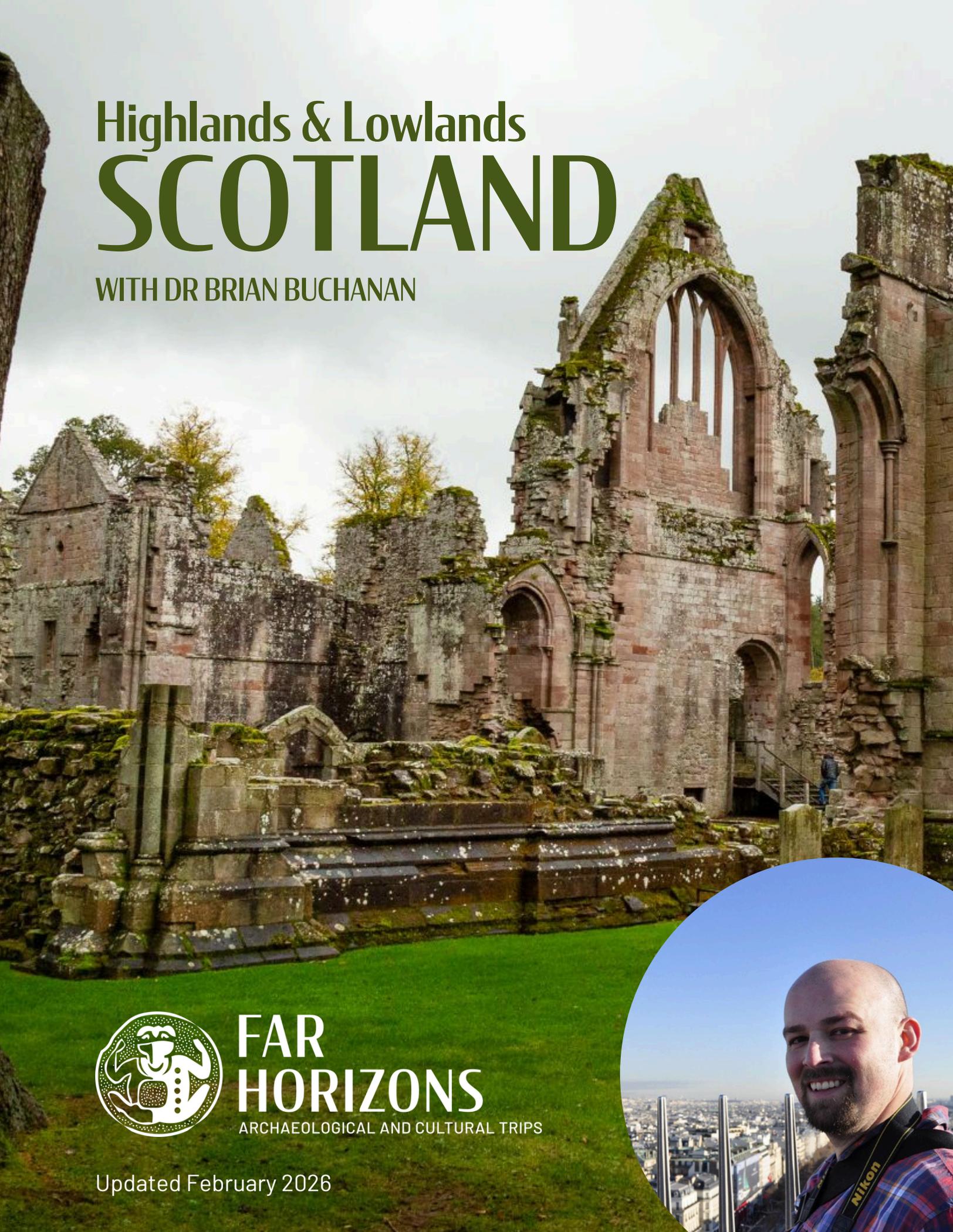


# Highlands & Lowlands SCOTLAND

WITH DR BRIAN BUCHANAN



**FAR  
HORIZONS**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL TRIPS

Updated February 2026



# SCOTLAND: HIGHLANDS & LOWLANDS

with Dr. Brian Buchanan

Depart on a cultural tour of Scotland that begins at the historic Edinburgh Castle in the south and journeys to the ancient sites of the Orkney Islands in the north.

Marvel at the 15th-century Rosslyn Chapel, visit the Culloden battlefield, and explore Linlithgow Palace, once a residence of the Stewart Kings.

