

## Scotland Itinerary Days 5 – 8

Isle of Skye - Isle of Lewis - Steinacleit Stones - Clach an Truiseil Standing Stone - Arnol Blackhouse - Dun Carloway Brough - Calanais Stone Circle - Clava Cairns - Laidhay Croft Museum - Achavanich Stone Setting

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Day  
Five

A leisurely day will be spent on the Isle of Skye including a beautiful walk following the shore of Portree Bay which will include a picnic lunch.

In the evening, a workshop will be held to discuss and plan our ritual at the Calanais Stone Circle on the Isle of Lewis.

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Day  
Six

In the morning, we will take the ferry from the Isle of Skye to the Isle of Harris followed by a beautiful scenic drive to the main town of the Isle of Lewis, Stornoway.Â After lunch we will visit the Steinacleit Stones and the Clach an Truiseil Standing Stone.Â The Steinacleit stones include a large Neolithic or early Bronze Age stone setting possibly once a chambered cairn or a large building with a later large oval building constructed on it.Â Believed to be the tallest standing stone in Scotland, the Clach an Truiseil is visible from the Steinacleit Stones and we will then take a short drive to visit this site.Â There are also two fallen stones lying adjacent to the Clach an Truiseil Stone which may be the remains of a substantial Neolithic stone circle similar in size to Calanais.

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Day  
Seven

We will begin our day with a visit to the Arnol Blackhouse, a restored traditional Hebridean style farmhouse.Â Once the residence of a crafting family and their animals, it is preserved almost as the family left it.Â Thick windowless stone-faced walls support a

thatched roof weighed down with nets and stones. A peat fire burns in the open hearth with the smoke filtering out through the roof. The Hebrideans lived in such homes for many centuries the last being vacated in the early 1970s and the Arnol Blackhouse is a fine example of the very tough life they once lived.

We then drive to the Iron Age Broch of Dun Carloway, the best preserved broch in the Outer Hebrides with beautiful views to the seaways below. Brochs are hollow-walled circular structures of a type found only in Scotland. Archaeologists' views differ as to whether brochs were built originally as fortified towers or defensible family homes. Dun Carloway is entered by a single, low and easily defensible doorway and has three chambers at ground level with a stone staircase that rises between the inner and outer walls giving access to the upper levels.

From Dun Carloway we drive to the Calanais Standing Stones and, for many, the most exquisite setting of standing stones anywhere. A sacred site for nearly 4,000 years, the stones were erected in 3000BC and the site abandoned in 800AD. The stones are located high on a hill with glorious views to the lochs below and at the heart of one of the largest prehistoric ritual landscapes in Britain. It comprises a circle of 13 stones with a central 5m high monolith and a small chambered tomb within the circle. A series of single stone rows radiate to the south, east and west with a double row of stones forming an avenue leading from the north. The monument is built of local gneiss stone and it seems that each stone was selected for its individual character and beauty. We will also visit one of the nearby smaller stone circles with a view to Calanais. A visit to Scotland would not be complete without experiencing this most beautiful and wondrous sacred place.

In the early evening, we will return to Calanais for a guided meditation/ritual at the stones at sunset.

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Day  
Eight

After leaving the Isle of Lewis, we visit the three Balnuran of Clava passage tombs. The circular tombs are Bronze Age and form part of a group of 45 distinctive cairns in this part of Scotland. There are two types of cairns and both are represented here. One of the cairns has both cup and ring marks carved into the stone. The tombs are located in the most beautiful woodland setting and each has a stone circle surrounding it.

We also visit the Laidhay Croft Museum, a white thatched longhouse. This style of house was once very common in this part of Scotland. Everything a farming family might need could be provided under one roof including a home for the animals.

Our last stop of the day before taking the ferry to Orkney, is a visit to the 4,000 year old Achavanich Stone Setting. It is not a stone circle but

rather is in the shape of a horseshoe.Â

Thirty-five stones still stand with six fallen and, unlike most stone

circles in Britain, the broadside of the stones face outwards.Â Close by are the remains of a passage tomb  
1,000 years older than the stones.