

Treat yourself to afternoon tea at Mackintosh at the Willow

From dazzling coastlines to dynamic design, vibrant Scotland is full of things to do and places to visit: many funded by the National Lottery. Here are seven ways to make the most of a trip to Scotland.

Stay in a 4-star hostel

Always wanted to travel back in time? Now you can step back 300 years at the Sail Loft at Portsoy, perched on the rugged Banffshire coast. Once a working sail factory, the Georgian buildings had fallen into neglect and disrepair. After a £2million revamp they have been brought back to life as a 4-star hostel, so you can enjoy glorious coastal views in luxury.

Wizards and wilderness

Explore 3,000 million years of Scotland’s stunning scenery with 51 Best Places to See Scotland’s Geology. It's a guide to - yes - 51 places across the country, from the enigmatic stone circles on Orkney to the peaks of the Eildon Hills, rumoured to have been split into three by the wizard Michael Scott.

Enjoy breathtaking views

Gaze at not one but two incredible waterfalls at Lealt Gorge on the Isle of Skye. A new viewing platform is the perfect spot to enjoy an unspoilt sunset view over the spectacular gorge; this beautiful natural space is part of the Staffin Ecomuseum, which boasts no walls or roof – just the open sky above.

Delight in design

Discover the best of Scottish creativity and global design at the spectacular V&A Dundee. Thanks to £19.1million of National Lottery funding, this Kengo Kuma-designed building is a must-see in a city bursting with things to see and do. Pop in to see furniture, textiles, metalwork, ceramics and other collections, including a 15th-century Book of Hours.

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Go exploring

Why not pull on your boots and head out into the wild landscapes of the Inner Forth? Known for its industrial past, this unique area is rich in wildlife, from lapwings and owls to pine martens and brown hares. Explore using the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative app and the Go Forth guide, which will help you find a new set of beacons which are intended to inspire visitors to look at the landscape in a different way.

Indulge in afternoon tea

Recharge your batteries with a scrumptious afternoon tea at the iconic Mackintosh at the Willow. A recent restoration has returned the tea rooms, designed by local hero Charles Rennie Mackintosh, to their former glory. Sit in splendour while you enjoy tea or coffee with sandwiches, scones and of course, homemade cakes.

An evening at the theatre

Treat yourself to tickets to the Theatre Royal Dumfries. The oldest working theatre in Scotland, the 18th-century theatre boasts connections to national poet Robert Burns and *Peter Pan* author J M Barrie, who was said to sit far to one side in the very front row, all the better to peek at the magic happening backstage. Find out more on the Theatre Royal Dumfries website.

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