With such a rich, often dense history, an educational tour of Scotland is one of the best ways to unlock the best this ancient country has to offer. Scotland is renowned for its vast, unspoiled landscapes, characterized by dramatic highland mountains, mysterious mist-covered glens, expansive lochs, rugged coastlines, and lush agricultural land. Dotting these dramatic landscapes are captivating historical remains of Scotland's rich past.

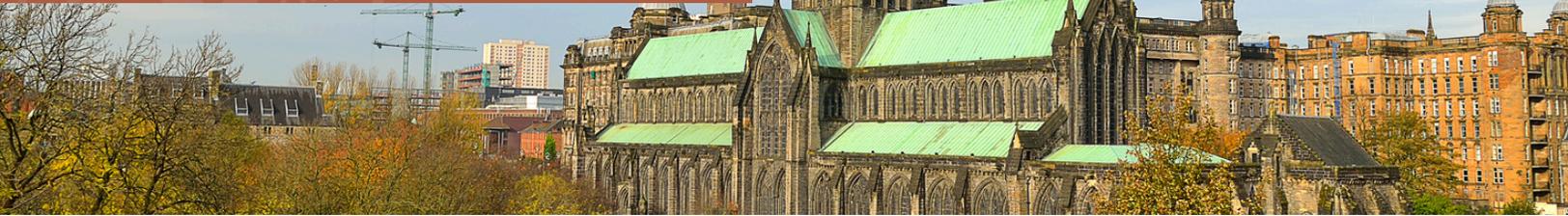
The Scots, known for their bravery, pride, and strong sense of independence, have long defended their freedom. From resisting Roman occupation to challenging English annexation attempts, Scotland's history is filled with tales of the struggle for sovereignty, culminating in a Scottish king ascending the English throne.

Today, Scotland is celebrated for its iconic bagpipes, traditional tartan and tweed, distinctive cuisine (like haggis, made from spiced sheep's innards and oatmeal), and world-renowned malt whisky.

Join a small group of only six people for a 14-day archaeological and educational journey through Scotland. Traverse from the southern border with England to the farthest reaches of the north, discovering historical and archaeological sites often missed by other travelers. Experience Scotland's prehistoric stone circles and tombs, magnificent abbeys, and cathedrals, and enjoy the views from medieval castle battlements in remote, picturesque locations.

Participate in the oldest Highland Games in Scotland at Tomintoul and take a ferry to the Orkney Islands, home to the densest collection of Stone Age archaeological sites in Britain. Our meticulously planned route takes you through some of the most scenic rural countryside in the British Isles, ensuring you experience the very best of Scotland's culture and heritage.

# Daily Itinerary



## Day 1

### St. Kentigern Cathedral, Govan Church, Glasgow's Hunterian Museum

Arrive early this morning in Glasgow. Scotland's largest city was founded as a monastery in the 6th century by Saint Kentigern, or Mungo as he is known in Gaelic, a bishop of the British kingdom of Strathclyde. For most of its history, the city maintained a strong connection with the Catholic Church, with the Bishops of Glasgow playing key parts in the medieval history of Scotland.

Only four medieval buildings have survived in Glasgow, and we will view three. The magnificent Cathedral of St. Kentigern was thought to have been built on the site of the saint's tomb. The Govan Old Church contains a unique collection of early medieval stones dating from the 9th through 11th centuries, including the elaborately decorated Govan Sarcophagus carved from solid stone in the Viking Age. Our final stop will be at the Hunterian Museum, housed within the University of Glasgow and the oldest museum in Scotland. We will see a collection of impressive Roman artifacts from excavations along the line of the Antonine Wall.

Overnight for one night at a centrally-located hotel and enjoy our welcome dinner at a fine local restaurant. (D)

## Day 2

### Antonine Wall, New Lanark

Built two thousand years ago in the reign of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, the Antonine Wall ran coast-to-coast across Scotland from the Clyde to the Firth of Forth and is the most magnificent Roman military monument left in Scotland today. Known to the Romans as Vallum Antonini, this UNESCO World Heritage Site was comprised of a bank of turf almost nine feet tall, topped with an imposing wooden palisade.

After viewing the impressive remains, continue to New Lanark, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded in 1786 by the philanthropist and Utopian idealist Robert Owen, this small 18th-century industrial community with its imposing cotton mill buildings, spacious and well-designed workers' housing, and the dignified educational institute and school still testify to Owen's humanism.

