



A Borderland Royalty & Raiders

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A Borderland – Royalty & Raiders ...



Loch Trool



Galloway Cattle

No other part of Scotland has a border – it is unique to the south of Scotland. Being on a border inevitably brings a history of warring and raiders. This land has been fought over and it can be seen in the defensive strongholds, and the customs and traditions used to protect the land that still remains today, most notably in the Common Ridings and Festivals.

Romans, Vikings, cattle raiders - the Reivers - from Northumberland and southern Scotland and English monarchs have all had an interest in it. Power struggles were frequent and bloody.

An independent territory, The Debatable Land, existed between England and Scotland and was fought over by Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and James V and at one point was the 'bloodiest region' in Great Britain.

This is a land worth fighting over.

Day 1



Caerlaverock Castle



Traquair



Bowhill House

Starting from Edinburgh, Glasgow or Newcastle your first visit could be to [Traquair House](#) in Innerleithen, close to Peebles.

Visited by 27 Scottish Kings and Queens, Traquair dates to 1107 and has been lived in by the Stuart family since 1491. Originally a royal hunting lodge, Traquair played host to Mary, Queen of Scots and later as staunch Catholics they supported the Jacobite cause without counting the cost. The famous Bear Gates at the top of the main drive which were built in 1739 only to be closed in 1745 following the visit of Bonnie Prince Charlie when the 5th Earl promised they would never be opened again until the Stuarts returned to the throne.

Did you know, Traquair House offers **B&B accommodation** in two historic guest rooms and Howford House is a 9 bedroom self-catering property within the grounds.

Your next visit will take you to [Bowhill Estate](#). The tales of the Buccleuch family and Bowhill are almost as old as the nation of Scotland itself. It is a vast woodland, the Ettrick Forest, which once covered all the hills, valleys and riversides. In 1322, King Robert the Bruce gave it to the Scott clan, the ancestors of today's Buccleuch family, in recognition of their loyalty.

From here you can make your way to [Hermitage Castle](#), which has been described as the 'guardhouse of the bloodiest valley in Britain' and was fought over time and time again. Mary, Queen of Scots rode out to the castle to visit her trusted noble, the 4th Earl of Bothwell who was injured in a skirmish with reivers.

Heading west and into Dumfries and Galloway, you come to [Caerlaverock Castle](#). With its triangular shape, it is unique among British castles. A walk around the castle gives a sense of its strength, the economy of form and pleasing geometry. Caerlaverock was besieged and captured on numerous occasions, with its last one in 1640, which was brought about by Lord Maxwell's loyalty to Charles I during his struggles with the Covenanters. The garrison held out for 13 weeks before surrendering.

Overnight in the Dumfries area, Castle Douglas or Kirkcudbright.

Day 2



[Bruce's Stone](#)



[Whithorn](#)



[Drumlanrig Castle](#)

Your next stop will be the [Isle of Whithorn](#) where Vikings were not the fierce fighters whose raids were feared by the monks. By the time they reached Whithorn in the 9th and 10th Centuries, they are already mingled in with the Irish Celts at Dublin. They are peaceful traders and much of what was dug up from Viking Whithorn shows them making things and building small wattle homes, well-insulated with bracken.

Travel through Wigton, the Booktown of Dumfries and Galloway and on through stunning Galloway Forest Park, the Highlands in miniature.

[Bruce's Stone](#) stands on a wonderful vantage point overlooking the shimmering waters of **Loch Trool** to the rolling hills beyond. It commemorates Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, and the Battle of Trool in 1307. It's hard to imagine, looking at this peaceful landscape, that such a bitter battle took place here 700 years ago. From the site of the stone you would have seen the drama unfold, as English soldiers were ambushed as they walked along the far shore of Loch Trool. A bugle was sounded as the soldiers approach the Steps of Trool and Bruce's men released a volley of stones onto the surprised troops. Those who turned to flee met heavily armed men behind them.

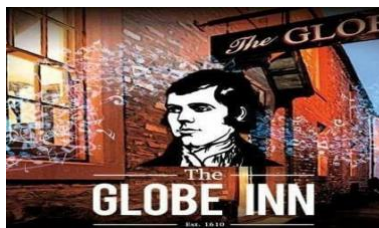
Travel onto **Drumlanrig Castle**, also known as the pink palace. The Castle has 120 rooms, 17 turrets and four towers and the producers of **Outlander** used the Castle for filming their second series.

It is one of the seats of the of the Douglas family in Dumfriesshire. Sir James Douglas (known also as "The Good" or "Black Douglas") was a right-hand man of Robert the Bruce. Indeed, he was entrusted with carrying Bruce's heart to the Holy Land but was killed in a battle with the Moors in Spain while on the way. Sir James Douglas was killed in a surprise attack, but before the confronting his attackers he is said to have thrown the heart urn ahead of him and shouted, "Lead on brave heart, I'll follow thee." Robert the Bruce's heart was carried along with Douglas' remains back to Scotland.

The heart was buried near **Melrose Abbey**. In 1920 it was exhumed and then buried again without a marker. In 1996 during excavations of the abbey ruins the urn was discovered and confirmed to hold the heart of Robert the Bruce. His heart was finally interred within Melrose Abbey, almost 700 years after he had initially requested it. Ensure to include a visit there at the start of the itinerary if time allows.

You can include another night in Dumfries in your itinerary or indeed continue your travel north into Ayr and on to Glasgow, south into Northern England or indeed west across the water and onto Northern Ireland.

If you like any of the above, you may also like the below suggestions



The Globe Inn Dumfries



Melrose Abbey



The Devil's Porridge Museum



Wallace Statue



Peter Pan Moat Brae House



Crafty Distillery