites are: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk</p>

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	www.nls.uk/maps www.abdn.ac.uk/emigration/methodology.html
Zoomers	<p>Independent or guided touring – you have a choice here. If you prefer the latter, try Insight, Trafalgar or Globus. There are lots of discounts available to older visitors too, from rail and bus passes to entry into many of the big attractions. Just make sure you have the appropriate identification available.</p>

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>Rosslyn Chapel: Admittedly, you may have to extend your stay for this one as the fantastic stone carvings of this richly decorated late- Gothic church have defied convincing explanation for more than 500 years. The church's close associations with Freemasonry and the Knights Templars have spawned a raft of conspiracy theories that claim that the carvings hold the key to the whereabouts of various legendary objects stored at Rosslyn including the Holy Grail. The chapel featured in the blockbuster novel, The Da Vinci Code and its popularity as a major pilgrimage site for the curious has soared.</p>
History	<p>Wherever you travel in Scotland, from the cities to the remotest corners, the country's unusually dramatic history lies waiting to be discovered just beneath the surface of the present. Dating back to 2000 BC, the standing stones at Callanish hint at early appreciation of astrology. Living on the western Isle of Skye, the chief of the MacLeod clan traces a direct ancestral link back to the Vikings who settled here in the 9th Century. Every New Year's Day, the ball game of Ba' rages through the streets of Kirkwall in the Orkneys as it has for countless centuries. And Cawdor Castle, where Macbeth carried out his bloody ambitions in the 11th Century, remains one of the most romantic and best preserved fortresses.</p> <p>No visit to Edinburgh is complete without a stroll through the polished halls of Holyrood Palace, where Mary Queen of Scots witnessed the murder of her trusted secretary by her jealous husband Lord Darnley in 1556. Nearby, the Writer's Museum displays the desk at which Robert Burns wrote his evocative poetry, and the pipe smoked by Walter Scott as he brought Ivanhoe to life. The Golf Museum at St. Andrews gives context to the game once outlawed in the 17th Century because its popularity was causing soldiers to neglect archery practice. At another royal retreat, Balmoral, Queen Victoria grieved the loss of her husband Albert, walking the heather-tinted Highlands in the company of her groom, Mr. Brown.</p> <p>The nearness of the past that permeates the whole Scottish experience is perhaps best summarized by the Stone of Destiny. In 1292, the Scots' coronation emblem was taken from Scone Abbey by the invading</p>

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	<p>Edward I of England and held in Westminster Abbey in London. After 700 years of effort, it was finally returned in 1996. Three years later, in 1999, the Scottish Parliament was re-established in Edinburgh, 292 years after it was abolished by Earl of Seafield on May 1, 1707. Although the British Parliament in Westminster, London, still has governance over national issues, the Scottish body has authority over Scotland's affairs.</p>
<p>Books</p>	<p>Frommer's have got Scotland covered from all angles – here are my recommended reads: Frommer's Scotland, 11th Edition Frommer's Best Walking Trips in Scotland Frommer's Scotland's Best Loved Driving Tours</p>
<p>1000 Places to See Before You Die</p>	<p>Scottish golf; The Castle Trail, Grampians; The Hebrides; Isle of Skye; Scotch Whiskey Trail; Highland Games; Loch Ness; I nverlochy Castle (hotel); Edinburgh Castle; Hogmanay; Edinburgh Festival; The Royal Scotsman; The Mackintosh Trail, Glasgow; The Trossachs</p>
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>There are five UNESCO World Heritage sites in Scotland:</p> <p>St. Kilda is a small, out-lying archipelago of Hebridean islands which was inscribed as a "natural" site in 1986. In 2004, the site was extended to include a large amount of the surrounding marine features as well as the islands themselves. In July 2005 it became one of the few World Heritage Sites to hold joint status for its natural and cultural qualities. The islands were bequeathed to the National Trust for Scotland in 1957. They are also a Biosphere Reserve and a National Scenic Area.</p> <p>Edinburgh Old and New Towns were together inscribed as a World Heritage Site in 1996. The former includes the medieval Royal Mile which runs from Edinburgh Castle to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and is bordered to the north by the neo-classical 18th century "New Town" which includes Princes Street. It is managed by the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust.</p> <p>The Heart of Neolithic Orkney includes Maeshowe, the Ring of Brodgar, Skara Brae, the Standing Stones of Stenness and other</p>

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	<p>nearby sites. It was inscribed in 1999 and is managed by Historic Scotland.</p> <p>New Lanark was inscribed in 2001. It is a restored 18th century industrial cotton mill village in South Lanarkshire constructed by Robert Owen as an experiment in utopian socialism. Restoration was organised by the New Lanark Conservation Trust.</p> <p>The Antonine Wall was inscribed in July 2008. It is an extension to a wider series of sites in Austria, Germany and Slovakia entitled "Frontiers of the Roman Empire". The Wall is the remains of a defensive line made of turf circa 20 feet high, with nineteen forts. It was constructed after 139 AD and extended for 37 miles between the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde. The wall was over-run and abandoned soon after 160 AD, then occupied again for a brief period after 197 AD.</p>
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<p>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>Sport is an important element in Scottish culture, with the country hosting many of its own national sporting competitions. It enjoys independent representation at many international sporting events including the FIFA World Cup, the Rugby Union World Cup, the Rugby League World Cup, the Cricket World Cup and the Commonwealth Games.</p>
<p>Shinty</p>	<p>Shinty is a team game played with sticks and a ball. Shinty is now played mainly in the Scottish Highlands, and amongst Highland migrants to the big cities of Scotland, but it was formerly more widespread, being once competitively played on a widespread basis in England and other areas in the world where Scottish Highlanders migrated.</p> <p>While comparisons are often made with field hockey, the two games have several important differences. In shinty, a player is allowed to play the ball in the air and is allowed to use both sides of the stick, called a caman which is wooden and slanted on both sides. The stick may also be used to block and to tackle, although a player may not come down on an opponent's stick, a practice called hacking. Players may also tackle using the body as long as it is shoulder-to-shoulder.</p> <p>The game was derived from the same root as the Irish game of hurling but has developed different rules and features. These rules are governed by the Camanachd Association.</p> <p>Shinty is also one of the forebears of ice hockey: in 1800, Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia played a game on ice at Windsor. In Canada, informal hockey games are still called shinny.</p>
<p>Golf</p>	<p>The Fife town of St. Andrews is known internationally as the Home of golf and to many golfers the Old Course, an ancient links course dating to before 1574, is considered to be a site of pilgrimage. There are many</p>