Transfer to Dirleton and overnight for three nights at the charming Open Arms Hotel, overlooking the village green and the 12th-century Dirleton Castle beyond. (B/D)





Dryburgh Abbey

## Day 3

### Rosslyn Chapel, Linlithgow Palace, Forth Bridge, Stirling Castle

Our day is filled with captivating sites, beginning at Stirling Castle, one of the finest examples of Renaissance architecture in Scotland. Continue to magnificent Linlithgow Palace, one of the principal residences of the Scottish monarchs in the 15th and 16th centuries. Without defensive walls or a well-fortified position, Linlithgow was an exquisite pleasure retreat. With four wings arranged around a central courtyard and one of the finest medieval interiors in Scotland, including a massive Great Hall, it embodied imperial splendor and power. Several noble family members were born in this royal manor, including James V and his daughter, Mary Queen of Scots.

After lunch in Linlithgow we drive to Rosslyn Chapel, a tiny 15th-century church with extraordinary treasures secreted within. Every conceivable roof rib, capital, boss, arch, and corbel is encrusted with human and animal figures, moldings, and foliage. Next, view the Forth Bridge, crossing the Forth estuary near Edinburgh and designated a UNESCO World Heritage property. It remains one of the greatest cantilever-trussed bridges and continues to carry passengers and freight today.

Return to Dirleton in the late afternoon. (B/D)

## Day 4

### Traquair House, Melrose Abbey, Dryburgh Abbey

Start the day at Traquair House, the oldest inhabited house in Scotland, situated amid beautiful scenery close to the River Tweed.

Next, see Melrose Abbey, lavishly ornamented with carvings of lush fruit, flowers, and foliage. Humorous additions to the masonry include human figurines around the exterior walls – the cook with his ladle, the mason with his mallet, the fat monk, and, flying high on a gargoyle, a bagpipe-playing pig.

Nearby, Dryburgh Abbey presents an interesting contrast. Founded in the 12th century, the complex was burned and restored twice but eventually went on to flourish in the 15th century. The great Sir Walter Scott is buried on the grounds.



Linlithgow Palace

# Daily Itinerary *(cont'd)*

## Day 5

### Edinburgh Castle, Dunkeld

Located on the Firth of Forth's southern shore, Edinburgh is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Scotland's capital. With its medieval Old Town, elegant gardens, and Neo-Classical buildings in the Georgian New Town, this is a gorgeous city. Towering over the city is Edinburgh Castle, home to Scotland's crown jewels, and the Stone of Destiny, an ancient symbol of Scotland's monarchy. There has been a royal castle on the site since the 12th century.

Enjoy an afternoon walking tour of historic Edinburgh before driving to the 18th-century country town of Dunkeld. Overnight in the Dunkeld House Hotel in Dunkeld, a graceful country house hotel overlooking the River Tay. Time permitting, stop by Dunkeld Cathedral, built in stages between 1260 and 1501. It became an important religious site for the early Celtic Church when the relics of the Irish saint, Columba, were moved here from Iona, Scotland's remote western island and important medieval monastic center. (B/D)



## Day 6

### Scottish Crannog Center, Blair Castle

Begin the day at the Scottish Crannog Centre, the first crannog built for probably 2,000 years. A crannog is a defensive homestead built in the water of a loch from as early as 5,000 years ago. This reconstruction is based on the results of excavations from the 2,500-year-old Oakbank Crannog. Ancient structural timbers, food, plant and insect remains, utensils, and even clothing have been remarkably well preserved and many are on display in the Crannog Centre's shore-based exhibition. Despite the destruction of the Crannog due to a fire in 2021, the center has been rebuilt to become bigger and better than ever!

In the afternoon, we visit Blair Castle, the home of the Atholl family for over seven centuries. The castle has had a diverse history, witnessing both turbulent and peaceful times, enlarged and adapted over 750 years. Home to politicians, soldiers, agriculturalists, and entrepreneurs, the family history is brought to life against a backdrop of fine 18th-century interiors and Scots Baronial architecture in 30 rooms.

Transfer to Aberlour and overnight for two nights at the Dowans Hotel, a grand Victorian mansion converted into a hotel.

Scotland is known for its single-malt Scottish whisky. The word whisky itself derives from the Scottish Gaelic uisge beatha, or 'water of life.' Tonight's elegant dinner will include a specially arranged whisky tasting. (B/D)

Edinburgh Castle



# Daily Itinerary *(cont'd)*

## Day 7

### Tomintoul Highland Games

Today will be a highlight of the trip as we join the festivities at the Tomintoul Highland Games, one of Scotland's longest-running. The exciting events include highland dancing, piping competitions, and tossing of the caber, where men heave a telephone pole-like beam so that it turns over in the air and falls on the ground directly opposite the man who threw it...a feat of strength and skill. (B/D)



Tomintoul Highland Games

Dunrobin Castle



## Day 8

### Culloden Battlefield, Dunrobin Castle

This morning's walk through the battlefields of Culloden will help us understand the last Jacobite Rising. In April 1746, after decades of attempts to install the descendants of the Catholic House of Stuarts on the British throne, this bloody battle was won by the Protestant troops of the House of Hanover and ended the Highland clan culture of Scotland.

