

# EUROPE DREAM TRIP

6 PRINTABLE TRAVEL ITINERARIES

## WHAT YOU'LL FIND:

- **PORTUGAL 10-DAY ITINERARY... 1-12**
- **IRELAND 10-DAY ROAD TRIP... 13-26**
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# PORTUGAL

10-DAY ITINERARY (NO CAR NEEDED)



# Car-Free Portugal Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

This itinerary covers the highlights of Portugal in 10 days using public transportation – no car needed!



## DAY 1

### Introduction to Lisbon



#### WHERE TO EAT

- Lunch at Le Petit Cafe
- Drinks at Portas do Sol
- Dinner at Farol de Santa Luzia OR consider going to a Fado dinner show at a place like Parreirinha de Alfama or Tasca do Chico

1. Arrive in Lisbon in the morning and drop your bags at your hotel, then hit the ground running and head to the Alfama neighborhood.

#### Things to do in Lisbon's oldest neighborhood include:

- **Castelo de Sao Jorge** - This medieval castle is one of the most popular tourist spots in Lisbon, and the views from the walls are great. Go early to miss the crowds.
- **Miradouro da Graça** - Officially known as Miradouro Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen, this miradouro or viewpoint is one of the best in Lisbon.
- **Sé de Lisboa** (Lisbon Cathedral) - It's beautiful inside!

## DAY 1 (CONTINUED)

- **Fado Museum** – Learn about the evolution of this expressive, often melancholy type of music that Portugal is famous for.
- **Miradouro de Santa Luzia** and **Miradouro das Portas do Sol** – These two miradouros are located virtually right next to each other, and are best visited in the late afternoon/early evening, when the sun will be shining on Lisbon's orange-hued rooftops.

For a walking tour option, [this one](#) covers all the highlights.

2. After a busy day of sightseeing, wind down with drinks at the Portas do Sol viewpoint, followed by dinner (and maybe a Fado show!).



### LISBON HOTEL (5 NIGHTS)

[Hotel Da Baixa](#)



[Memmo Alfama Hotel](#)



[BE Poet Baixa Hotel](#)



[Corpo Santo Lisbon](#)



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## DAY 2

# Lisbon



- Coffee at Linha d'Água
- Lunch at BEHER LISBOA
- Gelato at Amorino Baixa
- Dinner at Time Out Market

1. Start your morning at **Parque Eduardo VII**, where at the top you'll find incredible views back down the manicured lawns toward the Tagus River.

2. Head to the **Baixa-Chiado** neighborhood either by walking (about 30 minutes) or taking the metro to the Rossio stop.

- Walk down the pedestrian-friendly Rua Augusta, which is lined with shops and restaurants.
- Stop into a bakery to try some pastéis de nata, the delicious Portuguese custard tarts.

3. Take a ride on the **Ascensor da Glória**, one of Lisbon's famous funiculars. This funicular lets you off right next to the Miradouro de São Pedro de Alcântara, which offers some nice views.

4. From there, you can walk downhill a bit through the **Bairro Alto** neighborhood. Stop to see the Ascensor da Bica (Lisbon's most-photographed funicular).

5. Take the funicular down (it runs roughly every 15 minutes) or walk down alongside it to snap some photos. At the bottom, you'll be in the **Cais do Sodré** neighborhood, which puts you in the perfect position to hit up the **Time Out Market** (an artisan food hall) for dinner.



## DAY 3

# Day trip to Sintra



- Lunch at Bacalhau na Vila or Romaria de Baco in Sintra
- Pastries at Piriquita in Sintra
- Dinner at Saudade, Incomum by Luis Santos, or Restaurante Metamorphosis in Sintra

1. Take a break from Lisbon and head to **Sintra** for a day trip. Sintra is a mountain town about an hour northwest of Lisbon, and the region is filled with hills, forests, and fairytale-like palaces and villas.

- You can [book a day trip](#) to Sintra or visit on your own. To visit on your own, take the train from Rossio Station in Lisbon to Sintra. Once you arrive in Sintra, buy a ticket for the 434 bus that runs in a loop to most of Sintra's top attractions.

2. Don't miss the brightly-colored Pena Palace in Sintra. You'll want to [book your tickets in advance](#) so you can skip the ticket line.

3. After visiting Pena Palace, spend some time walking through Parque de Pena (the grounds surrounding the palace) before heading back to Sintra town for lunch and to visit Sintra National Palace.

4. From the national palace, it's only about a 15-20 minute walk to the Quinta da Regaleira, a fancy villa with beautiful gardens.

5. Head back to Lisbon for dinner, or stay in Sintra a while longer to enjoy the ambiance after the day trip crowds leave.

## DAY 4

# Lisbon and Belém



- Pastries at Pastéis de Belém
- Dinner at LX Factory back in Lisbon

1. Start your morning off by checking out the **National Azulejo Museum**. This museum is dedicated to the art of tilework in Portugal.

2. Head to the historical **Belém** neighborhood of Lisbon, which lies further out from the rest of the city along the Tagus River. You can get there by train, tram, or ride share.

A walking tour of Belém is recommended (I liked [this one](#)), or you can see the highlights on your own:

- **Mosteiro dos Jerónimos** (Jerónimos Monastery) – A UNESCO World Heritage Site that dates back to the 16th century.
- **Padrão dos Descobrimentos** (Monument of the Discoveries) – A monument that celebrates the Portuguese Age of Exploration during the 15th and 16th centuries.
- **Torre de Belem** (Belém Tower) – This tower was used to guard the entrance to Lisbon's harbor.

3. Stop at **Pastéis de Belém**, a historic bakery that makes custard tarts by the same name. Although there's usually a long line, it's worth the wait!

## DAY 5

# Half-day trip to Óbidos



- Capinha d'Óbidos for delicious pastries
- Real Casa Do Petisco for traditional Portuguese food

1. Spend a relaxing morning in Lisbon. Then, in the late morning or early afternoon, head to the nearby town of **Óbidos**.

- The easiest way to get to Óbidos is by bus. The Rodotejo bus company runs its Rapido Verde (Green Express) service to Óbidos from outside Lisbon's Campo Grande Station at least once per hour.

2. Spend some time strolling the picturesque streets of Óbidos and walking along the old fortified wall.

3. Try the strong cherry liqueur drink Ginja that is famous in Óbidos – many places serve it in little edible chocolate cups!

4. Check out the old medieval castle (which today is a private hotel), visit a church or two, and just enjoy getting a little lost in the narrow streets and alleyways.

5. Head back to Lisbon in the evening. If you haven't experienced a Fado dinner show yet, this is a great night to do it.

## DAY 6

# Train to Porto



- Bacalhau for seafood with a view
- Lado B or Cafe Santiago to try a Francesinha sandwich

1. Today it's time to say goodbye to Lisbon and head north to **Porto**.

- You can take the train from Lisbon to Portugal. The Alfa Pendular train takes about 2 hours and 50 minutes and costs €20-30, while the inter-city train is slower and cheaper. [Look for tickets here.](#)

2. After arriving in Porto and settling into your hotel, take a walk along the **Cais da Ribeira**, the waterfront right along the Douro River in the oldest part of the city. Stop at a waterfront cafe or bar for a coffee or glass of wine.

3. From the Ribeira, make your way to the **Dom Luís I Bridge**, a grand iron bridge spanning the Douro River. Cross the bridge over to **Vila Nova de Gaia**, which has some of the best views of Porto and is home to the city's best port lodges (cellars).

- If you'd like to do a port tasting, Calem and Sandeman are two of the most famous cellars in the area, though we also loved our tasting at Kopke Wine House, which you can pair with chocolate!
- For great views, take the short **Teleférico de Gaia** (Gaia cable car) back up to the top of the hill.

5. Finally, head over to the **Jardim do Morro** or fortress-like Monastery of Serra do Pilar for the best sunset views over the river.



### PORTO HOTELS (4 NIGHTS)

[Pestana Porto - A Brasileira](#)



[Hotel Infante Sagres](#)



[The Yeatman](#)



## DAY 7

# Porto



- Taste Porto food tour for dinner

1. Start your day visiting **Livraria Lello**. This beautiful bookstore from the 1800s is said to have inspired author JK Rowling while she was living in Porto. (You have to book a timed ticket online, and it's best to go first thing in the morning.)
2. From Livraria Lello, make your way down to the **Palacio da Bolsa** to continue your architectural exploration of Porto. The Neoclassical Palacio da Bolsa was built in the 19th century and you can take a tour.
3. Check out some of Porto's grand cathedrals. The **Igreja Monumento de São Francisco** is right next to the Palacio da Bolsa, and the **Sé do Porto** is a short walk away.
4. Hop on an hour-long **cruise on the Douro River** to see the Six Bridges of Porto. Seeing the city from the water will give you yet another set of amazing views. You can [book cruise tickets here](#).
5. In the late afternoon, dive into Porto's cuisine with a food tour. The 3.5-hour **Vintage Food Tour** from [Taste Porto Food Tours](#) is a great overview of Porto's evolving food scene, and you'll get more than enough to eat and drink!

## DAY 8

# Day trip to Braga



- Coffee and/or lunch at Cafe A Brasileira in Braga (the most famous coffee shop in Braga with beautiful architecture)
- Dinner at Tapabento in Porto (near São Bento train station; making a reservation ahead of time is highly recommended)

1. Take a day trip to the city of **Braga**, located to the northeast of Porto.

- You can easily visit Braga independently. From the São Bento train station in Porto, take the suburban train to Braga. The train takes about one hour.
- Don't want to navigate on your own? You could also book [this guided tour](#).

2. Check out the highlights of Braga, including Paços do Concelho de Braga (Braga City Hall), Sé de Braga (Braga Cathedral), São Marcos Church, Antigo Paço Arquiepiscopal (Archbishop's Court), Palácio do Raio, and Praça da República.

3. After exploring the city proper, make your way to **Bom Jesus do Monte**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site slightly outside Braga.

- You can take a taxi or Uber, or catch the local #2 bus on Avenue da Liberdade in Braga and take it to the last stop Bom Jesus do Monte. It's about a 15-20 minute bus ride.

4. Take the funicular to the top of the sanctuary complex and spend some time exploring (it's free to visit!).

5. Take the local #2 bus back to Braga for more exploring, or take it directly back to the train station if you'd prefer to return to Porto.

## DAY 9

# Douro Valley tour



1. Today it's time for another day trip, this time to the famous **Douro Valley**. The Douro Valley is a special wine grape-producing region in Portugal. It's where the famous port wine comes from.