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	<p>other famous golf courses in Scotland, including Carnoustie, Gleneagles, Muirfield, and Royal Troon</p>
Fishing	<p>Scotland is best known in fishing circles for its Atlantic Salmon; fly fishing for these elusive and beautiful fish was a life-long passion of my father, especially on the River Tweed. Here are some suggestions:</p> <p>The Borders & Galloway Regions: Sea fishing is pure heaven in the Solway Firth, especially near Port William and Portpatrick villages, in the vicinity of Loch Ryan, and also along the shore of the Isle of Whithorn. The elusive salmon is best pursued along the River Tweed, and the lesser-known hill lochans are ideal for trout fishermen. Local tourist offices distribute two helpful guides: A Comprehensive Guide to Scottish Borders Angling and Castabout Anglers Guide to Dumfries and Galloway.</p> <p>Argyll & the Southern Hebrides: This much-visited area in western Scotland is split in two by the long peninsula of Kintyre. The topography is decidedly northern Atlantic, distinguished by open sea and loch, and the Firth of Clyde separates the region from the Inner Hebrides. Along with about 50 prime freshwater-angling sites, Argyll and the Southern Hebrides contain some two dozen villages with fantastic sea fishing.</p> <p>Tayside: The northeast section of Scotland is filled not only with major rivers - the Don, Dee, Ythan, and Deveron - but with smaller ones, too, such as the Ugie, all ideal for salmon fishing. Besides the rivers, numerous estuaries and lochs make this one of the country's best areas for game fishing. Local tourist offices keep abreast of the details about boat rentals and permit prices, and some country hotels offer fishing packages.</p> <p>Sutherland & Northern Highlands: Sutherland's myriad lochs provide endless possibilities for anglers. Trout fishing is the big lure, and local tourist offices will tell you all about boats and permits. Not only is the fishing superb, but your hotel cook may also prepare your catch for you.</p>
Horse riding	<p>Horseback riding through the Highlands & Argyll... There's nothing like an equestrian excursion through the Highlands' fragrant heather and over its lichen-covered rocks. One of Scotland's biggest stables is the Highland Riding Centre, Drumnadrochit www.borlum.co.uk . For scenic rides across the moors, Highlands, and headlands of the Argyll, try the Ardfern Riding Centre, Loch Gilphead (tel. 01852/500-632).</p>
Hiking	<p>Scotland's Great Trails are distinctively waymarked, easily accessible and allow you to discover Scotland's beautiful natural landscapes. From mountains, lochs and forests to coastal paths and riverside walks as well as historical sites and Scotland's fantastic wildlife, there are</p>

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	<p>plenty of stunning natural sights to behold. Take the family and tick off a bite-sized chunk of one of the routes, do a bit each weekend or tackle the whole route in one go.</p> <p>If you wish to see some of Scotland's best dramatic mountain and loch scenery, the Great Glen Way, Southern Upland Way, the Three Lochs Way and the West Highland Way traverse some of the most beautiful places in Scotland.</p> <p>Follow some of Scotland's iconic rivers from source to sea, on routes such as the Speyside Way which runs from Spey Bay in the Moray Firth, upriver to Aviemore, in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. Follow some other great river trails like the Annandale Way, the Clyde Walkway or the River Ayr Way.</p> <p>Explore some of Scotland's long coastline. Embark on the 187 kms of the spectacular Fife Coastal Path. You will discover fascinating wildlife, sandy beaches and quaint fishing villages. The Ayrshire Coastal Path, John Muir Way, Kintyre Way, Moray Coast Trail and West Island Way or new addition, the Berwickshire Coastal Path, also offer stunning coastal scenery.</p> <p>Uncover Scotland's rich and fascinating history on an historical trail. Follow in the footsteps of St Cuthbert on the St Cuthbert's Way or discover ancient abbeys on the Borders Abbeys Way, perfect for exploring the beautiful countryside of the Scottish Borders. Or why not follow in the footsteps of marauding medieval cattle thieves on the Cateran Trail or Scotland's most famous outlaw Rob Roy on the Rob Roy Way?</p> <p>If you are interested in transport and travel, discover canal towpaths, The Falkirk Wheel and old railway lines on some of the fantastic canal and railway routes, such as the Forth and Clyde Canal Towpath, the Dava Way and the Formartine and Buchan Way.</p> <p>The Munros: The highest mountains in Scotland are known as Munros, named after Sir Hugh T. Munro who in 1891 surveyed all the country's mountains above 3000 feet (914 metres) and produced his Tables which catalogued 236 peaks that he deemed to be individual mountains with 'sufficient separation' between each other. Over the years and with advances in surveying, there have been several revisions to Munro's original listing, the latest being in 1997. Currently, there are 284 recognized Munros.</p> <p>Frommer's Best Walking Trips in Scotland covers 57 walks all over Scotland, together with information on where to eat and stay.</p>
Cycling	<p>Ciclismo Classico has a Bike Across Scotland tour package. What better way to see Scotland's breathtaking scenery than riding along its beautiful seaside coasts and lochs, through its verdant hills, dramatic</p>

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	<p>munros and bucolic villages? There are two options for eight-day rides, departing from Inverness in the Highlands covering 400kms before ending in the coastal village of Gairloch.</p> <p>Package highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight-days of cycling - Accommodations at three- and four-star country inns - Rides through majestic countryside, along lochs, islands, forests, and dramatic mountains, including the highest pass in the UK! - Opportunities to view local wildlife, ranging from dolphins to osprey - A tour of the 13th century Urquhart Castle along the banks of Loch Ness - A taste of Scotland with locally-sourced and seasonal dining experiences - A whisky tasting at one of Scotland's oldest distilleries in Glen Ord
<p>Sailing & Watersports</p>	<p>Wherever you travel in Scotland, you're never far from the water. Windsurfing, canoeing, water-skiing, and sailing are just some of the activities available at a number of sailing centres and holiday parks. You'll find it easy to rent boats and equipment at any of the major resorts along Scotland's famous lakes.</p>

<p>CULTURE</p>	
<p>Arts</p>	<p>Scotland has a long and lively literary culture, which consists of the romantic poems of Robert Burns, the classic adventures of Robert Louis Stevenson and the fantasies of JM Barrie, as well as the literary work of many more authors.</p> <p>Scotland is renowned for its art, alongside its music and dance. Having garnered a strong reputation throughout the years thanks to pieces including Allan Ramsay's 18th century portraits and Douglas Gordon's modern video footage, the variety of art on show is vast.</p> <p>National and international artwork is on show in Edinburgh in the National Galleries of Scotland that feature timeless pieces. The capital is also home to doggerfisher, which alongside Sorcha Dallas and Transmission in Glasgow and Dundee's DCA, showcases Scotland's thriving art scene of the present day.</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Scottish music often gets underestimated with bagpipes thought to be all the country has to offer, but this is far from the case. Scottish music goes far beyond the cèol beag, or 'little music', of Scotland's national instrument and you can listen to much more than just the sound of the pipes.</p> <p>Rock music has come to the fore in Scotland's music scene in recent years, with the T in the Park Music Festival being one example. Having now been put on for more than a decade, it is an opportunity for music fans to see the best talent produced by Scotland, including Paolo Nutini, Calvin Harris and Belle and Sebastian, as well as acts from around the</p>

