



THE GARDENS OF SCOTLAND



THURSDAY, JUNE 1ST - Departure from your chosen gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

FRIDAY, JUNE 2ND - Your arrival at Edinburgh Airport will be met for the transfer to our city-center hotel. The rest of the day is free to unpack, relax and begin exploring the neighborhood. This evening we gather for a welcome dinner. **(D)**

OVERNIGHT: EDINBURGH

SATURDAY, JUNE 3RD - The elegant city of Edinburgh is the political and cultural capital of Scotland. Set atop seven volcanic hills, it brims with historic treasures, but its finest is surely Edinburgh Castle, a towering fortification that dominates the skyline. Morning sightseeing with a local guide includes a visit to the historic castle, where you can admire the Honours of Scotland, her crown jewels. Our tour will end at the Royal Botanical Garden, where you'll be able to have lunch and spend as much time as you like. The

rest of the afternoon and evening are free to explore the city and sample one of its many fine restaurants. **(B) OVERNIGHT: EDINBURGH**

SUNDAY, JUNE 4TH - An excursion south of the city today takes us first to Kailzie Gardens on the River Tweed. Although an ancient estate, Kailzie is really the work of Lady Buchan-Hepburn who began an ambitious design project in the 1960's, rescuing what had become a wilderness. After a stop for lunch, we'll visit Rosslyn Chapel, made famous recently in the novels of Dan Brown. Our final visit before returning to Edinburgh will be to Inveresk Lodge Garden, which has colourful herbaceous borders, a great variety of shrubs and a collection of roses created by Graham Stuart Thomas, with climbers on high stone walls. We return to Edinburgh for a free evening.

(B)

OVERNIGHT: EDINBURGH

MONDAY, JUNE 5TH - Leaving Edinburgh to the north this morning we cross the Forth Bridge and drive through the ancient Kingdom of Fife, crossing the River Tay at Dundee. Our first stop will be Pitmuies Garden, where two semi-formal walled gardens adjoin an 18th-century house and shelter a long border of herbaceous perennials, superb delphiniums, old fashioned roses and pavings of violas and dianthus. Our next stop is at nearby Glamis Castle, the ancestral home of the Earls of Strathmore for over 600 years. From here we continue up the east coast of Scotland to Aberdeen, the "City of Roses," making a brief stop to view the spectacular ruins of Dunnottar Castle perched on the sea cliffs. Dinner awaits us at our hotel just outside Aberdeen. **(B, D)**

OVERNIGHT: ABERDEEN

TUESDAY, JUNE 6TH - Our excursion today takes us inland along the River Dee, first to Crathes Castle Garden. Known for their magnificent yew hedges and herbaceous borders, the gardens at Crathes surround a truly historic building which houses, amongst other things, the Horn of Leys, presented to the Leys family by Robert the Bruce in 1323. On our way back to our hotel we'll stop at Drum Castle, where we'll visit the beautiful Garden of Historic Roses. From our late-afternoon return, there will be free time to freshen up before dinner.

(B, D)

OVERNIGHT: ABERDEEN

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7TH - Heading northwest out of Aberdeen we follow the valley of the River Don to Leith Hall Gardens. A 17th-century house with a secluded garden, Leith Hall has extensive herbaceous and shrub planting, and what must be the longest catmint border in Britain! A short drive from here brings us to the Glenfiddich Distillery on Speyside, where we'll take the opportunity to sample a wee dram. We'll then be able to atone for our sins at nearby Elgin Cathedral, known as the "Lantern of the North." Dinner and overnight in the town of Nairn on the coast of the Moray Firth. **(B, D)**

OVERNIGHT: NAIRN

THURSDAY, JUNE 8TH - Our first stop today is Cawdor Castle, home of the Thanes of Cawdor – amongst whom was counted the King Macbeth. The magnificent castle provides a perfect backdrop for the 3 separate gardens for which the site is also famous: the Walled garden, the Flower garden and the Wild garden. We'll explore all three and have time for lunch before continuing on to our other visit of the day – the Battlefield of Culloden. It was here in 1745 that hopes of Scottish independence from England were brutally laid to rest. We'll return to our hotel in Nairn for dinner. **(B, D)**

OVERNIGHT: NAIRN

FRIDAY, JUNE 9TH - Our route back south today takes us through the heart of the Cairngorm Mountains via Piloehry. This afternoon we'll stop in Perth to visit Branklyn Gardens, a small but magnificent garden with an impressive collection of rare and unusual plants, before continuing to our final overnight in Stirling. On arrival we'll have to visit spectacular Stirling Castle before we gather for a farewell dinner at our hotel. **(B, D)**

OVERNIGHT: STIRLING

SATURDAY, JUNE 10TH - Morning transfer to Edinburgh Airport for returning flights to US. **(B)**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, D - dinner