- The easiest way to visit the Douro Valley is [on a day tour](#). This one includes visits to two vineyards, port tastings, lunch, and an hour-long cruise on the Douro River.

2. Return to Porto (hotel pickup and dropoff is included in the tour) and grab one last dinner in the city before you depart.

## DAY 10

# Train back to Lisbon



1. Sadly, this is the end of your trip. Take the train back from Porto to Lisbon to catch your flight home. If your flight departs in the evening, you'll want to take an early morning train back.

### If you have more time...

If you want to add even more day trips to your Portugal itinerary (or swap out some of the ones recommended in this itinerary), here are a few ideas:

- A trip to Cascais (beach resort-type town) from Lisbon
- A day trip (or overnight trip) to Evora from Lisbon (like [one of those](#))
- A day trip to Aveiro/Costa Nova from Porto (you can even [take a tour](#))
- A stop in the university city of Coimbra between Lisbon and Porto



# PORTUGAL PACKING LIST

## 10-Day Road Trip

### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 5-6 short-sleeved tops
- 1 long sleeved layering top (for warmth or sun protection; (I love [these merino tops!](#))
- 1 pair of jeans (if traveling in winter)
- 1 pair of comfortable pants or leggings
- 1-2 pairs of [capris](#) or shorts
- 2 comfy dresses or skirts
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 light jacket (in winter)
- 1 sunhat
- Underwear/bras/socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 5-6 t-shirts (at least [1-2 merino](#))
- 1 long-sleeved shirt
- 1 sweater or sweatshirt (in winter)
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1-2 pairs of other comfy pants
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 light jacket (for anytime other than summer)
- 1 hat
- Underwear and socks

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries
- Good sunscreen
- Small first aid kit (don't forget Band-Aids, pain relievers, aloe cream for sunburns)

### SHOES

- 1 pair of breathable sneakers or [walking sandals](#)
- 1 pair of comfortable flats (women)
- 1 pair of good walking shoes (men)

### TECH

- An [RFID-blocking wallet](#)
- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle or other e-reader
- European plug adaptors
- Electronics chargers
- Portable power bank

### OTHER

- Your passport!
- [Cross-body purse \(women\)](#)
- Comfy day pack (men)
- Reusable water bottle
- Sunglasses
- Travel umbrella

**GET ALL OF YOUR TRAVEL ESSENTIALS HERE!**

# IRELAND

10-DAY IRISH ROAD TRIP ITINERARY



# Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

This 10-day Irish road trip itinerary allows you to explore some of the highlights of the Emerald Isle, including Dublin, Glendalough, Killarney, the Cliffs of Moher, Galway, and more.



## DAY 1

### Arrive in Dublin



**DRIVE TIME**  
None



**DISTANCE**  
0-2 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. No need to pick up your rental car just yet! Hop on the Airlink bus to get from Dublin Airport to the city center.
2. Spend the afternoon leisurely exploring Dublin.
  - Consider taking the **DoDublin hop-on-hop-off bus tour** to get a feel for the city. ([Book online here](#))
3. Get dinner from a spot like The Church or The Bank, and have an early night to recuperate from jet lag.



### DUBLIN HOTELS (2 NIGHTS)

[Holiday Inn Express Dublin City Centre](#), O'Connell Street Upper

[The Grafton](#), Stephen Street Lower

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 2

# Dublin



**DRIVE TIME**  
None



**DISTANCE**  
3-4 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Spend the whole day exploring Dublin.

Things you can do today include:

- Tour the **Guinness Storehouse**. End with a pint at the rooftop bar overlooking Dublin. ([Book in advance here](#))
- Learn about Irish whiskey at the **Jameson Distillery**. ([Book here](#))
- Visit the Old Library at **Trinity College** and see The Book of Kells and the Long Room. ([Book here.](#))
- See **Dublin's grand churches**: [St. Patrick's Cathedral](#) and [Christ Church](#). Visit the Dublinia Museum at Christ Church.
- Learn about **immigration history** at Jeanie Johnston Tall Ship and Famine Museum, or visit [EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum](#).
- Visit the city's famous **Temple Bar pub district**.

### **DUBLIN PASS**

*If you plan to do a lot of sightseeing in Dublin, I recommend picking up a [Dublin Pass](#), which will get you admission to several of the city's top attractions (including the churches and the Guinness Storehouse), as well as a pass for the hop-on hop-off bus.*

**[Buy your Dublin Pass here](#)**

## DAY 3

# Glendalough and Waterford



### DRIVE TIME

3 hours



### DISTANCE

134 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Pick up your rental car in the morning and head south toward Waterford.
  - Save money by picking up your car in Dublin city rather than going back to the airport.
2. Stop in County Wicklow in the late morning to enjoy **Wicklow Mountains National Park**. See the ruins of the 6th-century monastic settlement at Glendalough.
3. End in **Waterford**. If you arrive early enough, head to the city center to see Reginald's Tower and the waterfront.



### WATERFORD HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Waterford Viking Hotel](#), Cork Road, Waterford



[Granville Hotel](#), Meagher's Quay, Waterford



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## DAY 4

# Rock of Cashel and Cobh



**DRIVE TIME**  
2.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
108 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Start the day with a tour of the **House of Waterford Crystal Factory** to see where the world-famous Waterford Crystal is still made by hand. (It's not a bad idea to [pre-book this tour!](#))
2. Drive to County Tipperary to see the **Rock of Cashel** (also called St. Patrick's Rock).
  - Take a free guided tour of the Rock of Cashel, or explore on your own.
3. Make your way south to the seaside town of **Cobh**. Take a walk to the colorful harbor for dinner.



### COBH HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Bella Vista Hotel](#), Bishop's Road Spy Hill, Cobh

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 5

# Blarney Castle and Killarney



### DRIVE TIME

2 hours



### DISTANCE

69 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Spend the morning getting to know Cobh's history. Visit **St. Colman's Cathedral** and **The Titanic Experience**. If you have enough time, book a historical [Titanic Walking Tour](#) of Cobh.

2. Head to **Blarney Castle**.

- Kiss the Blarney Stone to be granted the Gift of Gab.
- Explore the castle grounds and gardens.

3. Make your way to **Killarney** for the night.



### KILLARNEY HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Killarney Park Hotel](#), Town Centre, East Ave, Dromhale, Killarney

[McSweeney Arms Hotel](#), College St, Killarney

[BOOK NOW](#)

[BOOK NOW](#)



## DAY 6

# Choose Your Own Adventure!



### DRIVE TIME

Varies



### DISTANCE

Varies



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today, you have three different options to choose from. What you choose will depend on your interests and the weather.

#### **OPTION 1:** Explore Killarney National Park

- Tour Ross Castle.
- Visit Muckross House and its gardens.

#### **OPTION 2:** Circle the Dingle Peninsula

- If you're a more adventurous driver, head to the Dingle Peninsula and do the Sleah Head Drive.
- Stop in the cute and colorful town of Dingle.

#### **OPTION 3:** Drive the Ring of Kerry

- Take a clockwise route from Killarney, so you're going in the opposite direction as all the tour buses.

2. Spend the night in a real Irish castle! **Ballyseede Castle** is one of the more affordable castle stays in Ireland. If you arrive early, take a walk through the grounds and perhaps meet the castle's resident Irish wolfhounds.



### TRALEE HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Ballyseede Castle Hotel](#), Ballyseede, Tralee

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 7

# Cliffs of Moher



**DRIVE TIME**  
2.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
113 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Take your time enjoying the morning at **Ballyseede Castle**.

- Enjoy breakfast at the Stone Room Restaurant.
- Explore the sitting rooms, suits of armor, and the Orangery.
- Stroll through the grounds and gardens.

2. In the late morning, drive to the **Cliffs of Moher** for an afternoon visit.

- Check out the visitor center for some interesting and interactive exhibits (you can also get lunch here).
- Walk along the coastal trails to enjoy the views.
- OPTIONAL: [Take a cruise](#) along the bottom of the Cliffs from Doolin.



### DOOLIN HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[West Haven House](#), Toomullin, Doolin

[Doolin View B&B](#), Teergonean, Doolin

[Fiddle and Bow Hotel](#), Teergonean, Doolin

> [BOOK NOW](#)

> [BOOK NOW](#)

> [BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 8

# Ashford Castle and Westport



**DRIVE TIME**  
2.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
94 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Head north from Doolin and make a stop at **Ashford Castle**.

- Enjoy afternoon tea in the castle's Connaught Room (you need to [make a reservation](#) in advance for this!).
- Explore the castle gardens.

2. Head to the town of **Westport** for the night.

- Explore the colorful Georgian town center.
- Stop into a pub like Matt Malloy's or Porterhouse for live Irish music at night.



### WESTPORT (1 NIGHT)

[Woodside Lodge](#), Golf Course Rd, Westport

[The Wyatt Hotel](#), The Octagon, Westport

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

## DAY 9

# To Galway



**DRIVE TIME**  
1.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
49 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Spend the first half of the day exploring the town of **Westport** and its surroundings.

- Visit Westport House, an 18th-century historic home ([book tickets here](#)).
- OPTIONAL: Rent a bike and ride part of the Great Western Greenway.

3. In the late morning or early afternoon, head to the cultural capital of Ireland: **Galway**.

4. Spend the afternoon/evening exploring Galway. Take a walk down Shop Street and stop at an Irish pub or two. Galway has the best live Irish music!



### GALWAY (2 NIGHTS)

[Flannery's Hotel](#), Old Dublin Rd, Galway City East

[Park House Hotel](#), Forster Street, Eyre Square, Galway

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 10

# Galway or Aran Islands



**DRIVE TIME**  
2 hours



**DISTANCE**  
48 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today, you have two different options to choose from. What you choose will depend on your interests and the weather.

**OPTION 1:** Spend the day exploring the city of Galway

- Visit the free Galway City Museum
- See the Galway Cathedral
- Go on a [Galway Food Tour](#) (it's excellent)

**OPTION 2:** Take a day trip out to the Aran Islands

You can either drive to Rossaveal yourself or take a shuttle bus from Galway. Then, take a ferry from Ros a'Mhíl/Rossaveal to Inis Mor.

- Rent a bike and explore the island, or take a shuttle around to the main sites.
- See the ruins of Dún Aonghasa, an Iron Age fort.
- Take in the sights along the sea cliffs.