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	<p>world. It isn't just festivals where toe-tapping music can be found either, with pubs across the country hosting regular sessions. You'll soon become familiar with Scottish music and have it stuck in your head; something that won't bother you one jot!</p> <p>The home of Scottish Opera is Glasgow's Theatre Royal, which is near the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. The theatre hosts a number of classic productions for which they've won awards, including The Ring Cycle, Madame Butterfly and Der Rosenkavalier. They have even toured their productions across the Scottish countryside, with Orkney and Shetland just two areas to be graced with their presence. The performance of Die Fledermaus has even been tweaked to make it into a contemporary show and open it up to a whole new audience.</p>
<p>Films</p>	<p>Scotland has long been immortalised on the silver screen. But the only way to really appreciate the magic is to see it for yourself! The spectacular hills, landscapes, castles and wildlife have inspired film makers the world over, most recently the team at Disney•Pixar for their animated movie Brave. The dramatic hills of Glen Nevis and Glen Coe were the setting for Braveheart, the portrayal of one of the Scotland's most iconic figures, William Wallace. The majestic Eilean Donan Castle is also recognisable for its appearance in Highlander, starring Christopher Lambert and Sean Connery, and the James Bond movie, The World Is Not Enough. The breathtaking train chase scene from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets features the Hogwarts Express crossing the historic Glenfinnan Viaduct. Experience the same magical journey with a trip on The Jacobite steam train between Fort William and Mallaig. Many Harry Potter scenes were shot in Scotland, and in Glen Coe you can enjoy Hagrid's views of the Torren Lochan. Scotland's sparkling coastline can be seen in Chariots of Fire, filmed on the West Sands beach at St Andrews. 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 capital city is the backdrop for the animation film The Illusionist, which brings 1950s Edinburgh to life, while the adaptation of David Nicholls' best-selling novel One Day, starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess, features iconic locations such as Calton Hill. Film enthusiasts also shouldn't miss the Glasgow Film Festival in February and the Edinburgh International Film Festival in June.</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>The National Galleries of Scotland The National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh comprise the five galleries, the original National Gallery itself, joined by the Weston Link</p>

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	<p>to the Royal Scottish Academy, which creates an elegant, neo-classical presence at the foot of the Mound. Renaissance Masters, Post-Impressionist works, and the most extensive collection of Scottish paintings in the world are found here. A few minutes away is the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, with the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the impressive Dada-based, Dean Gallery well worth an excursion north-west of Princes Street. If you don't feel like walking, take the free bus which operates between the five galleries.</p> <p>National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh Visit the 16 stunning new galleries dedicated to the natural world, cultures of the world, art and design and science and technology, exhibiting a range of artifacts from dinosaur bones to designer chairs and mummies to motor cars. The Grand Gallery has been revitalized following recent refurbishment, with a 'Window on the World' display of more than 800 objects rising over four floors. Each one tells its own tale about everyday Scots and their lives, and together they paint a vivid picture of the nation from earliest days to future aspirations.</p> <p>Fossil Grove is Glasgow's most ancient attraction. A unique treasure, situated in beautiful Victoria Park in the west of the city, the fossil trees and surrounding rocks are the remains of an ancient forest, more than 330 million years old. Scottish National Heritage has designated the grove a site of Special Scientific Interest. These fossilised tree stumps were discovered in 1887 when an old quarry was being landscaped during the creation of the park. Careful excavation of the site uncovered the fossil remains and a building was erected to protect them from the elements.</p> <p>The University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery is home to one of the top five collections in Scotland, with over a million items ranging from meteorites to mummies. Explore dinosaurs, early man, Roman legionnaires and much more at the Museum. Just opposite, visit the Mackintosh House and displays including Rembrandt, Whistler and Scottish Painting in the Art Gallery.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Scotland is home to a number of great festivals every year but it's the Edinburgh Festival (Aug 7 – 31, 2015) that really steals the limelight. This festival actually consists of a number of different festivals, including the Edinburgh International Festival, the Military Tattoo, the International Book and Film Festivals and the renowned and highly popular Festival Fringe. Edinburgh also hosts the UK's Mela Festival, a multicultural event that stops off in the Scottish capital before moving onto Glasgow for its tour of Britain. http://www.eif.co.uk/ Other than those three weeks in August, there's still plenty of activity</p>

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	<p>across Scotland to check out. In February there's the Aye Write! Literary festival that takes place in Glasgow. Scotland's second city is also home to the biennial International Arts Festival, a new event that sees Glasgow host top notch contemporary art every other April.</p> <p>If you're after a musical experience you can either relax at Glasgow's Celtic Connections, where the traditional sounds of Scotland come to the fore, or you can join 69,000 other fans of pop music in a Perthshire field for T in the Park.</p> <p>Highland Games take place right across Scotland throughout the summer. You can see events from June until September, with the Braemar Gathering being one of the most renowned occasions; it's even attended by royalty. Every aspect of the rich Highland culture will be celebrated by a range of traditional and contemporary events.</p> <p>Winter is just as busy a time across Scotland, with winter festivals taking place in most towns and cities. Edinburgh's Winter Wonderland is one of the most famous, which sees the year brought to an end in style with a four-day Hogmanay celebration, a truly unique New Year's Eve party.</p> <p>Edinburgh is the world's favourite festival city, welcoming some 25,000 performers and thinkers, with over four million attendees each year. The Scottish capital is where huge talents such as Emma Thompson, Mike Myers, Hugh Laurie and Alan Cumming learned their craft; these and many more starts are warmly welcomed back to critical acclaim. Come along to enjoy the line-up of world class talent, as well as plenty of emerging entertainment waiting to be discovered.</p> <p>In August alone, seven festivals take over the city with something for everyone: from the stirring sounds of the massed pipes and drums at the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, to the big opera and dance productions invited by the Edinburgh International Festival. With comedy, dance and theatre populating the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with over 1,000 performances a day and the crème de la crème of bestselling authors appearing at the Edinburgh International Book Festival.</p>
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ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>With a coastline estimated at 13,115 km long, there is plenty of room for Scottish beaches! The east coast has plenty of unspoilt stretches of sands, with places like Dunbar, St Andrews, Montrose, Aberdeen, Fraserburgh, Lossiemouth, Nairn, and Dornoch just some of the towns and cities close to superb stretches of beach.</p> <p>The more rugged north and west coasts likewise have beautiful sands, often as smaller coves set amongst magnificent cliff scenery, while the dazzling white beaches of the Hebrides – look for the Gaelic word 'traigh' on maps – are an essential element of the island experience and</p>