As we drive north, we will stop at Dunrobin Castle, a large Victorian fairytale-like mansion built around a 14th-century tower. The museum contains many Pictish stones with carvings and other archaeological finds and fascinating memorabilia accrued by the incumbent family over the years.

Overnight at the Forss House Hotel in Thurso. (B/D)

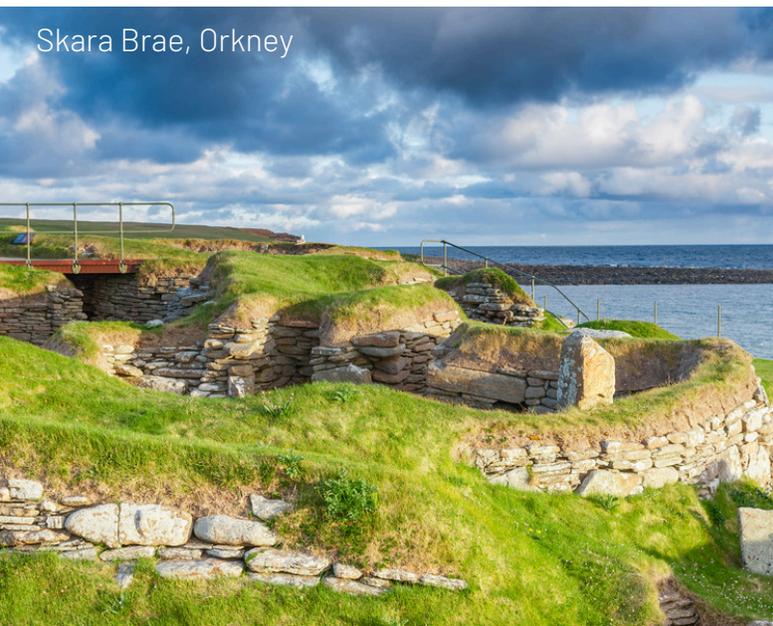
## Day 9

### Ferry Thurso to the Orkney Islands, Skara Brae

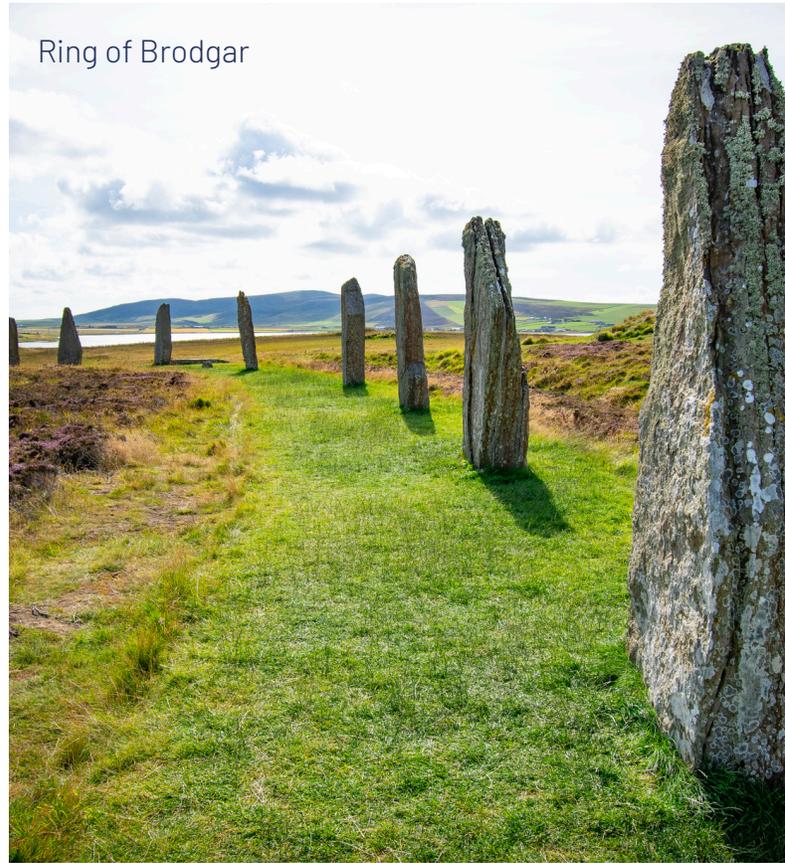
An early morning crossing by ferry takes us from Thurso to Stromness in the Orkney Islands. The UNESCO World Heritage Heart of Neolithic Orkney consists of a group of Stone Age monuments. The first we will see is Skara Brae, Orkney's most extraordinary prehistoric site. This Neolithic village, buried for millennia in the sand until unearthed by a freak storm in 1850, is completely preserved, including furniture and an astonishing drainage system. Brochs are Iron Age dry-stone towers found only in Scotland. Many stood alone, but on Orkney, they were generally surrounded by sizable settlements. The Broch of Gurness, spectacularly located overlooking the sea, is an outstanding surviving example. The origins of Orkney's capital Kirkwall, our home base for the next two days, can be traced back to Norse times in the 11th century when it was called Kirkjuvagr – the church of the bay. We will walk the stone streets of this medieval town to see St. Magnus Cathedral, founded in 1137 by the Viking, Earl Rognvald, in honor of his uncle St. Magnus. We will also visit the ruins of the magnificent Renaissance Earl's Palace with its enormous fireplaces and huge oriel windows, and the Bishop's Palace.

