



Northumberland, Vikings, Romans and on to Where Scotland Starts

SCOTLAND STARTS HERE

@SCOTLANDSTARTSHERE WWW.SCOTLANDSTARTSHERE.COM

Northumberland, Vikings, Romans and on to Where Scotland Starts

5-day itinerary covering Northumberland, the Scottish Borders and Midlothian

Embark on five days of exploring some of the must-see sights of Northumberland, the Scottish Borders and Midlothian.

Day 1



Start your journey at **Hadrian's Wall**, just an hour west of Newcastle. At **Housesteads**, you will find the wall's most dramatic site, including the best-preserved Roman fort in the country. Climb up the ridge and take in the spectacular view across the Northumberland National Park with Hadrian's Wall visible far into the distance.

From Housesteads, continue towards Alnwick. The picturesque market town is home to the impressive **Alnwick Castle and Gardens**. The home of the Duke of Northumberland is exactly what one would imagine a medieval fortress to look like. Most famously, scenes for the first Harry Potter movies and Downton Abbey were shot here.

Further north you will find another imposing fortress. Set on a rocky coastal outcrop with views to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, **Bamburgh Castle** has occupied a position as stunning as it is strategic for centuries. Having been rebuilt after brutal Viking attacks by the Normans, the castle's purpose of withstanding assaults is visible in its design. Visit to learn more about its history or take a wander along the golden sandy beach to fully take in the location. Depending on time and tide, why not stop by **Lindisfarne** and still inhabited **Lindisfarne Castle** as you continue your journey north. Only accessible by causeway at low tide, making your way across can feel like entering a different world.

Overnight just before or on the Anglo-Scottish Border around Wooler, Chatton, Coldstream or Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Day 2



Gungreen House



St Abbs



Floors Castle

Today it's time to discover where Scotland truly starts.

Take the scenic route as you cross into Scotland. A mere 5 miles north of the border you will find the coastal community of Eyemouth. Its natural harbour and fine scenery are perfect for a stroll, and the Berwickshire Coastal Path offers an easy route to for exploring. Alternatively, discover the town's smuggling history at **Gungreen House**. Overlooking the harbour, this solitary mansion was perfectly placed for its crucial role in the illicit trade in wine, spirits, tea and tobacco.

Watching the colourful fishing boats bring in their catch, make the most of the fresh produce and head to Giacopazzi's for fish & chips. If you're looking for sweet treats, the long-established family business also offers award-winning ice cream.

Explore the dramatic scenery further by heading out with Eyemouth Rib Trips. Whether you prefer a gentle trip or fast blasts, the experience will get you up close to the amazing wildlife of the Berwickshire Marine Reserve and wanting to see more.

Continue on to nearby **St Abbs**, where sea angling, diving, snorkelling and sightseeing boat trips offer the opportunity to get active. If you're looking for a truly remarkable sound and landscape, explore **St Abbs Head Nature Reserve**: Comprising over 200 acres of wild and rugged coastline, the nature reserve and its sheer cliffs provide an ideal habitat for thousands of seabirds ranging from gannets to puffins.

It's time to make your way inland, to visit the pretty market town of **Kelso**. Admire the townscape with ruined Kelso Abbey – one of the four magnificent Borders Abbeys – or head to **Floors Castle**. Scotland's largest still inhabited castle, and certainly one of its grandest is a sight to behold.

Overnight in Kelso. If you're looking for more activities, check for horse racing at Kelso Racecourse or head to Rutherford's Micropub – the first in Scotland – for a relaxed drink.

Accommodation options:

Ednam House, Queen Head Hotel or if you are looking for something extraordinary, Schloss Roxburghe.

Day 3



Jedburgh Abbey



The Borders Distillery



Beirhope Alpacas

Continue heading west this morning and make your way on to Jedburgh. If you have been caught in the spell of the Borders Abbeys, pay a visit to **Jedburgh Abbey**, the most complete of the four. Built over more than 70 years, it is striking for its unusual mix of Romanesque and early Gothic architecture. Then it's onward to **Hawick**, the centre of the Borders' famous textile industry. Now renowned as the cashmere, tweed and whisky town it offers a variety of sights worth visiting. Take a free tour of **Johnstons of Elgin** to discover the impeccable craftsmanship and journey from fibre to finished garment or indulge in a spot of shopping. Nearby you will find Scotland's newest distillery, **The Borders Distillery**. The first Scotch Whisky distillery in the Scottish Borders since 1837 is dedicated to making great whisky that captures the spirit of the Borders. The distillery perfectly combines heritage and modern ideas in its drinks and processes and occupies a historic landmark site in the centre of town. Make your evening extra special with a private trek with **Beirhope Alpacas** in the Cheviot Hills near Kelso. Join the cuddly animals as they take you on an exploration of the local hills with stunning views across the Borders and to England.

Return to Kelso for overnight.

Day 4



Abbotsford



Provender



Thirlestane Castle

Start your day by following the Tweed upstream to **Abbotsford**. From the riverside walks to the historic gardens and interiors, the fairy-tale home of novelist Sir Walter Scott will take your breath away.

Later take a wander through the lovely nearby market town of **Melrose**. Small independent shops, another grand abbey, a woollen mill, and colourful gardens all add to the town's character.

If you have worked up an appetite, book in with **Provender**. Their 'Meet the Mixologist, Meet the Chef, and Make your Own Starter' experiences promise a fresh look at cooking with local produce (pre-booking required).

Travel via **Scott's View** and **Leaderfoot Viaduct** to **Thirlestane Castle** in Lauder. Dating back to the 16th century, the castle not only boasts a strikingly beautiful exterior, but it also contains many fascinating details and stories inside (please note the house is closed Fridays and Saturdays).

Return to Kelso for overnight or, alternatively, Dryburgh Abbey Hotel.

Day 5



Traquair House



Cringletie



Secret Herb Garden

Today's journey slowly takes you northwards. In the morning, travel towards the Royal Burgh of **Peebles**. En route, pay a visit to **Traquair House**. Scotland's oldest inhabited house can look back on 900 years of history, with visits from numerous

monarchs and Bonny Prince Charlie. It also houses a small craft beer brewery that utilises some of the original 300-year-old equipment to create a range of ales.

As you continue onwards, stop by **Cringletie** for Afternoon Tea and take time to enjoy the landscape. If the weather allows, enjoy tea and cakes outside or go for a stroll on the hotel's 28-acre estate, which includes a nature trail and walled garden. In addition to floral displays, the garden also supplies the kitchen with fruit and vegetables.

Making your way towards Edinburgh, drop in at the **Secret Herb Garden**. The specialist Herb Nursery nestles at the foot of the Pentland Hills on the outskirts of Scotland's capital, and – besides a café and shop - boasts a number of whimsical elements. Take a seat among the vines in the greenhouse or pay a visit to the onsite gin distillery.

Overnight at Craigie Hotel in Penicuik then onto Edinburgh or beyond.

If you like the above, you might also enjoy the below suggestions:



Eat Sleep Ride



Mary Queen of Scots' House



Arniston House



Newbattle Abbey



Borders Textile Towerhouse



Common Ridings