

Scotland's Heritage by Rail: Museums & Marvels

with Dr. Patrick N. Allitt

May 19–25, 2027 | June 23–29, 2027



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From: \$9,890 per person

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Experience Scotland through its rails, history, and breathtaking landscapes on this immersive learning adventure with The Great Courses Journeys. This exciting new itinerary weaves together Scotland's most iconic train routes—including the Jacobite Steam Train and the stunning West Highland Line—with in-depth exploration of Scotland's engineering innovations, cultural identity, and defining historical moments. Throughout the journey, your Great Courses expert provides engaging lectures and context that deepen your understanding of everything from medieval power struggles to modern transport heritage.

Travel from Edinburgh's storied Old Town to the Highlands' dramatic peaks, visiting castles, battlefields, and monuments that shaped Scotland's national story. Discover the heart of Scottish rail heritage through curator-led museum tours, behind-the-scenes access at Glasgow Central Station, and conversations with local specialists. Complement these experiences with a taste of Scotland's world-famous whisky tradition during a Speyside distillery visit and cooperage tour. Along the way, enjoy stunning rail journeys, warm Highland hospitality, and opportunities to connect with fellow travelers who share your curiosity. This program offers not only exceptional sightseeing but also a rich educational experience—bringing Scotland's landscapes, legends, and engineering brilliance vividly to life.

Your Journey Expert



Dr. Patrick Allitt is the Cahoon Family Professor of American History at Emory University, where he has taught since 1988. He has a passion for railroad history that resulted in him creating his very popular and highly rated Great Course *How Railways Transformed the World*. In addition, he has led student and adult tours abroad for decades. Professor Allitt received his PhD in American History from the University of California, Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard Divinity School and Princeton University. He is a widely published author whose books include *A Climate of Crisis: America in the Age of Environmentalism*; *The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities throughout American History*; and *Religion in America since 1945: A History*. Professor Allitt has created more than 10 Great Courses, including *The Industrial Revolution*; *The American West: History, Myth, and Legacy*; and *The Great Tours: England, Scotland, and Wales*.



Questions? Call 1-855-476-5080

Discover More 



Highlights

- Ride Scotland's Most Famous Railways. Highlights include the Jacobite Steam Train across the Glenfinnan Viaduct and the breathtaking West Highland Line—one of the world's most iconic scenic rail routes.
- Explore Scotland's Rail Heritage. Enjoy curator-led museum visits, behind-the-scenes access at Glasgow Central Station and talks from leading railway experts.
- Savor Whisky Traditions and Craftsmanship. Tour a Speyside distillery, taste local whisky, and witness the centuries-old craft of coopering.
- Take in Scotland's Majestic Landscapes. From the Cairngorms to the rugged Highlands, enjoy sweeping views of lochs, glens, and mountains through scenic journeys.

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Itinerary



Day 1: Arrival in Edinburgh

Arrive in Edinburgh this morning and begin your exploration of the city with a visit to Edinburgh Castle, a medieval fortress that dominates the historic Old Town, followed by a guided tour of the National Gallery. Check into the hotel and gather with fellow travelers and your expert for a welcome dinner.

Included Meal: Dinner

Accommodations: InterContinental Edinburgh

Day 2: Edinburgh to Inverness

Depart Edinburgh and travel north by private coach, beginning with a stop at the Forth Bridge, an engineering marvel and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continue to the Falkirk Wheel, a remarkable feat of modern engineering and the world's only rotating boat lift—its elegant, energy-efficient design connects two major canals while showcasing Scotland's innovative spirit. This afternoon, visit the imposing Stirling Castle, one of Scotland's most significant strongholds, famed for its dramatic cliff-top position, Renaissance architecture, and deep ties to figures such as Mary, Queen of Scots and Robert the Bruce. Conclude your day at the National Wallace Monument, honoring Scotland's legendary hero. During the afternoon's bus ride through the Cairngorms, learn about the love-hate history of Anglo-Scottish relations. Arrive in Aviemore and enjoy dinner at the inn.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: The Boat Country Inn

Day 3: Steam Trains and Speyside Traditions

Enjoy a nostalgic one-way journey on the Strathspey Railway from Aviemore to Broomhill, travelling through the scenic Cairngorms. Afterward, visit a whisky distillery for an insightful tour and a *wee dram*. At the Speyside Cooperage Visitor Centre, discover the traditional craft of coopering—an essential part of Scotland's whisky-making heritage. Back at the hotel this evening, join your expert for a talk on the history of Scottish engineering. The rest of the evening is at leisure.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: The Boat Country Inn



“I can’t think of a better way to spend the long summer days than in traveling Scotland by train and seeing the places where Scottish history was made and is still being made.”