Overnight for the next two nights in the Ayre Hotel overlooking the port of Kirkwall. (B/D)

Skara Brae, Orkney



Ring of Brodgar



## Day 10

### Unstan Cairn, Maeshowe, Stenness Stones, Ring of Brodgar

Head out for Unstan Cairn, a Neolithic chambered cairn constructed sometime between 3400 and 2800 BC. Then, we continue our explorations of UNESCO's Heart of Neolithic Orkney at the Great Cairn of Maeshowe. The size and elaborate construction suggest that it was the burial place of an important, and probably ruling, family group. The tomb was broken into countless times in the past, including by the Norse, who carved their graffiti on the walls, leaving us the finest collection of runic inscriptions in Britain.

Drive to the southern end of Loch Stenness to explore The Stenness Stones and the Ring of Brodgar. There are four stones still standing at Stenness, while at Brodgar, twenty-seven of the original sixty monoliths are still standing. (B/D)

# Daily Itinerary *(cont'd)*

## Day 11

### The Italian Chapel, Ferry Back to the Mainland, Tarbat Discovery Centre

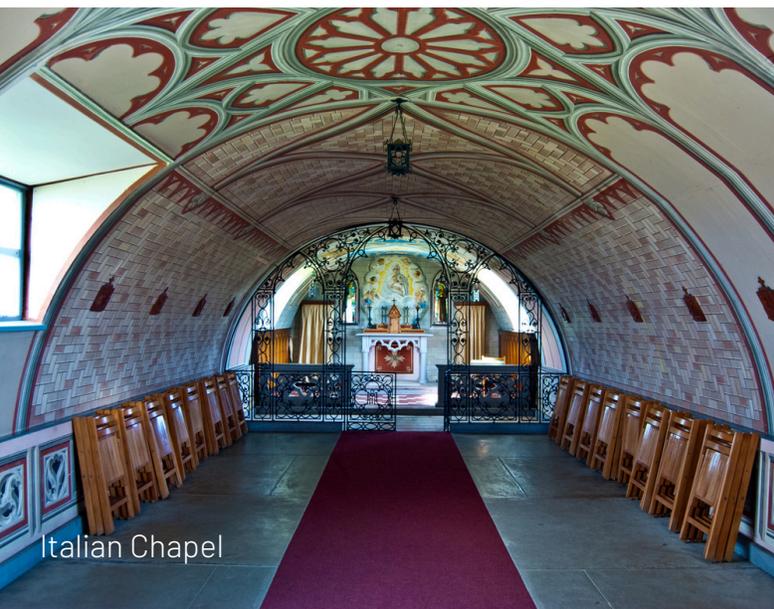
Stop to see the Italian Chapel, a tiny church built in the Mediterranean style by Italian POWs during World War II, before boarding the ferry to return to the Scottish mainland.

Upon arrival, drive to the Tarbat Discovery Centre, dedicated to displaying and preserving the heritage of the Tarbat Peninsula. Housed in the Old Parish Church are artifacts from the only Pictish monastic settlement excavated in Scotland.