## DAY 11

# Fly out of Shannon or return to Dublin



### DRIVE TIME

2.5 hours



### DISTANCE

Up to 128 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

Your Ireland road trip ends today. You can opt to fly out of Shannon (about 1.25 hours from Galway) or return to Dublin (2.5 hours from Galway), depending on your onward travel plans.

## BONUS

### If you have more time...



If you have more time for your Ireland road trip, consider spending time in some of these other areas!

#### County Donegal

- See the Slieve League cliffs
- Explore some castles
- See stone circles
- Check out Glenveagh National Park

#### Northern Ireland

- Belfast: Take a Black Taxi tour and visit the Titanic Belfast museum.
- Londonderry/Derry: Take a walking tour or go on a guided walk of the ancient city walls.
- Causeway Coast: See Giant's Causeway and castle ruins.

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# IRELAND PACKING LIST

## 10-Day Road Trip

### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 4-5 short-sleeved tops
- 1 long-sleeved [merino top](#)
- 2 sweaters/cardigans
- 1-2 other tops for layering (incl. a warm fleece for spring/fall)
- 1 dress or skirt
- 2 pairs of jeans
- 1 pair of other pants
- 1-2 pairs of leggings
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#)
- 1 [packable coat](#) (except summer)
- Underwear/bras/socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 4-5 t-shirts
- 2-3 long sleeved tops (at least [1 merino](#))
- 1-2 sweaters
- 2 pairs of jeans
- 1 pair of hiking/walking pants
- 1 pair of khakis/dressy pants
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#)
- 1 [packable down coat](#) (for anytime other than summer)
- 1 hat
- Underwear and socks

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries
- Small first aid kit

### SHOES

- 1 pair of comfy walking shoes (women)
- 1 pair of [rain boots](#) (women)
- 1 pair of comfy waterproof shoes (men)
- 1 pair of slippers for hotels

### TECH

- An [RFID-blocking wallet](#)
- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle or other e-reader
- Electronics chargers
- Wall plug adapter (Ireland uses the same wall plugs as the UK)
- Portable power bank

### OTHER

- [Cross-body convertible purse](#)
- [Reusable water bottle](#)
- Sunglasses & sunscreen (yes, you might need them!)
- Travel umbrella

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**GET ALL OF YOUR TRAVEL  
ESSENTIALS HERE!**

# ICELAND

10-DAY RING ROAD ITINERARY



# Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

This 10-day Iceland itinerary will help you take an epic road trip around Iceland's Ring Road, hitting all the famous waterfalls, hot springs, black sand beaches, and more.



## DAY 1

### Arrival, Blue Lagoon, and Reykjavik



#### DRIVE TIME

1 Hour 30 Minutes



#### DISTANCE

72 km



#### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Arrive at Keflavik International Airport and pick up your rental car.
2. Start your day with a few hours at the famous **Blue Lagoon**\*. You'll need to book a ticket in advance.
  - *Be sure to check that the Blue Lagoon is open. It has been closed on and off recently due to sporadic volcanic eruptions.*
3. After 2-3 hours at the Blue Lagoon, it's a 45-minute drive into downtown **Reykjavik**. This capital city is small and walkable, and some of the best things to do include:
  - See the inside of the Harpa Concert Hall
  - Take photos at the Sun Voyager sculpture
  - Visit Hallgrímskirkja church (and the observation deck at the top)
  - Walk down the Rainbow Street (Skólavörðustígur)
  - Try a [food tour](#) and sample typical Icelandic fare

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## DAY 1 (CONTINUED)

# Arrival, Blue Lagoon, and Reykjavik



### DRIVE TIME

1 Hour 30 Minutes



### DISTANCE

72 km



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

4. OPTIONAL: End your day with a sunset visit to the **Sky Lagoon** if you skipped the Blue Lagoon or would like to try a different hot spring.

**Where to eat:** Try a famous hot dog from Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur (the cheapest meal you'll find in Iceland!). Enjoy coffee with a view at Café Loki, or coffee with kitties at Kattakaffihúsið. On a budget? Grab soup at Svarta Kaffið. Looking for good seafood? Try Seabaron or Íslenski barinn.



## REYKJAVIK HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Hotel Holt, Bergstaðastræti 37](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[Reykjavik4You Apartments, Bergstaðastræti 12](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[Skuggi Hotel by Keahotels, Hverfisgata 103](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

## DAY 2

# Golden Circle



### DRIVE TIME

4 Hour 15 Minutes



### DISTANCE

300 km



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Start your day touring the **Golden Circle**, a popular inland sightseeing route.
2. From Reykjavik, head to the point furthest to the east, which is **Gullfoss Falls** (about a 2-hour drive from Reykjavik).
  - On the way (about halfway there), you might want to stop to see the **Kerid (Kerid) Crater**, a turquoise crater lake.
3. The next stop is just 10 minutes away in the **Haukadalur Valley**, where you'll find some of Iceland's most famous geysers like the Great Geysir and Strokkur.
  - The restaurant inside the Geysir Center is a good place to stop for lunch.
4. From the Geysir area, it's less than an hour to **Pingvellir (Thingvellir) National Park**. Inside the park, walk between two tectonic plates in the Almannagjá Gorge.
5. From Thingvellir, you can head straight to **Borgarnes**, or make a very slight detour to another hot spring, **Hvammsvik Hot Springs**.



## BORGARNES HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Hotel Hamar](#), Hamarsvöllur 310, 310 Borgarnes



[Hotel Varmaland](#), Varmalandsvegur, 311 Varmaland



[Blomasetrid Guesthouse](#), Skúlagata 13, 310 Borgarnes





## DAY 3

# Snæfellsnes Peninsula



**DRIVE TIME**  
2.5–3.5 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
200–245 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today you'll be exploring the **Snæfellsnes Peninsula**, which is often called "Iceland in miniature."
2. Along the route from Borgarnes to the town of Grundarfjörður, here are all the stops you could conceivably make, in order of when you'll see them:
  - **Gerðuberg Cliffs** (basalt column cliffs you can climb to the top of)
  - **Ytri Tungu** (golden sand beach; you can often spot seals here)
  - **Búðakirkja** (a black church)
  - **Bjarnarfoss\*** (very cool waterfall)
  - **Rauðfeldsgjá Gorge** (requires a short hike; waterproof boots recommended)
  - Town of **Arnarstapi\*** (good spot for lunch, plus nice coastal path with several cool viewpoints)
  - **Hellnar** (another town, at the end of the coastal path from Arnarstapi)
  - **Lóndrangar** (rock formation with nearby walking trails)
  - **Vatnshellir lava cave** (guided tour required)
  - **Djúpalónssandur beach\*** (there's a viewing area, and you can walk down to the rocky beach, too; don't get too close to the water here, though!)
  - **Saxhóll Crater\*** (extinct volcanic crater you can climb to the top of)
  - **Skarðsvík Beach\*** (another golden sand beach)
  - **Ingjaldshólskirkja** (a pretty red-roofed church)
  - **Svödufoss\*** (another lovely waterfall)
  - **Kirkjufell / Kirkjufellsfoss\*** (famous mountain and set of waterfalls; the only site that charges for parking)

*\*The items with \* are the very best stops. But you CAN hit most of these in one summer day.*

## DAY 3 (CONTINUED)

# Snaefellsnes Peninsula



### DRIVE TIME

2.5–3.5 Hours



### DISTANCE

200–245 km



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

3. Overnight tonight in either **Grundarfjörður** or **Stykkishólmur** (Grundarfjörður is better driving-wise for today/tomorrow, but there are more options for hotels and food in Stykkishólmur.)

*Note: You will have to pay for parking at some of the more popular sites in Iceland. Parking charges can vary; some are based on how long you stay, and others are a flat fee. You won't pay more than 1000 ISK in most cases, and they will all accept credit card payments.*



## GRUNDARFJÖRÐUR OR STYKKISHÓLMUR HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Grundarfjordur B&B, Nesvegur 5, 350 Grundarfjordur](#)



[Kirkjufell Guesthouse, Grund, 350 Grundarfjordur](#)



[Hotel Egilsen, Adalgata 2, 340 Stykkishólmur](#)



[Hótel Karólína, Adalgata 7, 340 Stykkishólmur](#)





## DAY 4

# To Akureyri



### DRIVE TIME

5 Hour 30 Minutes



### DISTANCE

400 km



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Stop at the **Bjarnarhöfn Shark Museum** (only open April–October). You can try hákarl, the famous Iceland fermented shark, here.
2. Stop in the town of **Stykkishólmur** and see the Stykkishólmskirkja Church.
3. On your drive north, stop at **Kolugljúfur Canyon**, home to a very pretty waterfall.
4. See the **Víðimýrarkirkja turf church**, which makes for an easy photo stop.
5. Visit **Reykjafoss**, a stunning multi-tiered waterfall. (Pro tip: Put “Reykjafoss Car park” in your GPS to get to the right place.)
  - Near Reykjafoss is **Fosslaug**, a wild natural hot spring. (Be sure to bring your own towel!)
7. Arrive in **Akureyri**, the largest town in northern Iceland.



## AKUREYRI HOTELS (2 NIGHTS)

**Hotel Kea by Keahotels**, Hafnarstraeti 87–89, 600 Akureyri



**Berjaya Iceland Hotels**, Thingvallastaeti 23, 600 Akureyri



## DAY 5

# Husavik



**DRIVE TIME**  
2 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
150 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Drive one hour north to the town of **Husavik**.

- Note: Driving from Akureyri to Husavik on the Ring Road requires you to drive through the only paid tunnel in Iceland. It costs 2110 ISK one way, and you can pay online any time within 24 hours of driving through it (you can pre-pay the day before, or pay up to 24 hours after). [Payment page is here.](#)

2. EITHER join a **whale watching tour** this morning ([this tour](#) is a good option, along with [this one](#)), OR book a **horseback riding tour** - I'd recommend the "Seaside Tour" with [Saltvik Farm](#).

3. Grab lunch in town, and then be sure to visit the **Húsavík Whale Museum**.

4. Relax in another hot spring at **Geosea Geothermal Sea Baths**. ([Pre-book tickets here.](#))

5. Have drinks and dinner at the **Jaja Ding Dong bar**, which is also home to a small Eurovision Song Contest museum.

6. Drive back to Akureyri.

## DAY 6

# Diamond Circle



### DRIVE TIME

4 Hour 30 Minutes



### DISTANCE

300 km



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today is all about exploring the **Diamond Circle** in the north. Start off by driving to **Godafoss**, or the "waterfall of the gods."