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	<p>a real highlight of a visit to, for example, Harris or Islay. The Big Strand on Islay, for example, is at least 12 km long.</p> <p>Some beaches have an association with a particular leisure pursuit – Thurso (Dunnet Bay) for surfing, for instance; beaches on Tiree for wind surfing; St Andrews for kite-surfing – but all of these are practiced at a variety of Scottish beaches.</p> <p>Scotland’s beaches are also leisurely places for beachcombing – lobster buoys from Maine, coconuts from the Caribbean and pumice from Icelandic volcanoes may add a touch of the exotic!</p> <p>More than 60 of Scotland’s beaches hold Seaside Awards – but the Scottish beach, especially in the Highlands, can still be an off-the-beaten-track location, unspoilt and hardly visited.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Scotland's wildlife is typical of the north west of Europe, although several of the larger mammals such as the Lynx, Brown Bear, Wolf, Elk and Walrus were hunted to extinction in historic times. There are important populations of seals and internationally significant nesting grounds for a variety of seabirds such as Gannets. The Golden Eagle is something of a national icon.</p> <p>On the high mountain tops species including Ptarmigan, Mountain Hare and Stoat can be seen in their white colour phase during winter months. Remnants of the native Scots Pine forest exist and within these areas the Scottish Crossbill, the UK's only endemic bird species and vertebrate, can be found alongside Capercaillie, Wildcat, Red Squirrel and Pine Marten. In recent years various animals have been re-introduced, including the White-tailed Sea Eagle in 1975, the Red Kite in the 1980s, and more recently there have been experimental projects involving the Beaver and Wild Boar.</p>
Parks	<p>Scotland has two national parks: Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, created in 2002, and the Cairngorms National Park, created in 2003. These were designated as such under the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 which was an early piece of legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament not long after its creation in 1999. It was a Scot, John Muir, who had initiated the first national park in the world, at Yosemite in the United States.</p>
Islands	<p>Scotland has 790 islands, of which 130 are inhabited, including Orkney, Shetland, Outer Hebrides, Skye, Mull, Iona, Arran, Islay, and Jura. Here are two on my ‘bucket list’:</p> <p>Iona: It's an otherworldly rock, one of Europe's most evocative holy places, anchored solidly among the Hebrides off Scotland's west coast. St. Columba established Iona as a Christian center in A.D. 563, and used it as a base for converting Scotland. You'll find a ruined Benedictine nunnery and a fully restored cathedral where 50 Scottish kings were buried during the early Middle Ages. Hundreds of Celtic</p>

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	<p>crosses once adorned Iona; today, only three of the originals remain. Now part of the National Trust, the island is home to an ecumenical group dedicated to the perpetuation of Christian ideals. Reaching Iona requires a 10-minute ferry ride from the hamlet of Fionnphort, on the nearby island of Mull.</p> <p>Orkneys: Archaeologists say the Orkneys, an archipelago comprising some 70 islands, hold the richest trove of prehistoric monuments in the British Isles - an average of three sites per square mile. Ornithologists claim that about 16% of all winged animals in the United Kingdom reside here, and linguists have documented an ancient dialect that still uses Viking terms. Northwest of the Scottish mainland, closer to Oslo than to faraway London, these islands are on the same latitude as St. Petersburg but much more exposed to the raging gales of the North Sea. The late-spring sunsets and the aurora borealis have been called mystical, and in midsummer the sun remains above the horizon for 18 hours a day. An equivalent twilight envelops the islands in winter. Only 19 of the Orkneys are inhabited; the others, often drenched with rain, seem to float above primordial seas.</p>
<p>Gardens</p>	<p>Scotland has over 200 gardens and nurseries each containing thousands of plant varieties.</p> <p>The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh was established in 1670 and during the twentieth century acquired three Regional Gardens - the mountainous Benmore in Argyll; Dawyck in the wooded hills of the Scottish Borders and Logan on the Gulf Stream-warmed southern peninsula of Dumfries & Galloway.</p> <p>Comprising 70 acres of stunning scenery, just a stone's throw from the city centre, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) captures the imagination of everyone who visits: from the knowledgeable gardener to the curious sightseer.</p> <p>Reflecting the international research and conservation work of RBGE, the Garden is home to the largest collection of wild-origin Chinese plants outside China. See, too, the Scottish Heath Garden, recreating the plantings and landscape of the Scottish highlands; the world-famous Rock Garden, which is home to over 5,000 alpine plants and the stunning 165m-long Herbaceous Border, backed by an outstanding century-old Beech Hedge.</p> <p>Opened in the summer of 2006 is the Queen Mother's Memorial Garden, a fitting tribute to a much-loved royal, which has been imaginatively planted to present something for visitors of all tastes - in every season.</p> <p>Among the Garden's many thousands of trees and shrubs are several groups in which its scientists have special interest, such as the conifers, rhododendrons and other shrubs of the Ericaceae family. Further</p>

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	<p>highlights include the Sierra redwoods (<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>) of North America and numerous other species of botanical interest, including beeches (<i>Fagus</i>), maples (<i>Acer</i>), and colourful rowans (<i>Sorbus</i>)</p> <p>At the North East corner of the Garden stands its magnificent Victorian Temperate Palm House - the tallest of its kind in Britain - the glorious entrance to Windows on the World, a glasshouse experience offering visitors the opportunity to explore ten distinct climatic zones holding around one percent of all known flowering plants, cycads and ferns. These range from the economically important species - including banana and rubber - to household favourites and the world's largest collection of tender vireya rhododendron, originating from the mountains of New Guinea and Borneo.</p>
<p>Historical Sites - Castles</p>	<p>Edinburgh Castle (Edinburgh): Few other buildings symbolize the grandeur of an independent Scotland as clearly as this one. Begun around A.D. 1000, on a hilltop high above the rest of Edinburgh, it witnessed some of the bloodiest and most treacherous events in Scottish history, including a doomed 1573 defense by Kirkcaldy of Grange in the name of Mary Queen of Scots.</p> <p>Palace of Holyroodhouse (Edinburgh): Throughout the clan battles for independence from England, this palace served as a pawn between opposing forces. In its changing fortunes, it has housed a strange assortment of monarchs involved in traumatic events: Mary Queen of Scots, Bonnie Prince Charlie, James VII (before his ascendancy to the throne), and French King Charles X (on his forced abdication after an 1830 revolution). The building's present form dates from the late 1600s, when it was rebuilt in a dignified neo-Palladian style. Today, Holyroodhouse is one of Queen Elizabeth's official residences.</p> <p>Drumlanrig Castle (Dumfries): Begun in 1679, this castle took 12 years to build and so much money that its patron, the third earl and first duke of Queensbury, complained that he deeply resented its existence. Later, it was embroiled in dynastic inheritance scandals worthy of a Gothic novel. One of the most prestigious buildings in Scotland, it houses the antiques and artwork of four illustrious families.</p> <p>Culzean Castle (near Maybole): Designed for comfort and prestige, this castle was built in the late 1700s by Scotland's most celebrated architect, Robert Adam, as a replacement for a dark, dank tower that had stood for longer than anyone could remember. Culzean was donated to the National Trust for Scotland just after World War II. A suite was granted to General Eisenhower for his lifetime use, in gratitude for his role in staving off a foreign invasion of Britain.</p>