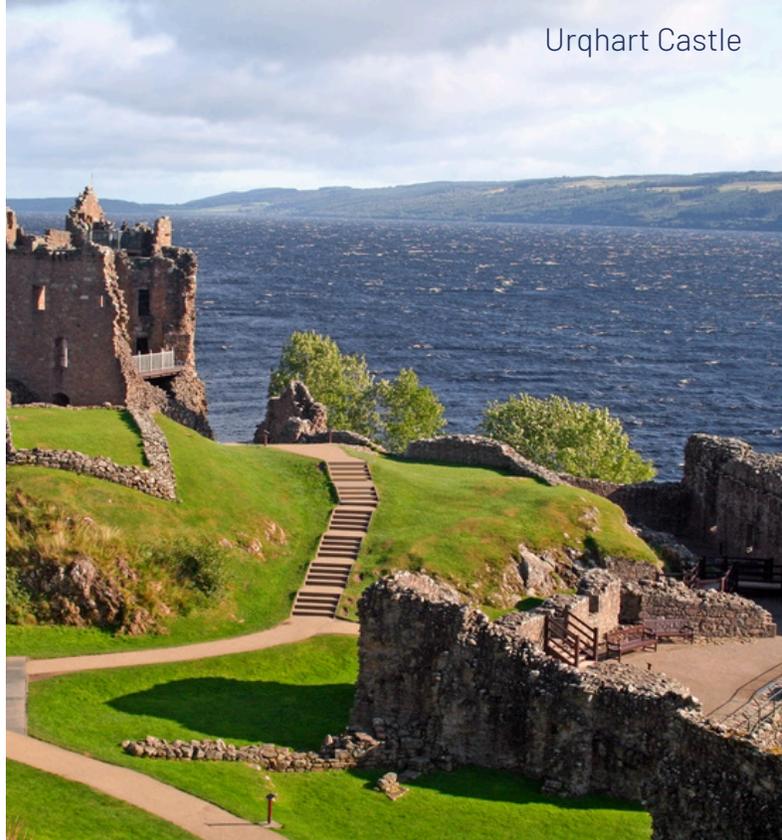
Driving south along the peninsula, we will stop to view three stunning carved Pictish stones. In a lonely flower-filled pasture stands a full-scale reproduction of the Hilton of Cadboll Pictish Cross Slab, one of the most magnificent of the carved Pictish stones in Scotland. Further down the road is the Clach a' Charridh, or Shandwick Stone, standing more than ten feet tall.

Intricately displayed on the six carved panels are the Pictish double-disc, a hunting scene, along with warriors and animals. Displayed within the Old Church, the 8th-century Nigg Cross is one of Scotland's greatest art treasures. The Pictish symbols and Christian imagery bring to mind an illuminated manuscript page.

Continue to Inverness, where we spend one night. (B/L/D)



Italian Chapel



## Day 12

### Urquhart Castle, West Highland Museum in Ft. William

Our long drive will take us through some of the most spectacular scenery in Scotland – the renowned and rugged Highlands. Travel through Great Glen, with Loch Ness being by far the most famous of its lakes. It is said to be home to Nessie, a monstrous creature first sighted by St. Columba in the 6th century. The commanding fortifications along the way attest to the region being fought over for centuries.

Overlooking Loch Ness stands Urquhart Castle, once one of Scotland's largest medieval battlements. Control of the castle passed back and forth between the Scots and the English during the Wars of Independence, and the last of the government troops garrisoned here during the Jacobite Risings blew up the castle when they left.

Our final stop of the day is at Ft. Williams to learn the story of the mountainous West Highlands of Scotland and its people at the West Highlands Museum.

Tonight, we will stay in the Georgian planned town of Inverary. (B/D)

### Day 13

#### **Inverary Castle, Kilmartin**

Begin our last day in Scotland at Inveraray Castle, a country house near Inveraray in the county of Argyll, in western Scotland, on the shore of Loch Fyne, Scotland's longest sea loch. It is one of the earliest examples of Gothic Revival architecture and has been the seat of the Dukes of Argyll, chiefs of Clan Campbell, since the 18th century.

This afternoon takes us to the valley of Kilmartin, which has one of the highest concentrations of prehistoric sites in Scotland. Visit Nether Largie South Chambered Cairn dating to the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC and the contemporary Temple Wood Stone Circles. See the displays in Kilmartin House Museum. Explore Dunadd Fort high located on an isolated rocky cliff and considered one of the main centers of the Scots in the kingdom of Dalriada. The outline of a footprint and a hollowed-out basin in the rock has been interpreted as being part of the royal inaugurations of the kings of Dalriada.