Then you can pick a couple of these spots to visit around **Lake Myvatn**:

- **Skútustaðagígar** (a series of pseudocraters to see)
- **Dimmuborgir** (an area of dramatic lava rocks with easy paved walking trails)
- **Hverir** AKA Námafjall Geothermal Area (an area where you can see smoking fumaroles and boiling mud pools up close; it's stinky, though!)

2. Next, visit the west side of **Dettifoss**, the most powerful waterfall in Iceland.

3. From Dettifoss, it's another 2 hours of driving to reach **Egilsstaðir**, where you'll stay tonight.

4. If you're up for yet another hot spring, make a stop at the fantastic **Vök Baths**, which are just outside of Egilsstaðir. ([Book a ticket in advance here.](#))



## EGILSSTAÐIR HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

[Gistihusid Lake Hotel, Egilsstaðir 1-2, 700 Egilsstaðir](#)



[Herad Berjaya Iceland, Miðvangur 5-7, 700 Egilsstaðir](#)



[Hotel 1001 Nott, Álfaás, Vellir, 701 Egilsstaðir](#)





## DAY 7

# The Eastfjords



**DRIVE TIME**  
5 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
315 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Start your day with the half-hour drive to **Seyðisfjörður**, an adorable little fjord town. Stop to see **Fardagafoss** and **Gufufoss** waterfalls on the way, and be sure to see the famous rainbow street in Seyðisfjörður.
2. Stop at **Petra's Stone Collection next** near the village of Stöðvarfjörður, about 1.5 hours from Seyðisfjörður. (Note that it's only open from June–September.)
3. Wind your way along the coast. There are two more waterfalls that are optional to see: **Folaldafoss** and **Nykurhylsfoss**.
4. Stop for lunch in **Djúpivogur** (Hafið bistro has excellent fish and chips).
5. Make scenic stops at the **Hvalnes Lighthouse**, and the **Stokksnes Peninsula**.
  - Stokksnes is known for the towering Vestrahorn Mountain and black sand dunes, and is worth a longer stop. Pay a small entry fee at the Viking Cafe.
7. From there, it's a short drive to the **Höfn** area for the night.



## HÖFN HOTELS (1 NIGHT)

**Milk Factory**, Dalbraut 2, 780 Höfn

> BOOK NOW

**Fosshotel Vatnajökull**, Lindarbakki, 781 Höfn í Hornafirði

> BOOK NOW

**Aurora Cabins**, Hafnavegur, 781 Höfn

> BOOK NOW

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## DAY 8

# Hofn to Vik



**DRIVE TIME**  
4 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
275 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Start your day at **Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon**, about an hour's drive from Höfn. Book a short boat or zodiac tour here to get up close to the ice.

2. Stop across the road for photos at **Diamond Beach**, where sea-polished chunks of glacier ice wash up on a black sand beach.

3. Next up, choose one or two of these hikes:

- **Múlagljúfur Canyon** - A magical canyon filled with mossy cliffs and thin cascading waterfalls. It's close to **Fjallsárlón**, another glacier lagoon.
- **Glacier hike in Skaftafell** - Hike on an arm of the Vatnajökull Glacier on a guided tour. [This 3-hour glacier hike](#) has several afternoon departures during summer.
- Hike to **Svartifoss waterfall** - This hike in Vatnajökull National Park takes you to a waterfall surrounded by basalt columns.

Not into all the hiking? There are a few things between the glacier lagoons and the town of Vík í Mýrdal that are easier to see, including the **Eldhraun lava field**, **Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon**, and the **Gígjagjá cave**.

4. Drive to **Vík í Mýrdal** (usually just called Vik), where you'll stay. Try Black Crust Pizzeria for dinner.



### VIK HOTELS (2 NIGHTS)

[Hotel Vik i Myrdal](#), 2 Klettsvegur, 870 Vík

> BOOK NOW

[Hotel Kria](#), Sléttuvegur 12-14, 870 Vík

> BOOK NOW

[Hotel Katla](#), Hofdabrekka Road 1, 871 Vík

> BOOK NOW

## DAY 9

### Vik area



**DRIVE TIME**  
1.5-3.5 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
90-230 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Start your day backtracking to any spots you may have missed yesterday like:

- **Fjaðrárgljúfur Canyon** - A very striking canyon you can walk along the top of. Looks like something out of Lord of the Rings.
- **Eldhraun lava field** - Moss-covered ancient lava flow. Go to "Gönguleið um Eldhraun," where you can find some safe, established trails.
- **Gígjagjá** (AKA Yoda Cave) - Fun photo stop you can drive to.

2. Closer to Vik, the must-visit spots are:

- **Reynisfjara Beach** - The most famous beach in Iceland with dramatic black sand, basalt columns, and spindly sea stacks. Beware the deadly sneaker waves, and stay away from the water.
- **Dyrhólaey** - Visit the hilltop viewpoint for views of "The Endless Black Beach" and the Dyrhólaey rock arch.

3. To the west of Vik, some spots you could visit today include:

- **Kvernufoss** - 100-foot-tall waterfall half that you can walk behind.
- **Skógar Museum** - A regional folk museum.
- **Skógafoss** - Iconic 200-foot-tall waterfall.

4. If you want to hike today, the **Waterfall Way** is a good option. You first have to climb to the top of Skogafoss, and then the Waterfall Way trail follows the Skógá River for 8 kilometers (about 5 miles), passing 26 different waterfalls along the way. Hike as far as you want!

## DAY 10

# Back to Reykjavik/Keflavik



**DRIVE TIME**  
2.5-3 Hours



**DISTANCE**  
230 km



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today it's time to head back to the **Reykjavik area** or airport.
2. Stop at **Seljalandsfoss**, a 200-foot-tall waterfall you can walk behind.
  - While at Seljalandsfoss, follow the trail another 10 minutes to **Gljúfrabúi**, or the "Canyon Dweller," a hidden waterfall. Wear FULL waterproof gear to visit this one.
3. Stop in the town of **Selfoss** for lunch, where an old milk factory in the center of town has recently been transformed into a food hall and collection of shops.
4. OPTIONAL: If you aren't flying home today, hike to the **Reykjadalur Hot Spring Thermal River**, which is a naturally warm river you can soak in. To get to the part of the river that's safe for bathing, you have to park at the dedicated Reykjadalur parking lot and hike for about 45 minutes. Bring your own towel.



### NEAR KEFLAVIK HOTEL (1 NIGHT)

[Aurora Hotel, Blikavöllur 2, 235 Keflavik](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## BONUS

### Optional add-ons



**DRIVE TIME**  
VARIOUS

#### Have more time in Iceland? Here are a few add-ons I recommend!

**Extra day to do Tröllaskagi.** The Tröllaskagi Peninsula lies just to the northwest of Akureyri and is a beautiful drive.

- Where to add it: In between Days 4 and 5 of this itinerary - add an extra night in Akureyri.
- What to do: Visit the Herring Era Museum in the fjord-side town of Siglufjörður; swim at Hofsó's Sundlaug (public swimming pool with epic views); and see Grafarkirkja, the oldest turf church in Iceland (near Hofso).

**Extra day between Akureyri and Eastfjords.** For extra hiking.

- Where to add it: Between Days 6 and 7 of this itinerary, and stay near Lake Myvatn.
- What to do: Visit the east side of Dettifoss (requires driving on an unpaved road) and hike from there to Selfoss waterfall; and hike to Studlagil Canyon.

**Day in Westman Islands.** A great day trip from the Vik area. Take the ferry from Landeyjahöfn (about 1 hour from Vik) to Heimaey island (book your ticket in advance, especially if you're taking your car).

- Where to add it: Either between Day 8 and 9, or between Day 9 and 10. Stay either one night on Heimaey, or an additional night in Vik.
- What to do: Look for puffins (May-mid August); visit the Eldheimar Museum; go on a RIB boat safari.

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# ICELAND PACKING LIST

## 10-Day Summer Road Trip

### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 4-5 short-sleeved tops for layering  
(I recommend [merino wool!](#))
- 4-5 long sleeved tops
- 1 fleece mid-layer (like [this one](#))
- 3-5 pairs of [hiking.pants](#) or leggings  
(1 pair fleece-lined recommended)
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#) and set of [rain pants](#)
- 1 packable down coat
- 1-2 swimsuits
- Hat and gloves
- Underwear/bras/wool socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 4-5 t-shirts (go with [merino](#))
- 4-5 long sleeved tops
- 1 fleece mid-layer
- 3-4 pairs of hiking pants (like [these](#))
- 1 pair of long underwear
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#) and set of [rain pants](#)
- 1 packable down coat
- 1 swimsuit
- Hat and gloves
- Underwear and hiking socks

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries
- Small first aid kit (Band-Aids, pain relievers, bug spray, etc.)

### SHOES

- 1 pair of [good hiking boots](#) and [rain boots](#) (women)
- 1 pair of [good waterproof hiking boots](#) (men)

### TECH

- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle Paperwhite or e-reader
- Europe plug adapter
- Electronics chargers
- Portable power bank

### OTHER

- [Comfy hiking daypacks](#)
- [Reusable water bottle](#)
- Eye mask for sleeping in summer  
(the sun barely sets!)
- [Dry bag](#) for rainy days
- [Quick-dry towel](#)
- Dual-voltage travel hair tools

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**GET ALL OF YOUR TRAVEL  
ESSENTIALS HERE!**



# ICELAND BUCKET LIST BINGO

Can you get a BINGO on your trip?

Walk behind a waterfall like Kvernufoss or Seljalandsfoss	Try a hot dog from Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur in Reykjavik	Soak in a hot spring like the Blue Lagoon or Vok Baths	Befriend an Icelandic horse	See where tectonic plates diverge in Thingvellir National Park
Watch a geyser erupt in Haukadalur Valley	Take in the view from Hallgrímskirkja church in Reykjavik	Try skyr, local food that's a cross between yogurt and cottage cheese	Climb black sand dunes on this Stokksnes Peninsula	Visit one of Iceland's dramatic black sand beaches
Try hákarl, the fermented shark that is Iceland's national dish	Get up close to the thundering Dettifoss waterfall	<b>FREE SPACE</b>	Snap photos on the Rainbow Street in Seyðisfjörður	Spot whales on a whale watching tour in Husavik
Go for a boat ride in Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon	See a magical canyon like Múlagljúfur or Fjaðrárgljúfur	Experience the power of the Icelandic WIND	Spot a turf house, a traditional Icelandic home	Hike the Waterfall Way and see up to 26 waterfalls
Take photos of the heart-shaped traffic lights in Akureyri	Visit a local town's public swimming pool	Visit the Jaja Ding Dong bar in Husavik (inspired by the Eurovision Netflix movie)	Walk through an ancient lava field at Dimmuborgir	See a glacier (or go hiking on one!)

