

See the World: Scotland Highland Games

Friday, January 10, 2014 13:15

We saw Scotland as the beautiful, heartwarming and fiercely patriotic half of the United Kingdom. Scots are a proud people of their heritage and history and are quick to tell you. As unabashed Braveheart fans, we toured the southern roads of Scotland chasing William Wallace history and then make our way through the Scottish Highlands to Loch Ness and Aberdeen for the Highland Games. Similar to a state fair, the Highland Games are a series of competitions that were traditionally between families over feats of strength and dance. Today the competition is just as fierce, but the music is loud, the drinks are cold and there's more fun than anything else.

The only accessible way to do Scotland without a group is to rent a car. There's a good deal of driving involved to see the sights and we made a wide circle along the coast of the entire county. We left Scotland wanting to stay another month- there's simply no limit on beauty to see!

Itinerary

01DAY

Morning: **Edinburgh and Edinburgh Castle**

- Edinburgh is a beautiful mix of Scottish tradition and modernization. Unfortunately, it is also a very hilly city and we chose to drive around the city rather than walk. Because of the local university, Edinburgh has been modified to be very accessible in other areas and I was able to have access to bathrooms and entryways independently.
- Edinburgh Castle has a beautiful view of the city and the grounds of the castle. It was been renovated to be accessible and I did not have any problems.

02DAY

Morning: **The Kelpies of Falkirk**

- The [giant horse heads of the Kelpies](#) are hard to miss when driving on the highway leaving Edinburgh. They're a completely accessible outdoor attraction and have a fun ice creamery attached. There are guides and tours available as well, but it's a relaxing stop on the way in or out of Edinburgh

Afternoon: **Stirling and the William Wallace Monument**

- Sir William Wallace, the guardian of Scotland, still watches over the town of Stirling from the William Wallace Monument overlooking the city. His famous blade is on display once you climb the steep tower and you can trace his history all the way to the top. This is not an accessible attraction, it's all steps and stairs, but the café at the bottom where I waited is very accessible.



The Stirling Bed & Breakfast

13 Causewayhead Road, Causewayhead, Stirling, FK9 5EG (Phone: +441786396146)

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CHECK-IN

13

JUNE
Friday

CHECK-OUT

14

JUNE
Saturday

TOTAL PRICE

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US\$126

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**Where We Stayed:
VERY accessible and
friendly!**



Double Room - Disability Access

for Julia Rodes

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03DAY

Morning: **Ben Nevis Peak**

- This peak was used for the filming of Braveheart, which unfortunately was majorly filmed in Ireland. This is not an accessible hike, but the drive to the trail head is beautiful and offers one of the best views of the unencumbered highland hills that we had seen. Dusty went ahead and hiked the trail, of course taking along with him the infamous speech to say at the top in memory of William Wallace.

Wallace: Sons of Scotland, I am William Wallace.