Drive on towards Glasgow and overnight at an airport hotel. (B/D)

### Day 14

#### **Depart Scotland**

Transfer to the airport for our flights back home. (B)

PLEASE NOTE: This is a sample itinerary that is typical of our trip offerings. In general, you can expect a very similar program, though days may be swapped depending on availability, opening hours, and other affecting factors.

#### **Pre and Post Trip Extensions**

Far Horizons offers pre or post extensions for many of our trips. We can also arrange extra nights at the arrival and departure hotel should you wish to arrive early or depart later. Please contact us for details.

# Why Take This Tour?

**Five UNESCO World Heritage Sites:  
Antonine Wall,  
Edinburgh,  
Forth Bridge,  
Skara Brae,  
Heart of Neolithic Orkney**

**Learn about Scotland's whisky with a guided distillery tour**

**Travel by ferry to the Orkney Islands**

**Enjoy the oldest highland games in Scotland in Tomintoul**

**Maximum 6 participants**

# Tour Information

## Pricing

For current pricing, please visit [farhorizons.com](http://farhorizons.com) and navigate to our trip page.

## Inclusions

### Price based on double occupancy and includes:

- Internal flights during the trip (if applicable/unless otherwise noted)
- The accompaniment of your scholar throughout the entire trip
- Local English-speaking guide
- Hotel accommodations (3 or 4 stars; or best available based in the area)
- Ground transportation
- Airport transfers for arrivals and departures
- Most meals as noted in the itinerary
- Entry fees to all included sites and museums
- Gratuities to guides, drivers, and restaurant and hotel staff
- Coordination for any private presentations or tours

*Trip prices are based on a minimum number of participants. If this minimum number is not met, trip prices are subject to change. Should the prices need to change, Far Horizons will reach out to registered guests to discuss directly.*

## Single Supplement

Should a roommate be requested and one not be available, the single supplement will be charged.

## Exclusions

- International round trip airfare
- A separate donation check of \$150.00 per person to a designated donation project
- Passport or visa fees
- Required vaccines or tests
- Airport or departure taxes
- Alcoholic drinks, beverages or food not included on set menus
- Excess baggage charges
- Personal tips and hotel incidental expenses
- Laundry or other items of a personal nature

## Donation Checks

As a tour company that benefits from the cultural and natural riches of our destinations, we have a policy of donating to the scientific and cultural sites and projects which we visit. This has created a bond between Far Horizons and the academic and local communities that has helped us establish an extensive list of lecturers and contacts in each of our destinations. We ask that each participant donate to the noteworthy project we designate. The donation amount is \$150.00 per person. Note that the donation is required as part of your registration for the trip and that it is non-refundable.

## Exchange Rate Fluctuations

Prices are based on currency exchange rates keeping below a projected level. While it is unlikely, if the exchange rates should change substantially, Far Horizons reserves the right to charge an additional amount to the trip cost.

## Registration

A deposit of \$1000 per person is required along with your registration & health forms, which will be linked in the email confirmation you receive once you pay your deposit on our booking platform. Final payment is due 120 days before departure. Prior to departure, you will be sent a reading list and a tour bulletin containing travel information.



Highland Cow

## Cancellation

Cancellations received in writing at least 120 days before departure will receive a refund less a \$500 per person administrative fee.

Cancellations received less than 120 days before the departure date will not receive a refund. If for any reason you are unable to complete the trip, Far Horizons will not reimburse any fees. Upon registering for the tour, the purchase of travel protection with both trip cancellation and emergency evacuation is strongly advised. Links to recommended insurance policies will be included in the email you receive confirming receipt of your deposit.

## Expectations During Travel

Our trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active, have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. We have designed this trip to be as comfortable as possible, while also aiming to visit some remote or unique sites that other companies do not attempt to include in their itineraries. There may be days where we have very long drives and the conditions of the roads may vary. Hotels and transportation in some remote areas may not be up to western standards. There may be times when no bellhops are available; please pack with the understanding that you need to be able to handle your own luggage at times. Sometimes we may be walking over uneven trails for a mile or more; hiking boots are strongly recommended. Not every meal will be haute cuisine and several lunches may be picnics or box lunches. By maintaining a flexible attitude we will soon be captivated by the beauty of the natural scenery, the hospitality of the local people, and the fascinating sites we will see. Your flexibility and patience will be appreciated.

## Air Ticketing

International round trip flights are not included in the cost of the trip. If Far Horizons must change the trip dates or cancel the trip for any reason, Far Horizons is not responsible for any air ticket you may have purchased. Please send your complete air schedule as soon as you have it. NOTE: Please contact Far Horizons if you would like for us to handle your air ticketing.