# NORWAY

10-DAY WINTER TRIP ITINERARY



# Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

Use this itinerary to plan the ultimate 10-day winter trip to Norway (without a rental car!), which includes Oslo, Bergen, Tromso, and more.



## DAY 1

### Arrival + Oslo



#### TRAVEL TIME

20 minutes on the airport train



#### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Arrive in **Oslo**. Catch the train from Oslo's Gardermoen airport to the central train station downtown (**Oslo sentralstasjon, or Oslo S**). The fastest option is to take the Flytoget train, which will get you downtown in just 20 minutes.

2. After checking in to your hotel, take a walk along the waterfront, where you can see the **Akershus Fortress** and the **Opera House**. I'd also recommend popping into **City Hall** to see its striking floor and murals, or visiting the new **National Museum** on the waterfront.

3. For a late lunch or early dinner, walk through **Aker Brygge**, a pier area that's filled with bars and restaurants.



### WHERE TO STAY IN OSLO (2 NIGHTS)

#### **Thon Hotel Opera**

*(Great central hotel at the train station)*

#### **Thon Hotel Terminus**

*(Another good option near the train station)*

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 2

# Oslo



### TRAVEL TIME

Varies



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today is all about exploring more of Oslo. Start off by strolling up **Karl Johans Gate**, the main street in the center of Oslo that leads to the Royal Palace (though note that the Royal Palace itself is only open for tours during the summer months.)

2. Visit at least one museum. My top picks for museums in Oslo are:

- [Fram Polar Ship Museum](#) (A museum focused on polar exploration)
- [Kon-Tiki Museum](#) (A museum dedicated to the sea expeditions of Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl)
- [Norsk Folkemuseum](#) (A museum about Norwegian history)

These museums are outside the city center on Bygdøy peninsula, but it's easy to get around Oslo using public transport.

3. Visit **Vigeland Park**, a large park and sculpture museum displaying the works of Gustav Vigeland.

4. OPTIONAL: Book a floating urban sauna with **KOK Oslo**. Cool down with a cold plunge in the Oslo Fjord if you dare!

5. Have dinner at a food hall in Oslo if you're looking for an affordable meal (by Oslo standards) with a fun atmosphere. Here are some food halls to check out:

- Barcode Street Food near the Opera House
- Oslo Street Food in central Oslo
- Vipppa on the waterfront between Akershus and the Opera House
- VIA Village Food Court near Aker Brygge
- Mathallen in Vulkan

Other things you could do today include a [hop-on hop-off bus](#) with commentary, or perhaps [a walking tour](#).



## DAY 3

# Norway in a Nutshell, Part 1



### TRAVEL TIME

5.25 hours by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today it's time to leave Oslo via the classic **Norway in a Nutshell** "tour." It's not a tour in the traditional sense – there's no guide, just a set itinerary and tickets that are booked in advance. You can book your Norway in a Nutshell package through [Fjord Tours](#).

- You'll be booking your journey from Oslo to Bergen, with a 1-night overnight stop in Flåm.

2. You'll start your morning by catching a train from Oslo's main station that will take you to the town of Myrdal. You'll be on the Bergen Railway, and the ride is about 4.5 hours.

3. Once you arrive in Myrdal, you'll switch trains and get on the **Flåm Railway**, a 20.2-kilometer-long branch of the Bergen Line. This train ride is often named one of the most beautiful train journeys in the world, but make sure to keep your eyes open because it only lasts for about 45 minutes!

4. This train ride ends in the fjord town of **Flåm**, which is where I recommend staying for the night. You should arrive around 2 p.m., meaning you won't have to worry about any part of your journey being in the dark.

5. Spend the late afternoon and evening in Flåm, before continuing on the rest of your Norway in a Nutshell journey tomorrow.



## WHERE TO STAY IN FLÅM (1 NIGHT)

### **Flåmsbrygga Hotell**

*(Nice chalet-style hotel overlooking the fjord)*

### **Fretheim Hotel**

*(Good option close to the train station)*



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## DAY 4

# Norway in a Nutshell, Part 2



### TRAVEL TIME

1 hour by bus, then 1 hour and 10 minutes by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. If you're feeling adventurous this morning, you can book an optional **snowshoeing tour** up in the mountains near Flåm (this is something you can add on to your Norway in a Nutshell tour when you book it if you want).
2. Afterwards (or first thing in the morning if you don't go snowshoeing), you'll board a boat for a cruise on **Aurlandsfjord** and **Nærøyfjord**. (And don't worry, the boat has both indoor and outdoor seating, so cruising is fine even in the winter months!)
3. You'll disembark in Gudvangen, and then board a bus that will take you to the town of Voss. In Voss, you'll board another train that will take you to Bergen.
  - Don't stress about all the boat, train, and bus transfers; lots of other people will be doing the same tour as you!
4. Arrive in **Bergen** in the evening and head to your hotel.



## WHERE TO STAY IN BERGEN (2 NIGHTS)

### Thon Hotel Rosenkrantz Bergen

*(A nice hotel with a great included breakfast).*



## DAY 5

# Bergen



### TRAVEL TIME

Varies



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today you'll have a full day in Bergen, Norway's second-largest city. Most places you'll visit today are within walking distance of the wharf in Bergen.

2. Start off by exploring the **Bryggen**, the iconic row of colorful wooden houses along Bergen's old Hanseatic Wharf. This is the most historic part of the city; the wharf was first built in the 14th century. Spend some time wandering through the maze-like alleyways between the old buildings.

3. Take the funicular up to the top of **Mount Fløyen**, which is accessible even in the winter. From here, you get a view out over Bergen and the Seven Mountains that surround it.

4. Visit a **museum**, like the Hanseatic Museum, the Bergen Maritime Museum, the Leprosy Museum (yes, it's a thing!), or KODE (a museum complex dedicated to art, design, and music).

- **Tip:** If you plan to do a lot of sightseeing, I recommend a 24-hour [Bergen Card](#), which will get you free or discounted admission to dozens of museums, attractions, and tours throughout Bergen. (You can even use it to save money at restaurants.) In the winter, many attractions offer free admission with the card as opposed to a discount.

5. For dinner, head down to the **Fish Market** for some super fresh seafood. In the winter, you'll want to head into the indoor arm of the market, the Mathallen. There are fewer vendors here in the winter, but you can still find fresh seafood to try.

## DAY 6

# Bergen and fly to Tromsø



### TRAVEL TIME

2-hour flight, 20 minutes on the airport bus



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. This morning, finish up any sightseeing you wanted to do in Bergen. Then, this afternoon, it's time to start the second half of your trip: it's time to fly to **Tromsø!**

- Widerøe Airlines has direct flights from Bergen to Tromsø, while flying on another airline like Norwegian or SAS will probably have you connect through Oslo. Either way, you should be able to arrive in the late afternoon/early evening. It takes about 2 hours to fly direct to Tromsø from Bergen.

2. Once you arrive, head to your hotel (the airport bus drops off at the hotel I've suggested) and get ready for some epic outdoor adventures in the Gateway to the Arctic! Tromsø is located at 69.6492° N latitude above the Arctic Circle.



## WHERE TO STAY IN TROMSØ (4 NIGHTS)

### Scandic Ishavshotel

*(A great hotel right on the Tromsø Sound with amazing views and included breakfast)*



### Thon Hotel Tromsø

*(Another nice hotel that is a little further up from the waterfront near the main shopping street)*



## DAY 7

# Tromsø



### TRAVEL TIME

None — just your tours!

1. Tromsø is actually more popular to visit during the winter because of its outdoor activities like cross-country skiing, dogsledding, and Northern Lights spotting. Spend your first day in Tromsø doing one of these activities.

Today, I'd start the day with an adventure activity like cross-country skiing or dogsledding.

- **Cross-country skiing** isn't just a sport in Norway; it's a national pastime! If you're going to try only one physical outdoor activity in Tromsø, make it cross-country skiing. Tromsø Outdoor offers a great [3-hour course for beginners](#). (Though they also offer fun [snowshoeing tours](#) if that's more your speed.)
- **Dogsledding** is another option today. This is another popular winter sport in Norway. And yes, it is most definitely a sport. You can book a tour with Tromsø Villmarkssenter, and even drive your own sled!

2. Tonight, if the weather cooperates and the tours are going out, sign up for your first **Northern Lights tour**! There are a LOT of Northern Lights tours in Tromsø to choose from, so I recommend looking for one that promises a small group and a guide who can help you take photos.

## DAY 8

# Tromsø



### TRAVEL TIME

1-2 hours walking



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today I recommend taking some time to explore Tromsø itself. So many people come to this city for the Northern Lights, but then spend all their time booking activities outside of the city. The city itself, though, is pretty cool!
2. Start off by visiting the **Arctic Cathedral** (officially Tromsdalen Church) across the sound from the main part of Tromsø. It's an iconic building in Northern Norway, and sometimes you can hear concerts inside the church.
3. Ride the **Fjellheisen** aerial tramway up above Tromsø for the best view in the city. The cars run from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. throughout the winter months, and the views are seriously great.
4. Check out the **Polar Museum**, which offers a fascinating look into Arctic trapping and hunting and the early polar explorers.
5. If you're looking for something unique to do in the afternoon, consider a [Tromsø Beer Safari](#), which includes tasting some local beers and snacks.
6. Tonight, if conditions are good (or if conditions were bad on Day 7), consider another Northern Lights tour! (I promise, you'll never get tired of seeing them.)

## DAY 9

### Tromsø or day trip



#### TRAVEL TIME

None — just your tours!

1. On your last day in Tromsø, have a "choose your own adventure" day and choose the activity that sounds most exciting to you. There are still a lot of cool adventures you can have from the city today, including:

- A [snowmobile safari](#) up in the Lyngen Alps
- An [Arctic fishing adventure](#) (mostly offered in February and March)
- A [Sami culture and reindeer experience](#), where you can learn about Norway's native reindeer herders

2. Return to Tromsø for one last chance at a Northern Lights tour if you still haven't been able to see them or want to see them again.