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Stirling Castle (Stirling): Stirling is a triumph of Renaissance ornamentation, a startling contrast to the severe bulk of many other Scottish castles. Despite its beauty, after its completion in 1540 the castle was one of the most impregnable fortresses in the British Isles, thanks partly to its position on a rocky crag.

Scone Palace (Scone): As early as A.D. 900, Scottish kings were crowned here on a lump of granite so imbued with ancient magic that, in the 13th century, the English hauled it off to Westminster Abbey. (The Stone of Scone was returned to Scotland in 1996 and is now found in Edinburgh Castle.) The palace you see today was rebuilt in 1802 from ruins that incorporated a 1580 structure with stones laid during the dim early days of Scottish and Pictish union.

Glamis Castle (Glamis): This castle's core was built for defense against rival clans during the 1400s, but over the centuries it evolved into a luxurious dwelling. The seat of the same family since 1372, Glamis is said to be haunted by the ghost of Lady Glamis, a former owner, whom James V had burned as a witch when she resisted his annexation of her castle. It also figured into the ambitions of Macbeth, thane of Glamis.

Crathes Castle & Gardens (Grampian): Crathes evokes the luxury of a 15th- and 16th-century Scottish laird. The style focuses on high heraldry, with frequent references to the persistent Scottish hope of an enduring independence. The gardens' massive yew hedges were originally planted in 1702.

Balmoral Castle (Ballater): Scotland offers far greater castles to explore, but Balmoral, the rebuilt castle of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria, draws hordes of visitors, who no doubt hope to glimpse Prince William. That's because it's still the Scottish residence of the queen. Although inside you can visit only the ballroom, the sprawling manicured grounds and gardens also await you.

Braemar Castle (Grampian): Built by the earl of Mar in 1628 as a hunting lodge, Braemar was burned to the ground, and then rebuilt by Farquharson of Invercauld, an ancestor of the present owner. It's often photographed as a symbol of Scottish grandeur and the well-upholstered aristocratic life.

Cawdor Castle (Cawdor): From its heavily fortified origins in the 1300s, Cawdor evolved into the Campbell clan's luxurious seat. According to legend and Shakespearean plot lines, three witches promised this castle to Macbeth to tempt him into the deeds that led to his destruction.

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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
<p>Shopping</p>	<p>The shopping experience in Scotland is very varied. Though the cities have the 'High Street' names, plus some very stylish and exclusive brands, rural areas have plenty of surprises. Here you'll discover potters and jewellers, knitwear designers, weavers, silversmiths and kiltmakers to name but a few.</p> <p>Scottish textiles, especially the tartan variety, are popular and worth buying. Everything from a travelling rug to your own kilt outfit. Shops up and down the country, and especially in Edinburgh and Inverness, can tell which clan your family belongs to and make you a kilt in that particular tartan. For the full outfit, including kilt, sporran, jacket, shoes and skeann dhu dagger, expect to pay in the region of £600, or more if you want more elaborate accessories.</p> <p>There are mill shops making tweeds and cloths in many parts of Scotland. Most are in the Borders, though it is not necessarily cheaper to buy at source. Harris Tweed is also a good buy and you can watch your cloth being woven on the Hebridean islands of Harris and Lewis.</p> <p>Knitwear is also good value and sold throughout Scotland, though the cashmere industry in the Borders is suffering from high trade tariffs. Shetland is a good place to find high-quality wool products. Note that Aran jumpers are not from the island of Arran, but from Aran (with one 'r') in Ireland.</p> <p>Jewellery is another popular souvenir and there are many excellent craft shops throughout the Highlands and Islands making beautiful jewellery with Celtic designs.</p> <p>Glassware is also popular, particularly Edinburgh crystal and Caithness glass, as well as pottery.</p> <p>Food is another good souvenir and not just the ubiquitous shortbread sold in tartan tins. If you haven't far to travel home, smoked salmon, or any other smoked product, is good value. One of the best places for food products is the island of Arran, where you can buy their delicious local mustards and preserves, smoked fish and game, and cheeses. And, of course, there's whisky. Most distilleries will refund the cost of their guided tour in the form of a discount voucher on a bottle of their brand whisky.</p>
<p>Markets</p>	<p>The Barras Market in Glasgow is an historic marketplace with great character and an eclectic mix of covered and open stalls selling a huge range of goods.</p> <p>Perth Farmers' Market takes place on the 1st Saturday of the month in King Edward Street and St John's Place, Perth, from 9am to 2pm. There are between 35 and 40 stalls selling a variety of quality local and Scottish produce throughout the year. The Producers themselves run their own stalls so you can come and speak directly with them, ask them</p>

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	<p>questions about their produce and purchase fresh quality products. Visit the Information Point at Perth Farmers' Market and pick up a variety of free leaflets. There's plenty to see and do: watch the cooking demonstration, sample the food, enjoy the atmosphere and purchase some of the finest produce in Scotland.</p>
<p>Nightlife</p>	<p>Glasgow has one of the most active dance club scenes in the UK. Listed below are just a few selected venues. In local parlance, "venues" are distinct from the actual "clubs" - such as Optimo (electro-clash), Manga (drum and bass), or Pressure (house and techno) - which are associated with a specific style, DJ, or team of DJs. They can move around to different venues. It all makes perfect sense to those in the know.</p> <p>Glasgow also has the reputation as an unsurpassed spawning ground in Scotland for pop and rock groups, such as Franz Ferdinand or Belle and Sebastian. Barrowland, a former ballroom, has to be one of the best venues in all of Britain for seeing live contemporary music. Recently, the company that runs the well-known Brixton Academy converted an old movie house into the Academy on the city's Southside, while in the city centre another former cinema, ABC, was redeveloped into a good music venue in 2005. Plus, two bars, King Tut's Wah Wah Hut (where the band Oasis was apparently "discovered") and Nice 'n' Sleazy, give Glasgow a pair of small venues with performance spaces that would rival those typical of Manhattan's East Village.</p>
<p>Hogmanay</p>	<p>There are many festivities happening across the country to celebrate Hogmanay. Choose from an array of ceilidhs, dinner dances, hoolies and balls.</p> <p>Join Glasgow's biggest party of the year as 25,000 revellers descend on George Square to see in the New Year;</p> <p>Stonehaven Fireball Festival: One of the few remaining mid-winter fire festivals on the Scottish East Coast. Local people celebrate the arrival of the New Year in this traditional way - swinging fireballs around as they walk up and down the old town High Street;</p> <p>The Hogmanay bonfire in the Borders town off Biggar (pop 2000), dates back to the pagan times when fire was worshipped and believed to ward off evil spirits for the New Year. It has continued at Biggar for hundreds of years and there is no other town in the world that celebrates the coming of the New Year like Biggar.</p> <p>Edinburgh's Hogmanay: The world's best New Year celebrations - four fabulous days and nights of amazing events throughout the city. Nobody celebrates New Year better than the Scots so come and join the 100,000 other revellers who pack Edinburgh's Princes Street for a wild night of full-on partying that pauses only for the breathtaking fireworks display from the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle at midnight. The pyrotechnics also signal the start of the biggest kiss-athon you'll</p>

