

Cairn Stone Adventure Tours

BEST OF SCOTLAND 2010

Tentative Itinerary (4-24-09)

April 28 (Wed) We will board an early evening flight in Chicago on Aer Lingus. Seven and a half hours later we will have a short layover in Dublin before we land in Glasgow (a 40 minute flight) mid morning on Thursday.

April 29 (Thur) Our charter motor coach will take us on the one hour drive to the charming Piries Hotel in the enchanting city of Edinburgh. Coach Gunn will lead a short afternoon walk to the city centre for sight seeing and dining in the [Edinburgh Castle](#), Princes Gardens, Princess Street area.

April 30 (Fri) After a hearty continental breakfast, Coach Gunn will lead an awesome trek through the cobblestone streets, castles, churches, and wonderful parks and hills of Edinburgh, including climbing the trails to the summit of Arthur's Seat. Edinburgh is truly a beautiful, vibrant city with a medieval touch.

May 1 (Sat) After breakfast and a little more shopping and sight seeing, we will board our motor coach for the scenic 1 ½ ride to Callander and the lovely Trossachs region of the Highlands. Our hike will take us up a river and through the heather to an unforgettable view. Shorter hikes can be arranged in this magnificent area. Our lodging will be in the nearby quaint village of Callander. Friends there have set up a bed and breakfast experience, and we will enjoy a group pub and meal at the Crags Hotel. Sean Connery has been seen horseback riding in this area.

May 2 (Sun) After a hearty full Scottish breakfast, we will move further northwest into the beautiful Highlands. En route we will stop outside Glencoe for a breathtaking hike up to Lost Valley, where the MacDonald Clan hid their stolen cattle. Short hikers will enjoy a lovely hike into Glencoe. We will all enjoy a fabulous pub stop at the L'Aroch Bistro in Balluchulish before traveling the final 15 miles along Loch Linnhe to our lodging in Fort William at the historic [Cruachan Hotel](#) [*Loch* means lake]. Fort William, located on Loch Linnhe and with several neat shops and restaurants, will be our base for the next two days.

May 3 (Mon) After a full Scottish breakfast, we will have a wide range of great hikes ranging from 1.5 to 16 miles. The biggest challenge would be to climb nearby [Ben Nevis](#), the highest point in all of Great Britain. Another option is hiking in Glen Nevis, the spectacular glen (valley) where the most dramatic scenes in *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* were filmed. This hike can range from 1.4 to 11.2 miles and culminates in a really cool waterfall. We will then enjoy more fun in the pubs of Ft. William.

May 4 (Tue) After another grand breakfast, we will board the motor coach for the short ride to the Sound of Arisaig along one of the most beautiful coasts in Scotland. We will take an incredible coastal hike along the [Silver Sands of Morar](#), ending at arguably the most beautiful 9-hole golf course in the world. The movie *Local Hero* was filmed on these

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beaches. Following the hikes that ranged from 1 to 3.5 miles, we will drive 5 miles to the port of Mallaig for lunch before boarding the ferry for the magical Isle of Skye. Once on Skye, we will complete our dynamite double header of coastal hikes as we journey to the coastal town of Eigol. The longest hike is 3.4 miles, and it will take you to Bonnie Prince Charlie's sea cave. Then it is on to Portree and its beautiful harbor. The lovely [Cuillin Hills Hotel](#), situated over the harbor, will be our home for the next two days. Portree is an amazingly beautiful village and is full of great little pubs, restaurants, and shops.

May 5 (Wed) Following a full Scottish breakfast in the elegant dining room, we will hike to the Old Man of Storr. This hike can range from 1 to 10 miles and is a real treat for the eyes. A short afternoon hike of 3 miles is planned that starts on a beautiful coastal trail at the base of our hotel and follows an old trail where golden eagles, seals, otters, and dolphins may be spotted. The trail eventually winds through a moor and up a hill and back to our hotel.

May 6 (Thur) Following another great breakfast, we will get an early start back to the West Highlands. There will be an optional walk across the Skye bridge into Kyle of Lochalsh (1.3 miles). Then it is on to Plockton, the Jewel of the Highlands. This small harbor village is famous for its palm trees. We will have a short pre lunch hike and then dine in the village. It is then on to wonderful Beinn Eighe for some more awesome hiking, including a genuine Scotch Pine forest, high munro lakes, beautiful heather, and the most pristine loch in all of Scotland. We will re-hydrate with wine and cheese along the beautiful Loch Murray before the short drive to Inverness and our lodging at the [Royal Highlands Hotel](#) in the city centre. There are lots of places to eat here, and you can even get a Big Mac or some KFC.

May 7 (Fri) Breakfast is on your own, and a neat hike along the River Ness and past [Inverness Castle](#) will be orchestrated before we check out and take the beautiful ride along the Great Glen Way. Of course, a stop will be made at Loch Ness. A late afternoon arrival is expected in Stirling at our lodging for the evening, the [Golden Lion](#). Stirling is in so many ways Scotland's heart and soul. Its castle high on the hill, the cobblestone streets of Old Town, and the Medieval Church [of the Holy Rude](#) make this a must stop. And of course, the impressive [monument of William Wallace](#) (Braveheart) is located just north of the city.

May 8 (Sat) A pre-breakfast hike of this fascinating city will precede an early departure for the Kingdom of Fife and historic Saint Andrews. En route we will do an awesome 3.7 mile hike at Alva Glen. It features 5 waterfalls and some cool grass trails. A beautiful hike, including the ruins of Scotland's biggest cathedral, Scotland's oldest university, the Old Course ("the Home of Golf"), and the beach where *Chariots of Fire* was filmed, is planned for St. Andrews. There will be plenty of time for shopping and dining before our return to Stirling.

May 9 (Sun) Sadly, it is time to leave Bonnie Scotland. It will be an hour's drive from Stirling back to the Glasgow Airport.