**NOTE:** You'll want to dress warm for Norway in winter, but note that most tour operators will provide you with super warm overalls for any outdoor tours.

## DAY 10

# Depart Tromsø



### TRAVEL TIME

20 minutes on the airport  
bus, 2 hour flight



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today it's time to depart Tromsø. You can catch the airport bus back to the airport for your flight back to Oslo, or onward to home. The flight back to Oslo takes 2 hours.

2. If you have more time and want to extend your Norway trip, you could add a few nights in the **Lofoten Islands**, which lie south of Tromsø and are popular in winter with photographers.

- Note: You WILL need a rental car in the Lofoten Islands in winter, as there's not really public transport available to help you get around. I do NOT recommend driving in Norway in winter unless you have experience driving in snow/on ice.

And that's it for your winter Norway adventure!

# NORWAY PACKING LIST

## 10-Day Winter Trip



### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 3 short-sleeved tops
- 4-5 long-sleeved tops (I recommend [merino wool](#))
- 4-5 warm sweaters
- 1 warm [fleece layer](#)
- 3 pairs of warm pants
- 1 pair of lighter pants
- 2-3 pairs of warm leggings (including fleece-lined ones)
- 1 warm, long winter coat
- Hat, scarf, gloves, ear muffs
- Pajamas
- Underwear/bras/socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 5-6 long-sleeved tops
- 4-5 warm sweaters
- 1 pair of jeans
- 3 pairs of warm pants
- 1-2 pairs of base layer bottoms
- 1 warm, long winter coat
- Hat, scarf, gloves, ear muffs
- Pajamas
- Underwear and socks

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries (moisturizer is a must)
- Small first aid kit

### SHOES

- 1 pair of [waterproof winter boots](#) (women)
- 1 pair of [winter boots](#) (men)
- 1 pair of sneakers or dressy boots
- Slippers for your hotel

### TECH

- An [RFID-blocking wallet](#)
- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle or other e-reader
- European outlet adapter
- Portable power bank

### OTHER

- Your passport!
- [Reusable water bottle](#)
- Hot hands/hand warmers
- Yaktrax to add onto boots for extra grip on snow/ice

**GET ALL OF YOUR TRAVEL  
ESSENTIALS [HERE!](#)**

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# EUROPE CHRISTMAS MARKETS

7-DAY ITINERARY (GERMANY + FRANCE)



# Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

Use this itinerary to plan the perfect 7-day Europe Christmas markets itinerary, which includes some of the most festive destinations in Germany and France.



## DAY 1

### Arrive in Frankfurt



#### TRAVEL TIME

20-25 minutes driving or  
20 minutes by train



#### TODAY'S ROUTE

GOOGLE MAPS

1. Frankfurt is a major international transit hub, making this a good place to start your trip. After arriving at the airport, you can either pick up your rental car now or hold off until tomorrow and take the S-bahn train into the city center.
2. Drop your things at your hotel and start hitting the Christmas markets! Start at the **Römerberg**, or historic market square, where the main city Christmas market is. It's a great place to take some photos and grab something to eat.
3. From there, walk north through **Paulsplatz** and towards **Hauptwache** station; there are Christmas market stalls all along the streets and squares between Römerberg and Hauptwache. You can also head the other direction to find market stalls along the **River Main**, and I also enjoyed the small market at **Roßmarkt**.



## WHERE TO STAY IN FRANKFURT (1 NIGHT)

### Hotel Motel One Frankfurt-Römer

*(Comfortable hotel close to the Old Town)*

### Scandic Frankfurt Museumsufer

*(Another good option near the main train station)*

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 2

# To Heidelberg



### TRAVEL TIME

1 hour and 10 minutes  
driving or 1 hour by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. This morning, it's time to drive or take the train to **Heidelberg, Germany!** If you're driving and didn't pick up your rental car yesterday, you can do it this morning.
2. Start by exploring Heidelberg's Christmas markets for food and shopping. The squares you'll definitely want to visit for market vibes are **Karlsplatz**, where you'll find an ice skating rink with a view of Heidelberg Castle; **Marktplatz** with a giant wine barrel; **Kornmarkt**, with some illuminated Christmas trees; and **Universitätsplatz**, where you'll find a carousel and lots of market stalls.
3. For a non-Christmas market activity, take the historic **Heidelberg Bergbahn/Mountain Railway** up to **Heidelberg Castle** to explore and take in the views over the city.
5. For dinner, if you're ready for something that's not Christmas market food, head to **Weinstube Schnitzelbank** for excellent schnitzel and beer.



## WHERE TO STAY IN HEIDELBERG (1 NIGHT)

### **Hotel Villa Marstall**

*(Simple but nice with parking in a public garage nearby)*

### **Hotel Europäischer Hof Heidelberg**

*(Luxury option with paid parking on site)*



## DAY 3

# To Strasbourg



### TRAVEL TIME

1.5 hours driving or 2 hours by train with one change



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. It's now time to say goodbye to Germany for a few days and head to the Alsace region of France. **Strasbourg**, where you'll base yourself for the next few days, is nicknamed the "*Capitale de Noël*," or the Capital of Christmas, and it truly is magical during the holidays with dreamy Christmas decor.

2. Drop your things at your hotel and head out to explore the Christmas markets! Start with the markets near the **Strasbourg Cathedral**. There's a market right in front of the cathedral, and another nearby at Place du Marchéaux-Poissons called **Le Quai des Délices** (go here to taste local Alsatian wine!).

3. From there, cross the Grande-Île de Strasbourg to see the small markets and decor around **Petite France** (like on Place St-Thomas and Place Benjamin Zix).

- Some of the streets with the best Christmas decorations include **Rue du Maroquin** (find the famous houses covered in teddy bears here), **Rue Mercière** (for the lighted angels in front of the cathedral), **Rue du Chaudron**, **Rue des Orfèvres**, and **Rue des Hallebardes**.

4. After dark, head to **Place Kléber** to see the Grand Sapin, or Christmas tree. There's a light show at the tree on the hour every hour between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

5. Try different Christmas market food here like flammeküechle or tarte flambée (a savory flatbread), pain d'épice (spiced bread), and bredele cookies.



## WHERE TO STAY IN STRASBOURG (3 NIGHTS)

### **Hôtel & Spa Le Bouclier d'Or**

*(Lovely historic hotel in Petite France with valet parking)*



### **Hotel Hannong & Wine Bar**

*(Centrally located, with a parking discount at a nearby garage)*



## DAY 4

# Christmas in Colmar



### TRAVEL TIME

30 minutes by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today you'll take a day trip to the charming town of **Colmar**. Even if you have a rental car, taking the TER train from Strasbourg to Colmar is easier and faster. Once you arrive, you can start hitting the Christmas markets.
2. There are markets on **Place de l'Ancienne Douane** and **Place des Dominicains**, indoor vendors at the **Koïfhus at Ancienne Douane**, and you won't want to miss the charming market stalls in **Petite Venise/Little Venice** or the **Marché Gourmand**, or Gourmet Market.
3. See the excellent decor all throughout the city - some famous spots you've likely seen photos of are along **Grand Rue, Rue Saint-Nicolas**, and in Petite Venise (especially along the **Quai de la Poissonnerie**).
4. If you want to do another activity in Colmar, take a flat-bottomed boat tour on the canals in Petite Venise and the Quai de la Poissonnerie ([booking ahead recommended](#)).
5. Catch the train back to Strasbourg in the evening.

## DAY 5

# Alsace small towns OR wine route



### TRAVEL TIME

Varies, likely 2-3 hours  
total of driving



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today is another day trip from Strasbourg. You can either choose some smaller Alsatian towns/villages or go on an adventure along the Alsace Wine Route.

### Option 1: Alsace small towns

Choose a couple of these towns to visit from Strasbourg:

- **Obernai** – This is my top pick for a smaller Alsatian town to visit from Strasbourg, since it's easy to reach, very charming, and not super crowded!
- **Eguisheim** – This small medieval town is said to be one of the prettiest in France, and has a small Christmas market on its main town square.
- **Riquewihr** – This village is best to visit on a weekday, because weekends can be extremely crowded. The Christmas market just outside the town center is very nice, with unique things for sale.
- **Kaysersberg-Vignoble** – With a Christmas market that only runs Friday-Sunday, Kaysersberg is a great option for a quieter, less commercial market.
- **Ribeauvillé** – Another fairytale village, Ribeauvillé hosts a very unique Medieval Christmas market on two weekends every year.

You can also book [this tour](#), which includes stops in four of the towns.

### Option 2: Alsace Wine Route

Alternatively, you could take a break from Christmas markets altogether today and go on a wine tasting tour along the Alsace Wine Route instead. (I would book a tour and let someone else do the driving.) Here are two good options:

- [Alsace Half-Day Wine Tour from Strasbourg](#) (including stops at 2 wineries)
- [Alsace: Full-Day Wine Tour & Tastings from Strasbourg](#) (including stops at 3 wineries, plus 2 additional tastings)

## DAY 6

# To Stuttgart



### TRAVEL TIME

2 hours driving or 1.5-2 hours by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. You'll now leave France behind and head back across the border to Germany. To **Stuttgart**, specifically, which makes another great base to visit a variety of Christmas markets.

- The drive is not a long one, but if you wanted to break it up, you could stop in **Karlsruhe** to visit its Christmas market on the way.

2. After arriving in Stuttgart, head out to the Christmas markets, which have some of the most beautifully decorated stalls. There are Christmas market stalls (almost 300 of them!) spread throughout Stuttgart's city center, including on **Schlossplatz, Schillerplatz, Karlsplatz, and Marktplatz.**

3. If you're looking for other things to do, you could go to either the [Mercedes-Benz Museum](#) or [Porsche Museum](#) to learn about these famous car companies.