—Dr. Patrick Allitt



Day 4: Jacobite Steam and Highland Heritage

Today, travel from Fort William to Mallaig in the first-class carriage on the Jacobite Steam Train, crossing the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct and taking in the sweeping Highland scenery. Enjoy lunch in a local restaurant before exploring the Glenfinnan Station Museum and viewing the viaduct from ground level. The Chairman of the Friends of the West Highland Lines joins you for a talk on Scottish rail heritage before visiting Neptune’s Staircase, an impressive series of canal locks. Dinner and tonight are spent at a quaint rural local inn.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodations: Ballaclulish Inn (May) or Glenfinnan House (June)

Day 5: West Highland Rail Journey and Glasgow Icons

After this morning’s lecture on the history of Scottish railways, you’ll board the West Highland Line often described as one of the world’s most scenic rail journeys. From Fort William to Glasgow, you will travel through dramatic Highland landscapes, passing lochs, moorlands, and remote stations that showcase Scotland’s wild beauty. Take an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the historic Glasgow Central Station, exploring its hidden tunnels, architecture, and railway heritage. Continue on foot to your hotel for your final nights. Dinner is at leisure this evening.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodations: Voco Grand Central





Day 6: Glasgow Transport Heritage and Farewell Celebration

Join your Great Courses Journeys expert for a final talk on the history of Glasgow. Enjoy a curator-led tour at the Riverside Museum, exploring 150 years of Glasgow transport history, including iconic trams, subway carriages, and locomotives such as SAR 3007 and the 1886 Caledonian Railway No. 123. After lunch at the Riverside Café, visit the Tall Ship *Glenlee*, a fully restored 19th-century steel sailing vessel and one of the last Clyde-built ships still afloat. The day concludes with a festive farewell dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodations: Voco Grand Central