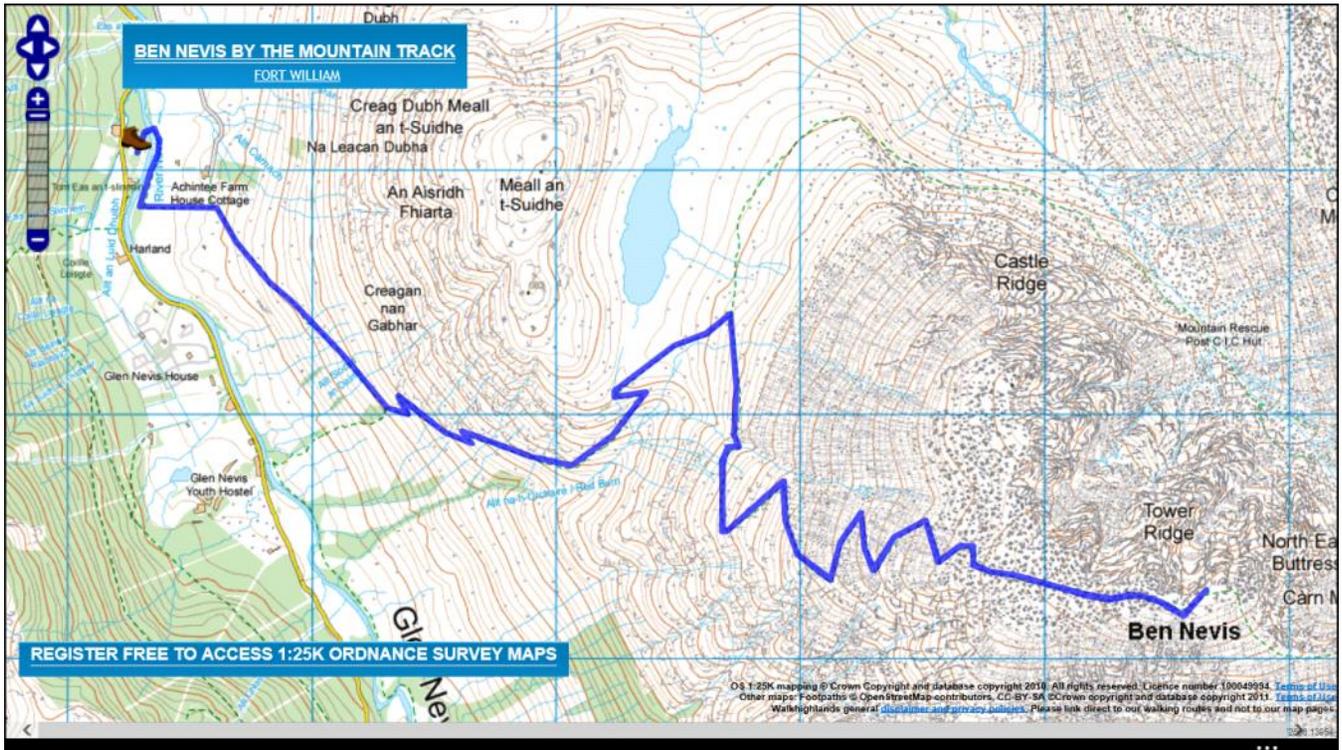
Young soldier: William Wallace is 7 feet tall.

Wallace: Yes, I've heard. Kills men by the hundreds, and if he were here he'd consume the English with fireballs from his eyes and bolts of lightning from his arse. I AM William Wallace. And I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You have come to fight as free men, and free men you are. What would you do without freedom? Will you fight?

Veteran soldier: Fight? Against that? No, we will run; and we will live.

Wallace: Aye, fight and you may die. Run and you'll live -- at least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our freedom!!!

Wallace and Soldiers: Alba gu bra! (Scotland forever!)



Evening: Loch Ness

- The infamous [Loch Ness](#) was a must for our Scottish adventure. The Loch itself can get very foggy, so don't get frustrated if you can't see the Loch Ness monster, Nessie. There are several parking lots around the Loch (Scottish for lake), including a steeper one near the castle at Loch Ness. From the parking lots, you can walk around the lake on paved sidewalks next to the road. We walked for a bit and then drove around the perimeter of the loch looking for Nessie.
- There is a [Loch Ness Center & Exhibition](#), which is right next to the Drumnadrochit Hotel where we stayed. Very accessible hotel for Scotland standards and even packed us a lunch to go for the next day!

Where We Stayed:
VERY accessible and friendly!



04DAY

ALL DAY: **Aberdeen Highland Games**

- The Highland Games are essentially a "state fair" held in each city or area of Scotland during different times of the year, but you pay a ticket to attend the games. Scotsmen and women local to that area compete in the different games, including folk dancing, hammer throw, caper toss and bagpipes. There's also a very intense tug-o-war match. The Games are generally held in an open farm field and

there won't be any paved sidewalks or road in between the areas of different events. There were handicapped accessible port-o-johns and everyone allowed me to move ahead of them in the crowd to get a closer view of the events.

- Make sure to try Scottish fair food! Lots of roasted meat and samples of whiskey, as well as fried, sugary pastries!