

## SPEYSIDE WHISKY EXPERIENCE

### Introduction

- **4 Days / 3 Nights**
- **Any Day Start**
- **First Class Hotels**
- **Standard Group Size 1 - 8**

Scotland is the world capital of whisky production and many of the distilleries, located in the spectacular Scottish countryside, began life as illegal stills on small farms. Speyside is the big whisky distilling area and the River Spey and its tributaries supply the many distilleries with the water used to give the malts their distinctive flavour.

The Speyside area contains almost two thirds of Scotland's distilleries and the River Spey itself is lined with distilleries on both banks. Speyside's importance was due to the Grampian mountain snow-melt, the malting barley of Banff and Moray and the rustic railway which ran along the Spey, bringing labour, barley and malt to the distilleries and returning to Edinburgh and Glasgow with Whisky.

### Trip Profile

The aim of this tour is to give you a taste of the most famous area for malt whisky, Speyside. This is the home of malt whisky on the eastern side of the Highlands. Throw a stone here and it will land on a distillery. Speyside has everything required for whisky production, from the barley grown on the coastal plains to the rivers and springs which feed the distilleries.

You will have the opportunity to experience the whole process, from the malting and mashing to fermentation, distillation, maturation and bottling. Your tours will include tastings, often direct from the casks themselves. Many of the distilleries are in beautiful coastal and river locations with stunning scenery and you will be able to explore the attractions and delights of the local villages and towns.

**What's your favourite Whisky? Create Your Own Tour.** As with all our tours, the attractions and distilleries you visit will take account of your interests and can be adapted to what you want to see.

Your tour may be planned to coincide with the Spring or Fall Speyside Whisky Festivals (29<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2010 and late September, 2010). In addition, private tastings and cooking with whisky courses can be arranged in Dufftown, the Speyside capital of whisky.

### Itinerary

#### Day One

We can start the tour from any of the major airports in Scotland or from Edinburgh, Aberdeen or Glasgow. Travelling up the whisky smuggler's route north to Speyside, our first stop will be **Edradour**, Scotland's smallest distillery, producing fine single malts on a farmhouse scale. From here, we will travel further north passing Blair Castle where the pipes of Bonnie Prince Charlie are on show. Eventually, we will arrive at the **Dalwhinnie** distillery, one of the highest at 1073 feet. We will stay overnight in the Speyside area, the home of Scottish whisky. Time permitting; we can visit the **Speyside Cooperage**. Since 1947, this family owned business has produced the finest casks from the best American Oak. The cooperage continues to work and produce the age-old product, still using traditional methods and tools.



Dalwhinnie distillery

## Day Two

On the way to Cardhu, we stop at **Ballindalloch Castle** one of the most beautiful and renowned castles in Scotland. Known as the Pearl of the North. We visit **Cardhu** (Gaelic for "black rock"), the only malt distillery pioneered by a woman. From here we travel to **Glenfarclas**, where the stills are the biggest in Speyside. You may wish to visit Dufftown, the whisky capital of Scotland and home to **Glenfiddich**. You can visit the famous whisky shop or visit the factories of other famous products of the area, such as Walkers Shortbread or Johnston's Cashmere. Private tastings and cooking with whisky events are hosted by restaurants in the town. An alternative would be, to visit **The Macallan** distillery, Speyside's best known heavyweight. Their fine collection of old whiskies range in price from \$110 to \$33,000 per bottle. Following an in depth tour of the distillery, guests have the opportunity to sample the oaky, resinous, sherried flavours of the whiskies.



Huge Glenfarclas stills

## Day Three

Today we visit some of the north Speyside distilleries and begin at **Benromach**, situated on the edge of the market town of Forres. Popular with Prince Charles, the distillery was reopened in 1998 after a succession of closures. From here we travel to the **Dallas Dhu** historic distillery. Although production has now ceased, it is opened to the public and the later batches still appear in independent bottlings. The name derives from US Vice-president George Mifflin Dallas, who was of Scottish origin. Then to Elgin and the **Glen Moray** distillery on the banks of the River Lossie. Famous for its wine finishes, the distillery uses Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc barrels and has recently introduced the Vallee du Rhone. Alternatively, we can visit **Glen Grant**, named after its founders John and James Grant in 1840 and having sampled the malts, we stroll around the delightful Victorian garden created by James Grant's son, a major in the army who served in India.



Benromach distillery

## Day Four

On our final day we visit some of the great names in whisky production. We begin with **Glenfiddich** where they use traditional coal firing in one of the two still houses. It is one of the few distilleries to have remained in the hands of the family who founded it. Here we take the Connoisseurs' tour which includes a tutored nosing. Then to **Aberlour**, one of the most respected whiskies in Scotland. Here you are able to hand-fill your own personally labelled bottle of Aberlour from a sherry butt and a bourbon barrel, each considered to be fine examples of the distillery's style. Our last stop is at **The Glenlivet**. This is the biggest selling malt in the American market. It is a whisky of structure and complexity with a flowery, peachy style, derived from the light peating and the hardness of the mountain water which runs underground for many miles. We now return your drop off point.



Glenlivet distillery

(4 days, all accommodation with breakfast, **Blue Badge Driver / Guide**, based on the number in your group)

**Price per person – please contact us – US Toll Free: 1866 464 7389**

## Accommodation and Tour Details

### Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation is based on first class accommodation. Lunch and evening meals are not included unless specifically stated in the tour notes. We are able to offer several grades of accommodations from beautiful bed and breakfasts to whisky orientated hotels and castles.

### Guides and Entrance Fees

Each tour is lead by a fully qualified **Scottish Blue Badge Driver / Guide**. In most instances, entrances to historic attractions are included in the price we will quote you. Distillery tours will vary according to the level of tour you require and between distilleries.

### Prices

We aim to offer the best and most competitive price for each of our tours. We use our partners to get the best price at the time of booking. The cost will also depend on the services you require. Please **contact us** for the best price.

### Airport Transfers

We can provide transfers from any location and airports or cruise ports. Return transfers from London airports to the start and finish of the tour are not in the tour costs.

## Practical Information

### Climate

As some of attractions on this tour are out of doors it is advisable to take the correct clothing. With the unpredictability of the climate and forecast, wet weather clothing is essential. Sturdy footwear and waterproof clothing are advised.

<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>

### Health

This tour involves a walking on some terrain that can be fairly rough. We ask all our travellers to carefully consider the physical demands of our tours and discuss any concerns that may arise. There is much scope for flexibility within each tour to accommodate a range of limitations and needs, but we do have to be clear what they may be before accepting any booking.

Additionally, if you find walking difficult or any other health requirement, please let us know as soon as possible. There may be motorised wheelchairs available at some attractions. These may be booked if sufficient notice is given.

### Taxes

Value Added Tax is applied to most goods. Most travellers can get a VAT refund, but you must ask and the paperwork and procedures can be long and complicated.

### Tipping

Some restaurants and hotels will automatically add a 10-15% service charge. Check your bill before tipping further. Taxis, Restaurants, Bell Boys, Porter expect a tip, bar staff in pubs, do not.

## Important information

The information in this tour profile is given in good faith and covers the planned excursions, attractions and conditions which should be available on this tour. In some instances, due to unforeseen circumstances, changes in the above itinerary might be necessary. To appreciate this tour to its best, you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary.

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