## Private Tours and Talks

The private tours of archaeological sites and talks by specialists are scheduled in advance and include a donation to each. Specialists working at these sites are excited about showing their work to interested enthusiasts. However, please be aware that there may be times when the director or a member of the staff may not be on site when our groups arrive due to other commitments.

## Walking and Standing

Far Horizons expects all participants to be physically active and able to walk and climb independently throughout the full touring days. This includes walking over uneven terrain (uphill and downhill) for 2 miles or more at each site. You should expect to be on your feet for much of each day, averaging as much as 5 miles of walking per day. **As such, each participant should be able to walk unaided at a pace of 3 miles per hour for at least an hour at a time, and to stand unsupported for at least 60 minutes.** Bearing this in mind, we suggest that, if you have not already done so, you begin walking several miles every day, ideally including stairs and hills. If you have questions about your ability to keep up with the group or the strenuous nature of this trip, please contact the Far Horizons staff.

## Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you consider purchasing travel insurance. Should illness or an unforeseen event force you to cancel your travel plans after your final payment or during your trip, it would be doubly unfortunate to incur a significant financial loss. Trip cancellation protection will enable you to be reimbursed for the loss of your payment if you are unable to travel for any of the covered reasons in the "Outline of Coverage" section, or should you have an accident or suffer from any medical conditions during the trip.

Far Horizons offers customized protection plans through Travel Insured International (a Crum & Forster Company) with the following benefits:

- Trip Cancellation and Trip Interruption for covered reasons
- Trip Delay
- Baggage Loss and Baggage Delay
- Emergency Medical Expenses and Emergency Medical Evacuation
- 24-Hour Accidental Death & Dismemberment
- 24-Hour Travel Assistance & Concierge Services
- Option to upgrade to 'Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR)

We recommend reviewing the language in detail so you are aware of specific parameters; Depending on the policy, to waive the Pre-Existing Medical Condition Exclusion or to upgrade to CFAR coverage, the plan must be purchased within 14 to 21 days of the initial trip deposit, full trip cost must be insured, and traveler is medically fit at time of plan purchase. Otherwise, coverage may be purchased at any time prior to departure.

To obtain a personalized quote and/or purchase a plan through Far Horizons/Travel Insured International, simply click [HERE](#). For specific questions regarding the Worldwide Protector Plan, please contact Travel Insured International's Customer Care Center at 1-800-243-3174 or by email at [customercare@travelinsured.com](mailto:customercare@travelinsured.com), and refer to Far Horizons' account number: 54070.

## Itinerary Changes

Changes in our itinerary, accommodations, and transportation schedules may occur while traveling. While we are committed to keeping as close to the published details as possible, sometimes it is simply not possible. Weather events, government affairs, or other factors out of our control sometimes come into play. A good book to read as well as patience, flexible attitude, and a sense of humor are essential.



Fouth Bridge



Meet Your Study Leader...

# Dr. Brian Buchanan



**Dr Brian Buchanan received a double BA in both anthropology and history from Millersville University (in Pennsylvania); his MA in Public Anthropology from the American University; a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) a computer system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of geographical data; and his PhD in Archaeology at the University of Durham.**

Brian is a landscape archaeologist specialising in the Roman and early medieval landscapes of Britain. He is an Assistant Professor at Eastern Washington University, and has worked on archaeological projects in the UK, the USA, Ukraine, and Northern Africa. His enthusiasm about archaeology and history is contagious, and his knowledge of the area makes him an exceptional leader.



Melrose Abbey



# Why Travel with Far Horizons?

With over forty years of experience, and an 85% customer return rate, we have stood the test of time. Remind yourself what makes Far Horizons so unique.

## ✦ Scholar Led Tours

Every tour is led by a well-respected PhD scholar with expertise in the subject & regions we visit.

## ✦ Trusted Partnerships

Trusted Partnerships: Every tour is led by a well-respected PhD scholar with expertise in the subject & regions we visit.

## ✦ Behind the Scenes Access

Our groups have private access to closed areas and on-site specialists.

## ✦ Unique Trips

Our itineraries are designed to showcase sites that are off-the-beaten path; we explore places that many travelers never see.

## ✦ Personalized Service

We love knowing our guests and helping with the decision process. We are here to assist you.

## ✦ Small Groups

Our tours have a maximum of 14 travelers. So you can trust that you will have a boutique experience every time.

Culloden battlefield



# Highlands & Lowlands SCOTLAND

WITH DR BRIAN BUCHANAN

Email with Questions

[journeys@farhorizons.com](mailto:journeys@farhorizons.com)

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## FAR HORIZONS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL TRIPS