## WHERE TO STAY IN STUTTGART (2 NIGHTS)

### **EmiLu Design Hotel**

*(Great option right in the city center, within walking distance to most of the main markets and attractions)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Jaz in the City**

*(Another nice hotel not far from the main train station)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 7

# Esslingen and Ludwigsburg



### TRAVEL TIME

1 hour and 20 minutes  
by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Using Stuttgart as a base, you can visit two smaller German cities today: Ludwigsburg and Esslingen. You can reach both of these towns using the S-Bahn train from Stuttgart in less than 20 minutes, meaning no driving is necessary!
2. Start the day in **Esslingen**. You'll find traditional Christmas market stalls around the **Marktplatz** and **Stadtkirche St. Dionys**.
3. Walk a little further towards Rathausplatz to the famous **Mittelaltermarkt**, or Medieval Market of Esslingen. The Medieval Market makes you feel like you've actually stepped back in time, with vendors dressed in period clothing, artisan demonstrations, performers, medieval rides and games, and traditional food for sale.
4. In the afternoon, take the S-bahn to **Ludwigsburg** (you'll have to pass back through Stuttgart). The **Ludwigsburg Baroque Christmas Market** is on the main square between two Baroque churches and features huge angel wings made from twinkle lights. Stalls here sell a range of locally made goods, crafts, and food.
  - For food, try Maultaschen (a type of dumpling) and Stockbrot (bread cooked around a long stick).
5. Take the S-bahn train back to Stuttgart in the evening.

## DAY 8

# Return to Frankfurt



### TRAVEL TIME

2 hours and 15 minutes  
driving or 2 hours by train



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. And that's the end of this weeklong Christmas market trip! It will be time to head back to **Frankfurt** today. You can either book your flight out of Frankfurt this afternoon or evening, or spend one more night in Frankfurt before flying home.

### Want to extend your trip?

The best way to extend this itinerary is by adding 2 nights in Munich. Rather than returning to Frankfurt from Stuttgart, drive 2.5 hours to Munich instead.

The best Christmas markets in Munich are the main market on **Marienplatz** (head up one of the surrounding towers for an excellent overhead view), the small market with great food on **Rindermarkt**, the medieval market on **Wittelsbacherplatz**, the market in the courtyard of the **Residenz palace**, and the pink market at **Stephansplatz**.

You could also visit the **Residenz palace** while you're in Munich, or head out to **Nymphenburg Palace** for a tour.

# CHRISTMAS MARKETS PACKING LIST

## 7-Day Winter Trip



### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 2 short-sleeved tops
- 2-3 long-sleeved tops (I recommend [merino wool](#))
- 2-3 warm sweaters
- 1 warm [fleece layer](#)
- 2 pairs of warm pants
- 1 pair of lighter pants
- 1-2 pairs of warm leggings (including fleece-lined ones)
- 1 good winter coat
- Hat, scarf, gloves
- Pajamas
- Underwear/bras/warm socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 5-6 long-sleeved tops
- 3-4 warm sweaters
- 2 pairs of jeans
- 2 pairs of warm pants
- 1 good winter coat
- Hat, scarf, gloves
- Pajamas
- Underwear and warm socks

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries (moisturizer is a must)
- Small first aid kit

### SHOES

- 1 pair of [waterproof winter boots](#) (women)
- 1 pair of [winter boots](#) (men)
- 1 pair of sneakers or dressy boots
- Slippers for your hotel

### TECH

- An [RFID-blocking wallet](#)
- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle Paperwhite or e-reader
- European outlet adapter
- Portable power bank

### OTHER

- Your passport!
- Cash for markets
- [Reusable water bottle](#)
- Packable shopping bag for markets
- Hot hands/hand warmers
- Room in your suitcase for market mugs

**GET ALL OF YOUR TRAVEL  
ESSENTIALS [HERE!](#)**

# SCOTLAND

7-DAY OR 10-DAY ROAD TRIP ITINERARY



# Itinerary

## INTRODUCTION

Use this itinerary to plan the ultimate 7-day or 10-day road trip through Scotland, beginning in Edinburgh and visiting the Scottish Highlands, Isle of Skye, and more!



## DAY 1

### Arrival + Edinburgh Old Town



#### TRAVEL TIME

None! Get around on foot or public transit



#### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Arrive in Edinburgh! No need for a car here. Take the bus or a taxi into the city.
2. After checking in to your hotel, stroll down the **Royal Mile**.
  - Visit either **Edinburgh Castle** or the **Palace of Holyroodhouse** (guided tour recommended for Edinburgh Castle; at Holyrood the audioguide is good).
  - Pop into **St. Giles' Cathedral** along the Royal Mile.
  - Pay a visit to colorful **Victoria Street**, an inspiration for Diagon Alley in *Harry Potter*, as well as **Grassmarket** for pubs.
3. In the evening, choose between a tour and tasting at the [Scotch Whisky Experience](#) or a [nighttime walking tour](#) of Edinburgh.



#### WHERE TO STAY IN EDINBURGH (2 NIGHTS)

##### **Motel One Edinburgh-Royal**

*(Affordable hotel in the Old Town)*

##### **Market Street Hotel**

*(Luxury option near the train station)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

[BOOK NOW](#)

FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY



## DAY 2

# Edinburgh New Town



### TRAVEL TIME

None! Get around on foot or public transit



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Despite its name, Edinburgh's **New Town** is still very historic, dating back to the early 19th century. Start your morning with a stroll through **Princes Street Gardens**, just down the hill from Edinburgh Castle.
2. Visit the **National Galleries of Scotland** (a free art museum), or climb the 287 steps up to the top of the **Scott Monument**. You can buy tickets for the Scott Monument at the entrance.
3. Stroll along **George Street**, the main shopping street in Edinburgh. This is a great place to do some shopping if you'd like, and stop for lunch.
4. Walk to **Dean Village**, a charming and picturesque neighborhood characterized by colorful historical houses and the Water of Leith running through it.
5. Head back into town for dinner (perhaps stop in to the Balmoral Hotel for a dram at their SCOTCH bar).
5. For sunset (which might be before or after dinnertime, depending on what time of year you're visiting), walk up to **Calton Hill**.
6. Head back to your hotel to rest up for a big day tomorrow, when your road trip begins!

### UK ETA REQUIREMENT

Starting in 2025, travelers who do not need a visa to visit the UK (which includes Scotland) have to apply for a electronic travel authorization (ETA) before traveling. The UK ETA costs £16 and is valid for 2 years. Travelers from the US, Canada, Australia, and other countries need an ETA. Applications can take 3 or more days to process, so give yourself enough time before a trip. You can [find more info and apply here](#).



## DAY 3

# To Inverness



**TRAVEL TIME**  
4 hours



**DISTANCE**  
186 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Pick up your rental car in the morning. *(Most rental car pickups will be at the Edinburgh airport, but see if you can pick up your car in Edinburgh city instead to save some time and money.)*

2. Start driving north to **Inverness**. Today will be a bit of a longer driving day, so you'll likely want to break up the drive a bit. Here are some stops you can make (choose 1-2 of these):

- **The Kelpies** – Just off the M9 motorway about 45 minutes west of Edinburgh, these horse head sculptures have become a Scotland icon. Stop for a walk around the sculptures (they're free to visit!).
- **Stirling Castle** – One of the most important castles in Scotland, Stirling Castle makes for a great stop about an hour outside of Edinburgh. The castle has ties to many Scottish Kings and Queens, and a tour here is worth it.
- **Pitlochry** – Pitlochry is a cute little Victorian town in Perthshire that makes a nice stop on your way up north. You could tour the Blair Athol Distillery, or simply take a stroll through town and grab lunch.

3. When you arrive in Inverness, you might want to head into town for a walk and dinner. If you arrive in the afternoon, take a stroll through the **Victorian Market** and visit **Leahey's Bookshop**.

4. For dinner, I recommend **River House** or **The Mustard Seed**, and then head to **Hootananny** for live music.



## WHERE TO STAY IN INVERNESS (2 NIGHTS)

### **Inverness Palace Hotel & Spa**

*(Central, mid-range hotel on the River Ness)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Ness Walk**

*(Luxury hotel in a peaceful setting)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 4

# Culloden and Loch Ness



**TRAVEL TIME**  
1.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
46 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Have breakfast at your hotel and get an early(ish) start this morning so you can visit **Culloden Battlefield** first thing. This battlefield is where Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Jacobite army faced off against British government and loyalist troops on April 16, 1746. It was a hugely important battle in Scottish history and signaled the end of traditional Highland culture.
2. From Culloden, it's a very short drive to the **Clava Cairns**, a Bronze Age burial site. This incredible site in the forest dates back roughly 4,000 years and includes partially intact burial chambers and standing stones.
3. Then it's about a 40-minute drive to the village of **Drumnadrochit**, which is home to the **Loch Ness Centre**, as well as some cafes and galleries. If you have time, stop in for a gin tasting at the **Great Glen Distillery**, which is the smallest craft distillery in Scotland!
4. Take the ["Freedom" cruise with Jacobite Loch Ness Cruises](#) (*book in advance*). This 2-hour cruise leaves from Clansman Harbour (just a few minutes' drive from Drumnadrochit), and includes a 1-hour cruise on the lake, plus an additional hour to explore Urquhart Castle, which is an iconic structure on Loch Ness.
5. Head back to Inverness for the rest of the evening. Check out **Uilebheist Distillery & Brewery** to try some local craft beer.



## DAY 5

# To Isle of Skye



**TRAVEL TIME**  
3 hours 45 mins



**DISTANCE**  
136 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. It's time to bid the Highlands farewell (for now!) and head to the **Isle of Skye**.
2. On your way west, make a stop at the picture-perfect **Eilean Donan Castle** at the confluence of 3 different lochs (lakes). You can visit the 13th century castle itself (tickets required), enjoy the views, and stop in to the cafe.
3. Then it's time to drive over the sea (bridge) to Skye! Stop at **Eas a' Bhradain waterfall**, a lovely waterfall just off the highway.
  - If you need a pick-me-up or lunch nearby, the **Lean To Coffee Skye Cafe** is lovely, or you can grab a pizza at **Cafe Sia**.
4. Next, stop at the **Sligachan Old Bridge**, just off the A87. This bridge used to be the main way to cross the River Sligachan, and makes for a great photo stop with the Black Cuillin Mountains in the background.
5. Drive to the **Fairy Pools** next, a series of small waterfalls and shallow pools formed by the River Brittle. It's a relatively easy hike from the parking area.
6. It's about a 45-minute drive to **Portree**, the main town on the Isle of Skye. Check into your hotel, have a walk around, and then for dinner you can either grab take-away at a spot like **The Chippy** or **Pizzaway**, or make a reservation at a spot like **Cuchullin**, **Dulse and Brose**, or **Scorrybreac**.



### WHERE TO STAY IN PORTREE (2 NIGHTS)

#### **The Caledonian**

*(Central, mid-range hotel with free parking)*

#### **Cuillin Hills Hotel**

*(Luxury hotel just outside Portree with amazing views)*

[> BOOK NOW](#)

[> BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 6

# Isle of Skye



### TRAVEL TIME

1.5-4 hours



### DISTANCE

Up to 136 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today you'll have a full day to spend on the Isle of Skye, and you can make it as jam-packed or as relaxed as you'd like! For a more laid-back morning, have a leisurely breakfast at your hotel or at a spot like the **Birch Cafe** or **Cafe Arriba**.