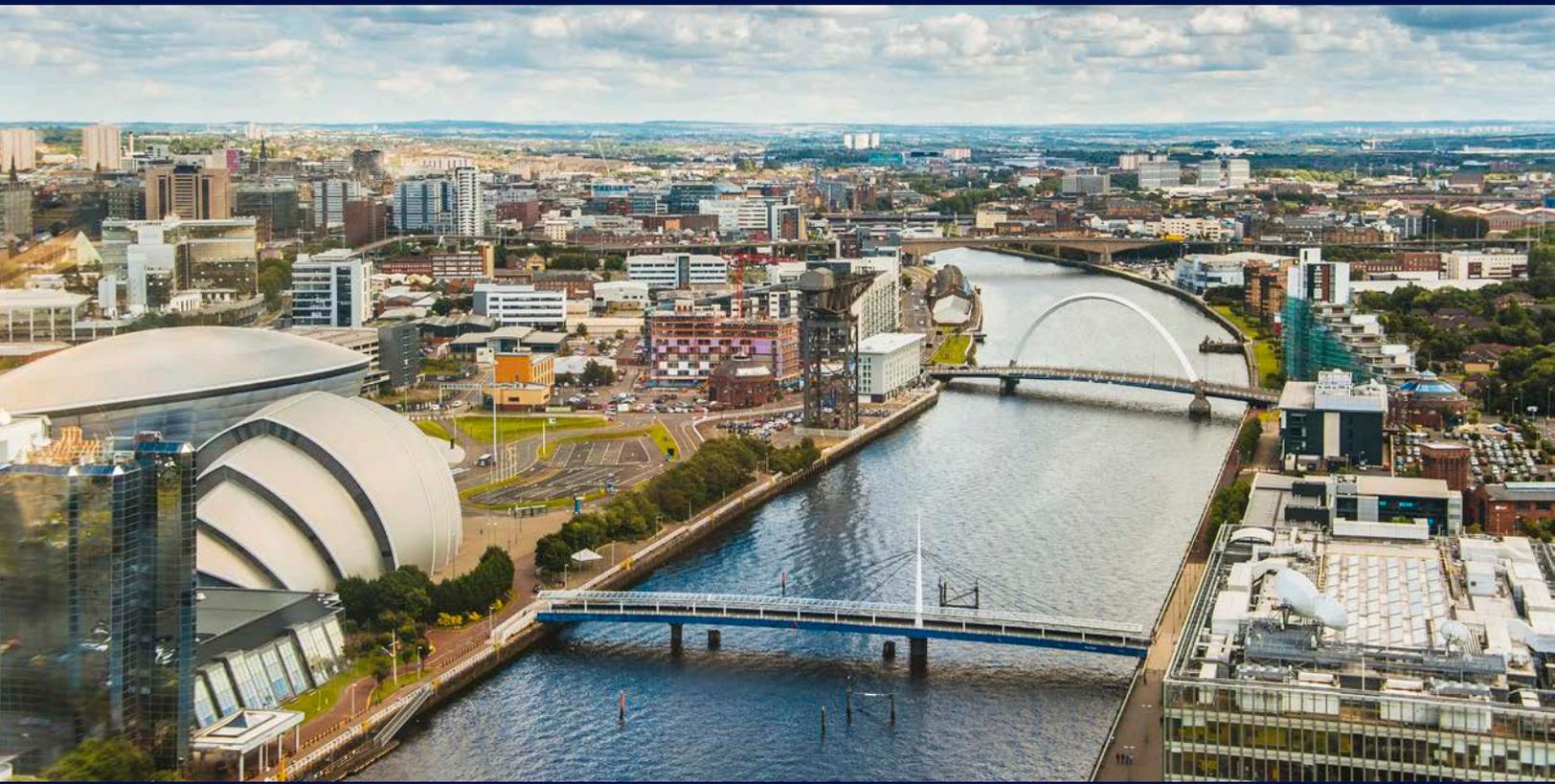
Day 7: Departures

Depart hotel for individual flights home.

Included Meal: Breakfast



Accommodations



InterContinental, The George | *Edinburgh*

A historic luxury hotel set within five beautifully restored Georgian townhouses on prestigious George Street. Blending 18th-century elegance with contemporary comfort, the hotel features refined rooms, curated design inspired by Scottish landscapes, and welcoming service. Its central location places guests within walking distance of Edinburgh's major landmarks, while its rich literary heritage and graceful interiors create an atmosphere of timeless sophistication. **(1 Night)**



The Boat Country Inn, Aviemore | *Aviemore*

The Boat Country Inn is a charming Highland retreat set in the Cairngorms National Park, offering comfortable rooms. Guests enjoy hearty pub-style dining, a welcoming bar, and free Wi-Fi—creating a warm, scenic escape with modern comforts. **(2 nights)**



Ballaclulish Inn (May) | *Glencoe*

An historic Scots Baronial-style retreat set on the shores of Loch Linnhe, surrounded by Glencoe's dramatic mountains. Its cozy lounges, crackling fireplaces, and loch-view rooms create a welcoming Highland atmosphere. Guests enjoy hearty local cuisine, including Scottish seafoods. **(1 night)**

Accommodations



The Glenfinnan House Hotel (June) | *Glencoe*

An 18th-century Highland mansion set on the tranquil shores of Loch Shiel, offering sweeping views of the Glenfinnan Monument and surrounding mountains. Its pine-paneled interiors, log fires, and atmospheric artwork create a warm, traditional ambience. Guests enjoy fine Scottish cuisine, cozy public rooms, and easy access to iconic sites such as the Glenfinnan Viaduct. The hotel's peaceful setting makes it an ideal retreat for both nature lovers and history enthusiasts.

(1 Night)



Voco Grand Hotel | *Glasgow*

An iconic 4-star hotel seamlessly connected to Glasgow Central Station, offering a blend of Victorian grandeur and contemporary comfort. First opened in 1883, it has hosted famous figures and witnessed major historical moments, all while retaining its striking architecture and elegant interiors. Guests enjoy stylish rooms, modern amenities, and vibrant dining, making it an ideal base for exploring the city's culture and landmarks. **(2 Nights)**



Pricing:

Departure	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy	Deposit	
May 19–25, 2027	\$9,890	\$11,480	\$750	BOOK NOW
June 23–29, 2027	\$10,090	\$11,910	\$750	BOOK NOW

What's Included:

- All accommodations for the duration of the tour
- Meals, as noted in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and visits as noted in each itinerary
- Expertise of The Great Courses expert, travel director, and local guides throughout the tour
- All gratuities for on-tour guides, drivers, hotel and restaurant staff as part of the group program
- All on-tour transportation, unless otherwise noted
- Quietvox listening devices to facilitate audibility and social distancing on tour
- The assistance of an ATA professional travel team to assist with pre-trip questions, travel arrangements, including flights, extra hotel nights, and other services
- Comprehensive pre-departure mailings and materials, with information about the destination and what to expect on tour, including a suggested reading list
- Emergency evacuation insurance

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