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ever take part in and you'll never make so many friends so quickly as you do then!

Hogmanay Traditions:

Traditionally, the Scots were a superstitious race at the best of times and for an event as significant as the dawning of a new year, customs, rituals and traditions inevitably arose around the country. Many of these have now disappeared but others have carried on down through the years and some have even become essential ingredients of today's celebrations.

Cleaning the House

The last day of the year was traditionally regarded as a time of preparation: business would be concluded to let the new year start afresh and houses were thoroughly cleaned (known as 'redding'). Fireplaces in particular had to be swept out and in a variation on reading tea-leaves, the ashes of the last fire of the old year were believed to show what lay ahead in the new year.

First Footing

One of the major Hogmanay customs was 'first footing'. Shortly after 'the bells' - the stroke of midnight when public clocks would chime to signal the start of the new year - neighbours would visit one another's houses to wish each other a good new year. This visiting was known as 'first footing', and the luckiest first-foot into any house was a tall, dark and handsome man - perhaps as a reward to the woman who traditionally had spent the previous day scrubbing her house (another Hogmanay ritual). Women or red heads, however, were always considered bad luck as first-foots. First-foots brought symbolic gifts to 'handse' the house: coal for the fire, to ensure that the house would be warm and safe, and shortbread or black bun (a type of fruit cake) to symbolise that the household would never go hungry that year.

CUISINE

Burns Supper: What is a Burns Supper?

The format can be whatever the organiser wishes. As for the poems used, the Address to the Haggis is essential – verses 1, 2, 3 and 8. The other poems used reflect the kind of personnel attending the Supper. Some functions have guest orators who might offer Tam o' Shanter, Holy Willie's Prayer (with actions) or The Cottar's Saturday Night. Some Burns Clubs do indulge in guest orators as they feel Robert Burns' poems were meant to be read aloud if necessary but not acted. The menu may be as you please but traditionally, it is as follows: Soup such as Cock a Leekie or Scotch Broth; Haggis, Champit Tatties (mashed potatoes) and Neeps (mashed turnip). A main course of beef or steak. Bannocks an' Kebbuck – cheese – such as the hard cheeses of Mull, Galloway or Orkney, biscuits and oatcakes

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<p>Food</p>	<p>When you first look at a menu serving traditional Scottish grub you might get a little bit lost, what with the Arbroath Smokies, Champit Tatties, Cullen Skink, Cranachan, Roastit Bubbly Jock and much more unusual sounding food that will leave you somewhat confused. The names might be complex but the method of traditional Scottish cooking isn't, as Scottish food is simply hearty and tasty fare. Home-cooking and making use of good, local produce have always been important in Scotland and that's no different today as Scottish restaurants make the most of the ingredients they have around them. Scottish smoked salmon is just one example, which has a luxurious delicate taste. The country is also home to cheeses like the Lanark Blue, known as the 'Scottish Roquefort', while Scottish meat including everything from Aberdeen Angus beef to wild venison are bursting full of flavour.</p> <p>Many Scottish eateries will serve up these treats, using classic recipes and giving them a modern twist. When you're in Scotland you really should try the national dish, haggis, which caused Burns to write a special ode for it. Enjoying resurgence in restaurants across the country, including Café Gandolfi and Stravaigin in Glasgow, make sure you wash down your haggis with a wee dram!</p>
<p>Drink - Whisky</p>	<p>Scotland should be proud of its whisky, and it is. After 500 years of practice, uisge beatha (from the Gaelic, meaning 'water of life') was first mentioned in written record in 1494; the Scots have whisky distilling down to a fine art. The tastes change with the landscape as well. In the rolling pastoral Lowlands you'll find grassy and malt flavours, while heathery whisky is the norm in the Highlands. It's different once again in the low hills of Speyside where a mellow sweetness is found, while the rough and salty smokiness of the Western Isles whisky perfectly matches the terrain.</p> <p>Scottish people love whisky so much that pubs are dedicated to the drink; head to Leslie's Bar in Edinburgh, or The Grill in Aberdeen, where more than 400 varieties of whiskies will keep you quiet for the evening. Fellow drinkers and friendly barmen will be only too happy to give you a guide of Scotland's national drink and one of its finest exports. Among the famous Highland malts are Glen Grant, Macallan, Glenfarclas, Knockando, Cardhu, Glenfiddich, Strathisla and Tamnavullin. Of course there are also island malts which have their own special appeal. These include Highland Park and Scapa on Orkney, Talisker from the misty Isle of Skye, Jura and the Islay malts which include Laphroig, Bowmore and Bruichladdich.</p> <p>Edinburgh Gin It's not just whisky that comes from Scotland. This distillery in the heart of Edinburgh produces award-winning gin to suit a variety of tastes –</p>

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	<p>including the powerful Cannonball Gin which I can personally attest will make your head explode! They also features several tours such as: Gin Discovery Tour £10 (per person) 45 Minute Discovery Tour for Groups of up to 8 people Learn the story behind Edinburgh's spectacular gin and discover how it is distilled. Witness their exhibition area firsthand and take an intimate tour of the distillery; getting sneak peeks at what they usually keep hidden from watchful eyes... Included in the tour is a free sample or a miniature bottle of Edinburgh Gin to take home. http://www.edinburghgindistillery.co.uk/</p>
<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>Edinburgh Restaurants</p> <p>The Witchery A world-renowned restaurant housed in sixteenth century building by the gates of the Castle. Expertly prepared Scottish produce in rich surroundings makes dining here a magical experience.</p> <p>Restaurant Martin Wishart Award-winning modern French cuisine impressively cooked to Michelin-star standards, set right in the middle of the historic Port of Leith.</p> <p>Oloroso The views from this luxurious restaurant are astounding. Take in panoramic views of Edinburgh and the Lothians. All the while enjoying surprising Pacific Rim flavors.</p> <p>David Bann Taking the blandness out of vegetarian and vegan food once and for all, David Bann will impress vegetarians and carnivores alike with its slick environment and colorful menu.</p> <p>Vermillion Set in the heart of The Scotsman Hotel, the richly Scottish menu and opulent surroundings of Vermillion set high standards.</p> <p>Tower Restaurant Spectacular views of Edinburgh's Castle and city skyline feature on the menu of James Thomson's stunning rooftop restaurant, perched above the landmark Museum of Scotland.</p> <p>The Kitchin Restaurant Situated in the picturesque port of Leith, Michelin-starred Tom Kitchin's style is a unique marriage of seasonal Scottish produce with the</p>

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classical French technique he has mastered working alongside some of the world's greatest chefs.