- Pro tip: Pick up a picnic lunch before leaving Portree.

2. You're going to spend a good amount of today on the **Trotternish Peninsula**. Driving counter-clockwise around the peninsula, these are the top stops to make:

- **Old Man of Storr:** Unique rock formation with an optional hike.
- **Lealt Falls:** Beautiful waterfall with an optional hike.
- **Kilt Rock and Mealt Falls:** A distinctive rock formation and waterfall.
- **The Quiraing:** Stunning scenic area with an optional hike.
- **The Fairy Glen:** Otherworldly hilly landscapes with a short hike (do this one no matter what!).

3. If you've done all of the hikes today, you'll probably be ready to head back to **Portree** for the evening. If you've just stopped to admire the scenery and take photos, you have time for a couple more stops!

4. You can drive 45 minutes from The Fairy Glen to **Dunvegan Castle**, the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland. *(Note that it's only open from Easter through mid-October each year.)*

5. From Dunvegan Castle, it's also possible to drive out to **Neist Point** all the way at the far western tip of the Isle of Skye. Neist Point is one of the most dramatic locations you can visit on the island. *(But beware that the roads you have to drive to get out to Neist Point can be nerve-wracking to drive.)*

6. Back in Portree, I recommend making dinner reservations at a spot like **The View** (at the Cuillin Hills Hotel), **Sorrybreac**, or **Dulse and Brose**.

## DAY 7

# Glenfinnan and Glencoe



### TRAVEL TIME

3.5 hours



### DISTANCE

106 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Get an early start today to make your way back to the mainland.
  - Drive to **Armadale** near the southern tip of the Isle of Skye (about an hour from Portree), and take the car ferry that crosses over to **Mallaig** on the mainland. The ferry is operated by [CalMac](#), and takes 30-45 minutes. *Be sure to book it in advance!*
2. From Mallaig, it's a 40-minute drive to the famous **Glenfinnan Viaduct** at Loch Shiel, made famous in the Harry Potter films. The Hogwarts Express is actually the [Jacobite Steam Train](#), a tourist train that travels between Mallaig and Fort William. *(Best times to watch the train are roughly 10:45 a.m. or 1:20 p.m.).*
3. After viewing the train (or if you really don't care about it), you can continue on to **Glencoe**, a famous valley in the heart of the Highlands.
  - Stop in at the **Glencoe Visitor Centre**, and visit some of the most famous nearby viewpoints like **Three Sisters Viewpoint** and **The Meeting of Three Waters**.
4. There are a lot of walking and hiking trails throughout Glencoe, too, if you want to stretch your legs this afternoon/evening before heading to your hotel and getting dinner.



## WHERE TO STAY IN GLENCOE (1 NIGHT)

### **Glencoe House**

*(Five-star luxury hotel on a beautiful property)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

### **Clachaig Inn**

*(A simple, comfortable Highlands inn)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## DAY 8

# Back to Edinburgh



**TRAVEL TIME**  
2.5–3.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
140 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. If this is the end of your Scotland trip, you can get back to **Edinburgh** in about 2 hours and 45 minutes and could conceivably fly home this afternoon or evening if you drop your car off at the airport.

2. If you aren't leaving quite yet (or if you're perhaps continuing your journey in the UK by car or train), you can take a more leisurely drive back to Edinburgh. Stop at more viewpoints in Glencoe and through the Highlands, like the **Rannoch Moor Viewpoint** and **Loch Tulla Viewpoint**.

3. Take the slightly longer route that will take you along **Loch Lomond** within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. You can stop in the very pretty village of **Luss** for lunch (The Village Rest is a good bet) and some sightseeing before continuing on east.

4. And, if you didn't stop to see **The Kelpies** on your way out of Edinburgh, you'll be driving right past them on your way back into the city.



## ALTERNATE: DAY 5

# Moray Coast + Speyside



### TRAVEL TIME

3.5-4 hours



### DISTANCE

147 miles



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

**If you want to extend your itinerary into a 10-day road trip instead of a 7-day road trip, stay a third night in Inverness and use this alternate Day 5 itinerary before picking up Isle of Skye on Day 6.**

1. Start your morning with a drive (about an hour) to the town of Elgin, which is famous for the ruins of **Elgin Cathedral**, which you can visit.
2. Continue on along the Moray Coast to the village of **Portnockie**, where you can visit cliffs with a coastal path that offer up views of the extremely picturesque **Bow Fiddle Rock**.
3. From Portnockie, it's a quick drive to **Cullen**, a quaint seaside village. There's a beach here that's nice for a walk, plus the village itself is adorable. You can stop for an early lunch at a spot like **The Rockpool Cafe** to try Cullen Skink, a creamy fish soup that this village is famous for.
4. Visit **Speyside**, one of Scotland's most famous whisky-producing regions. Take a tour at one (or several!) of the following distilleries (*book ahead!*):
  - **Glenfiddich** - Home to the world's most-awarded single malt whisky.
  - **The Macallan** - Sometimes referred to as "Malt Disney" by locals, The Macallan has a flashy, state-of-the-art visitor experience.
  - **Strathisla** - Strathisla is the oldest operating distillery in the Scottish Highlands, dating back to 1786.

If you're driving, many distilleries will give you your tastings in "driver's drams" to take with you and enjoy later!

5. If you only do one distillery tour (or if you opt to skip them altogether), another spot worth visiting in Speyside is **Ballindalloch Castle and Gardens**. *The castle is only open Sunday-Thursday for visitors, Easter through the end of September.*

## ALTERNATE: DAY 9

# To Glasgow



**TRAVEL TIME**  
2.5 hours



**DISTANCE**  
100 miles



**TODAY'S ROUTE**  
[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. If you're doing the 10-day route, you'll leave Glencoe the morning of Day 9 and instead of heading back to Edinburgh, you'll head to **Glasgow** instead.

- From Glencoe, you can stop at viewpoints like the **Rannoch Moor Viewpoint** and **Loch Tulla Viewpoint**.
- You could also stop at the Glencoe Mountain Resort, which operates as a [sightseeing chairlift](#) that affords incredible views of Glencoe.

2. Your drive will take you along **Loch Lomond** within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. You can stop in the very pretty village of **Luss** for lunch and some sightseeing before continuing on to Glasgow.

3. Arrive in **Glasgow**, the largest city in Scotland! Check into your hotel, and then head to the city center for a wander.

- Check out **George Square**, stroll along **Buchanan Street**, and be sure to catch the statue of the Duke of Wellington on Royal Exchange Square, who is usually wearing an orange traffic cone as a hat.

4. For dinner tonight, try to get a booking at **The Ubiquitous Chip**, one of the best restaurants in the city on Ashton Lane.



### WHERE TO STAY IN GLASGOW (2 NIGHTS)

#### **Radisson RED Hotel**

*(Five-star luxury hotel on a beautiful property)*

#### **Motel One Glasgow**

*(Central, affordable hotel in the city center)*

[BOOK NOW](#)

[BOOK NOW](#)

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## ALTERNATE: DAY 10

# Glasgow



### TRAVEL TIME

None! Get around on foot or public transit



### TODAY'S ROUTE

[GOOGLE MAPS](#)

1. Today is all about exploring more of Glasgow, which generally doesn't get as much love as Edinburgh but is just as great of a Scottish city. Start your morning at the **Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum** in Glasgow's West End. This free museum is one of the most popular in Scotland, and has a mixture of art and historical artifacts.
2. If the weather is extra nice and you'd rather be outside, you might opt to visit the **Glasgow Botanic Gardens** instead this morning. The 27-acre garden features Victorian glasshouses and lots of lovely walking paths.
3. This afternoon, I recommend one of two things: either a [historic walking tour of Glasgow](#), or a [Glasgow food tour](#)!
4. This evening you can either have a chill night in, or perhaps a chilling night out if you want to fit in one more tour. This [Glasgow ghost tour](#) is a good one, though it's only offered 4 nights a week.

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# SCOTLAND PACKING LIST

## 7-Day or 10-Day Road Trip

### CLOTHING FOR WOMEN

- 4-5 short-sleeved tops
- 1-2 long sleeved layering tops (I love [these merino tops](#))
- 2 pairs of [casual pants](#)
- 1-2 pair of jeans or other pants
- 1-2 dresses or skirts
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#) (and set of [rain pants](#) if you're planning to hike a bit)
- 1 fleece, hoodie, or warm sweater
- 1 packable down coat (for any season other than summer)
- 1 swimsuit
- 1 hat
- Underwear/bras/socks

### CLOTHING FOR MEN

- 5-6 t-shirts (go with [merino](#))
- 1-2 long sleeved layering tops
- 2-3 pairs of [casual pants](#)
- 1 pair of jeans
- 1 pair of shorts or other pants
- 1 set of pajamas
- 1 [raincoat](#) and set of rain pants
- 1 fleece, hoodie, or warm sweater
- 1 packable down coat (if not summer)
- Swimsuit, underwear, and socks
- 1 hat

### TOILETRIES

- Basic toiletries
- Small first aid kit (don't forget Band-Aids, pain relievers, moisturizer)

### SHOES

- 1 pair of breathable sneakers or [walking sandals](#)
- 1 pair of [good hiking shoes](#) (women)
- 1 pair of flats
- 1 pair of [good hiking boots](#) (men)

### TECH

- An [RFID-blocking wallet](#)
- Camera + memory cards
- Kindle or other e-reader
- UK travel adapter(s)
- Electronics chargers
- Portable power bank
- [eSIM card](#)

### OTHER

- Your passport! (and online ETA)
- [Comfy hiking daypacks](#)
- [Reusable water bottle](#)
- Sunglasses & sunscreen
- [Dry bag for rainy hikes](#)
- [Quick-dry towel](#)
- Travel umbrella
- Dual-voltage travel hair dryer



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[PORTUGAL \(NO CAR\)](#)

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### About A Dangerous Business

A Dangerous Business is a travel blog that aims to inspire people to fit more travel and adventure into the lifestyle they already have. Run by award-winning travel blogger Amanda Williams, the site is filled with detailed travel itineraries and tips for road trips, weekend getaways, and city breaks, based on more than a decade of personal travel experience.



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