

Scotland - Responsible Visitor Guide

Isle of Harris - Andy McCandlish

Scotland is one of the most breathtaking and unspoilt countries in Europe. As a nation, we are committed to the responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage that makes Scotland such a special place to visit. We seek to provide a visitor experience which maximises the positive benefits of tourism while minimising any negative impacts.

By following the simple steps in this guide, every visitor can enjoy a better holiday experience and also play their part in conserving our natural environment, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Getting Here and Around

- Scotland is a wonderful place to visit year round. Visiting Scotland outside the peak season offers many advantages, may cost you less and you are likely to have the great outdoors to yourself.
- We appreciate that flying is often the quickest way of getting here. However, if possible, consider travelling to Scotland by train or coach. Not only is this better for the environment but you can enjoy some amazing landscapes along the way! Should you be planning on hiring a car to explore the country, opt for a fuel efficient low emission vehicle, available from many companies throughout Scotland. A useful resource for public transport is www.travelinescotland.com.
- Recognising that most tourism activity and transport generates unavoidable carbon emissions, please consider supporting carbon offsetting initiatives. There are many websites available that will allow you to calculate the impact of your journey and to make a contribution to compensate the emissions arising from your travel to Scotland.
- Once you are here, consider exploring one or two places in depth or, if touring, why not leave the car behind for one day and walk or cycle instead. Not only will you understand more about the places you are visiting, you are likely to have a richer experience too.

Accommodation and Services

- In booking accommodation look out for the Green Tourism Business Scheme award. This award means that a provider acts responsibly with regards to energy consumption, waste management and other environmental issues. For more details see www.green-business.co.uk.
- The Green Tourism Business Scheme award is also open to tour operators, visitor attractions, activity providers, restaurants and other businesses. Look out for the logo and please support those businesses that are demonstrating environmental good practice.
- We suggest using locally owned businesses and services wherever possible. By doing this you can be sure of making a highly valued contribution to the local economy and community, especially in rural areas.
- Scotland is home to a wide variety of delicious, world-class produce from west coast scallops to Highland venison. Look out for the EatScotland logo which is awarded by VisitScotland to restaurants, cafes and bars to show those that serve fresh, seasonal food of high quality. For details, please see www.eatscotland.com. You can also sample the best and buy local produce at the network of Farmers Markets throughout the country.



Accommodation

Environment

Our Natural Environment

- Experiencing the wild mountains, lochs and glens of the Highlands or Scotland's pristine beaches is an essential part of any visit. You can care for these places for future generations by:
 - Avoiding damage and disturbance. Some plants can be easily damaged and some birds and other animals can be easily alarmed or distressed.
 - Taking away your rubbish. You might also consider picking up other litter as well. Your litter includes biodegradable items such as orange peel. In most places, rubbish can be recycled; your accommodation hosts or local tourist centre would be pleased to advise where.
- Throughout the country, opportunities exist to experience some of Europe's best wildlife. Always observe wildlife from a distance and avoid any restricted areas. There are many companies in Scotland that can help you access the best wildlife viewing possible. See www.wild-scotland.org.uk for more details.
- Wherever possible, lend your support to the valuable work of environmental and wildlife conservation organisations such as the National Trust for Scotland, The Scottish Wildlife Trust, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and The John Muir Trust. This can simply be done by visiting their sites across Scotland.
- In Scotland you have the right to be on most land and inland water if you take responsibility for your own actions, respect the interests of other people and care for the environment. We recommend reading the Scottish Access Outdoor Code which is a practical and indispensable guide for anyone using Scotland's countryside for recreation purposes. For full details please see www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Our Cultural Heritage

- Throughout the country you will find a fascinating array of castles, ancient monuments and heritage sites. For full details we recommend visiting Historic Scotland www.historic-scotland.gov.uk. When visiting these places, be sensitive to their historic and sometimes fragile character and respect the local signposting and advice.
- Visiting a local festival or event such as a Highland Games is a great way to enjoy a first hand experience and insight into Scottish culture. There are hundreds of events to choose from throughout the year; see www.visitscotland.com/guide for full details.
- Make a visit to the country's many small shops and fairs which specialise in authentic local goods and hand-made trade and crafts. By doing this you will be lending valuable support to local businesses who play a key role in the rural economy of Scotland.

Culture

We really hope that you enjoy your visit and return home with many unforgettable memories of Scotland. By following this guide you will be making a highly valued contribution to the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage for future generations.



Scottish Natural Heritage
All of nature for all of Scotland

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