Blue Bar Café

Clean, contemporary and simple are the keywords when talking about both the stylish interior and internationally influenced menu of this popular café. And it is perfectly situated nearby Edinburgh's main theatres.

Villager

A hip and elegantly retro hangout in the city centre – with a menu to match – who could resist vodka martini mussels? All matched with an eclectic cocktail list and a background soundtrack of the coolest funk.

Dragonfly

Voted 'Most Stylish Bar' in the 2006 Scottish Style Awards – you mingle with the beautiful people and, from the balcony, watch the bartenders make drinks like the Glenfiddich Cavalcade or the aptly named Edinburgh Rocks.

Glasgow Restaurants

étain

The popular 'Epicurean Menu' offered by Terence Conran's only UK outpost outside of London is a tasting menu with each course matched perfectly with a different wine. Epicureans will feel truly in heaven in Conran's sleek but subtle penthouse restaurant.

No.Sixteen

Tiny, unpretentious, and ever so slightly off the beaten track – although still pretty close to the throng of the bohemian West End – No.Sixteen is one of Glasgow's favorite restaurants. So good, that it has become one of Edinburgh's favorite restaurants too!

Ubiquitous Chip

Perhaps the most fabulously named restaurant in Glasgow, 'The Chip' as it is affectionately known is renowned for its strong Scottish flavors, and a refined coziness that Glaswegians have grown to love over its thirty-year tenure.

Uisge Beatha

A unique 'old-style' pub in the stylish West End, you'll find over 125 single malt whiskies to choose from, served by men in kilts!

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**Rab Ha's**

A triumph of individuality over uniformity and of soul over empty style comprising boutique hotel, enticing restaurant and traditional Scottish bar, Rab Ha's is found within the Merchant City.

Babbity Bowser's

Housed in an original Tobacco Merchant's house attributed to Robert Adam in the Merchant City. Fraser and his team are a local institution and look forward to welcoming you to this bar, restaurant and small hotel. The restaurant offers a selection of freshly prepared Scottish meals or snacks, daily billboard specials and real ales with live music every Saturday night.

Café Gandolfi

The Tim Stead-designed wooden furniture in this Merchant City institution have become almost as much of a draw as Gandolfi's simple but incredibly enticing menu.

The Lansdowne

Through a leafy West End close, you will stumble across The Lansdowne, which after renovations in 2005, emerged as one of the neighborhood's favorites – with a stylish bar, and well-prepared but uncomplicated dishes.

Mother India

Glasgow isn't called the Curry Capital for nothing, and there are many first-class Indian restaurants – with Mother India being one of the most authentic, and one of the best – absolutely bursting with fresh ginger, spices and herbs.

Liquid Ship

Taking its name from a misspelled letter addressed to 'Ubiquitous Chip' (see above) – Liquid Ship is brought to the West End bar by the same family that owns the remarkable Chip. This ambient little bar is home to fantastic acoustic music, accompanied by a great selection of beers and wonderful tapas dishes.

Brutti Ma Buoni

Translating as 'ugly but good,' this unpretentiously hip bar and restaurant on the ground floor of the achingly trendy Brunswick Hotel in the Merchant City is always full of Glasgow's cutting edge artists and trendsetters, and their new basement level is the perfect pre-club spot.

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CURRENT DEALS	Air Canada Vacations have a great offer at the moment: Book any pre-packaged or customized Europe Air & Hotel and get \$20 OFF every night. Offer ends May 8th 2015!
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PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	Ben Nevis, The Highlands, The Borders, Loch Ness, John O'Groats, Skye, Dumfries and Galloway, Glasgow, Edinburgh.
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AIR CANADA & SCOTLAND	<p>Air Canada route feature the only non-stop flights from Canada to Edinburgh in 2015. Flights depart Toronto for Edinburgh four times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays from June 15 – Oct. 13, 2015.</p> <p>Air Canada is Canada's largest domestic and international airline serving more than 180 destinations on five continents. Canada's flag carrier is among the 20 largest airlines in the world and in 2013 served more than 35 million customers. Air Canada provides scheduled passenger service directly to 61 Canadian cities, 49 destinations in the United States and 73 cities in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, Mexico and South America. Air Canada is a founding member of Star Alliance, the world's most comprehensive air transportation network serving 1,316 airports in 192 countries. Air Canada is the only international network carrier in North America to receive a Four-Star ranking according to independent U.K. research firm Skytrax that ranked Air Canada in a worldwide survey of more than 18 million airline passengers as Best Airline in North America in 2014 for the fifth consecutive year.</p>
Air Canada route	<p>Air Canada's new leisure airline with stylishly affordable service to holiday spots in Europe and the Caribbean. Benefit from Air Canada's extensive network for smooth connections to flights departing daily from Toronto and Montreal.</p> <p>http://flyrouge.com/</p>

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Dreamliner B787	The Dreamliner B787 aircraft represent the latest generation of aircraft and provide an unparalleled onboard experience - everyone on board benefits from a quieter and smoother flight with these ultra-modern planes. Plus technological advances mean less travel fatigue. Ambient mood lighting eases the time zone changes, lower cabin pressure means better oxygen absorption and increased humidity reduces dehydration. The air you breathe is cleaner thanks to continuous circulation through an advanced filtration system and the water is pure thanks to ultra-violet light water treatment. These aircraft offer the largest windows of any aircraft flying today – and forget about blinds as these windows have an electronic dimming system!
Cabin Classes	Air Canada route offers you a choice of three cabin classes to Edinburgh: Premium route Route Plus route Best of all, Air Canada passengers earn Aeroplan miles on every flight - which they can then use towards future travel. Maybe you even have enough Aeroplan miles to fly to Edinburgh.
Joint Venture Partners	Air Canada offers services to many destinations with their Atlantic Joint Venture partners Lufthansa and United Airlines - Air Canada's nonstop service complements the service offered by these partners offering Air Canada customers even more choice.
Flight Times	Air Canada's flight timings on the Toronto Edinburgh route are excellent. Flights depart Toronto at 18.55 and arrive in Edinburgh at 06.45 the next day. Flights depart Edinburgh at 08.20 and arrive in Toronto at 10.50 same day. Flight time is approximately 6 hours 50 minutes. Flights depart Toronto for Edinburgh four times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays.
Aeroplan	You earn Aeroplan miles when you book your trip, making your next flight with Air Canada even more affordable.
Award	Air Canada has been voted Best International Airline in North America five years in a row in the prestigious Skytrax survey of global travellers.
Before You Fly	Air Canada have Apps for iPhone and BlackBerry making it easy to track flights, receive flight notifications and perform mobile check-in, seat selection and electronic boarding passes.
As You Fly	With Air Canada you enjoy personal touch-screen TVs and power outlets at every seat. There are up to 600 hours of on-demand entertainment available at every seat, gate-to-gate.
Personalized Service	Dedicated Concierge Service is available to Executive First and Air Canada Super Elite passengers in major Canadian airports.

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Why choose Air Canada Vacations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The service and reliability of Air Canada and Air Canada rouge - Convenient connectors from 61 Canadian cities - Over 200 destinations worldwide. - In-flight seat-back entertainment from gate to gate on most flights - Mobile app, web and mobile check-in - Access to your personal Vacation Planner website - Earn & Redeem Aeroplan Miles - Enjoy exclusive added values for Aeroplan Members in Asia, South America and the South Pacific - Flexible stays of 3, 4, 7 or 10 night - Upgrade to Executive Class service or rouge Plus and Premium rouge for more legroom and in-flight amenities - Special extras from Privileges, the added-value program, in Mexico & the Caribbean - A wide selection of hotels, coach tours, cruises, rail passes, day tours, car rentals and more - Carefree cruising with our Flight Guarantee & Best Price Guarantee - 15 industry leading cruise line partners, hundreds of itineraries around the world - Dedicated travel experts for groups of 10 or more
Air Canada Vacations Tours in Scotland	Once you have arrived in Scotland there are so many tours and activities that you can preplan to allow you to get out and see the countryside. Two great coach and city stay packages featured by Air Canada Vacations are “Over the Sea to Skye” and “Braveheart to Nessie”. You visit a whisky distillery, Edinburgh, Isle of Skye and Loch Ness and the tour includes accommodation in Edinburgh, Hop On Hop Off ticket in

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	<p>Edinburgh, tour to the Highlands via motor-coach transportation, including overnights in Skye and Loch Ness, and breakfast daily. It takes all the worry out of planning – Air Canada Vacations experts have done all the hard work for you.</p> <p>“Classical Scotland” fly-drive tour. 7 nights’ accommodation (2 night Edinburgh, 2 nights Oban, 1 night Skye, 1 night Inverness, 1 night Perthshire) 8 day car rental Breakfast daily Staying at traditional B&B’s</p>
<p>Braveheart to Nessie Tour</p>	<p>This popular Air Canada Vacations tour includes: Round-trip flights 5 nights of accommodation in selected room category Round-trip transfers upon arrival and departure at destination; 2-day / 1-night coach tour in an air-conditioned tour bus 1-day Hop-on/Hop-off Edinburgh Bus Tour English-speaking guide Meals as per itinerary</p> <p>Itinerary Day 1 Depart Canada Board your flight to Edinburgh Day 2 Welcome to Edinburgh Upon arrival, transfer to your selected hotel. Enjoy the rest of your day at your leisure. Ibis Edinburgh South Bridge Hotel (Superior accommodations) / Apex International Hotel (First-class accommodations) or similar (1 night) Day 3 Edinburgh – Loch Ness (Breakfast included) Leaving the capital city behind, travel towards Glasgow and stop at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Then head north to Glen Coe and the stunning heights of Ben Nevis. Listen to tales of William Wallace, the Scottish hero portrayed in 'Braveheart'. Loch Ness Guest House (Superior accommodations) or similar (1 night) Day 4 Loch Ness – Edinburgh (Breakfast included) Enjoy free time in the morning or explore the loch on a cruise (not included) before heading back to Edinburgh. Enroute, visit the battlefield of Culloden (not included), pass the stunning Cairngorm Mountains, visit a whisky distillery (not included) and explore the picturesque town of Pitlochry.</p>

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	<p>Ibis Edinburgh South Bridge Hotel (Superior accommodations) / Apex International Hotel (First-class accommodations) or similar (3 nights)</p> <p>Day 5 Edinburgh (Breakfast included) Discover Edinburgh with you hop-on / hop-off bus tour.</p> <p>Day 6 Edinburgh (Breakfast included) On your final day in Edinburgh explore the shops along Princes Street for some last minute souvenirs or relax in the Gardens for panoramic views of Arthur's Seat and the Edinburgh Castle.</p> <p>Day 7 Return to Canada (Breakfast included) Transfer to the airport for your return flight.</p>
Excursions	<p>Air Canada Vacations offer nearly 30 day excursions, including walking tours, Castle admission tickets to Edinburgh Castle, Linlithgow Palace and Stirling, Whisky Tours, St. Andrews Day Trip, Scottish Highlands Day trip, The Royal Yacht Britannia, Hard Rock Café Edinburgh, Bus and Boat Tours and more.</p> <p>Edinburgh's Chocolate Walking Tour. Tempted by Edinburgh's array of chocolatiers and confectioners but don't know where to start? Head out on a 2.5-hour chocolate walking tour of the city, and savour seven sugary samples in some of the city's finest dessert boutiques.</p> <p>Cupcake and Macaroon Walking Tour of Edinburgh. Discover Edinburgh's best cupcakes, macaroons, shortbread cookies and more on a 2.5-hour walking tour with six samples included! Perfect for anyone with a sweet tooth, the experience takes in several candy stores, bakeries and cafes along the Royal Mile and its surrounding streets.</p> <p>Whisky Small Group Tour from Edinburgh. Get whisked out of Edinburgh by comfortable van to the wilds of Scotland on this whisky-tasting day trip through the Scottish Lowlands. Sample several types of fine Scotch whisky at two distilleries, Glengoyne Distillery and Deanston Distillery.</p>
Air Canada Deal	<p>Air Canada Vacations have a great offer at the moment: Book any pre-packaged or customized Europe Air & Hotel and get \$20 OFF every night. Offer ends May 8th 2015!</p>
How to Book	<p>Your Travel Agent can help make your reservations with Air Canada Vacation or check out the many options available at www.AirCanadaVacations.com .</p>
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