



CASTLES & CULTURE AYRSHIRE

ENJOY

Ayrshire and Arran's majestic castles, inspiring country houses and birthplace of Scotland's national poet. A fascinating tour for anyone with an interest in art, architecture, history and culture.



DAY ONE

LARGS, KELBURN CASTLE AND WEST KILBRIDE CRAFT TOWN

In the north of the region on the A78 is Largs, a traditional seaside resort with Victorian promenade, sandy beach and ice cream parlours including the famous Nardinis. Kelburn Castle and Estate lies just south of Largs on the A78. Home of the Earls of Glasgow and one of the most colourful castles in Scotland due to the graffiti project, Kelburn has something for all the family. Enjoy the magical 'Secret Forest', historic gardens, romantic glen, riding centre, indoor playbarn, adventure course and licensed restaurant.

West Kilbride Craft Town is 8 miles south of Largs, just off the A78. With a craft gallery, gift shop, and a variety of craft studios, visitors can see and buy quality craft in one easily accessible and picturesque location. At the centre of the craft town is the Barony Centre, a magnificent church transformed into a creative hub for major craft exhibitions and retail, craft and design classes and cultural events.

DAY TWO

CULZEAN CASTLE, ALLOWAY AND BURNS

Culzean Castle is south of Ayr just off the A719. With its dramatic clifftop setting, Robert Adam architecture, fascinating history and beautiful surroundings, it's easy to see why the castle is one of Scotland's most popular visitor attractions. Surrounded by Culzean Country Park, a 600 acre encompassing lush woodland, landscaped gardens and rugged coastline, this 18th-century Scottish castle couldn't be better placed for a great day out.

Heading back to Ayr, on the A77, is the picturesque village of Alloway and award-winning Robert Burns Birthplace Museum. This fascinating museum offers a truly unique encounter with Scotland's favourite son. The museum comprises of the famous Burns Cottage where the poet was born, the historic landmarks where he set his greatest work, *Tam o' Shanter*, the elegant monument and gardens created in his honour and a modern museum housing the world's most important collection of his life and works.

DAY THREE

DUMFRIES HOUSE

On the A70 at Cumnock is Dumfries House, one of Britain's most beautiful stately homes and best kept heritage secrets. The House has something to delight and enchant visitors of all ages with its sumptuous interiors and magnificent furnishings, all set in 2,000 acres of land. In June 2007, HRH, The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay headed a consortium of charities and heritage bodies to purchase this unique house, its contents and adjoining land in order to keep this historical jewel intact and accessible to the public.

DAY FOUR

ARRAN AND BRODICK CASTLE

The Isle of Arran is an hour's ferry ride from Ardrossan. Brodick is the largest village on the island and offers a superb selection of services, with plenty of cafes, hotels, galleries and shops to choose from. On the outskirts of the village is Brodick Castle and Country Estate, a grand, red sandstone castle with stunning views over Brodick Bay to the Firth of Clyde. The grounds and surrounds are worthy of a visit alone – from the W A Nesfield-influenced landscaped gardens to the woodland trails, wildlife ponds and waterfalls, there's plenty to explore outdoors in Britain's only island country park. The castle is packed full of treasures too and is renowned for its impressive collections of period furniture, silverware, porcelain, paintings and sporting trophies.

CONTACTS

Below are the addresses and contact details for each of the venues mentioned. Each attraction offers different opening times and admission charges and we would recommend that you contact each one before visiting.

Kelburn Castle and Country Centre, Fairlie, nr Largs, KA29 0BE, tel: 01475 568685, www.kelburnestate.com

West Kilbride Craft Town Scotland, Barony Church, 50 Main Street, West Kilbride, KA23 9AR, tel: 01294 829179, www.crafttownscotland.org

Culzean Castle and Country Park (National Trust for Scotland), Maybole, KA19 8LE, tel: 0844 493 2149, www.nts.org.uk

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum (National Trust for Scotland), Murdoch's Lone, Alloway, KA7 4PQ, tel: 0844 493 2601, www.nts.org.uk

Dumfries House, Cumnock, KA18 2NJ, tel: 01290 421742, www.dumfries-house.org.uk

Brodick Castle and Estate (National Trust for Scotland), Isle of Arran, KA27 8HY, tel: 0844 493 2152, www.nts.org.uk

TRAVEL

Caledonian MacBrayne, www.calmac.co.uk, tel: 0800 066 5000

Traveline Scotland, www.travelinescotland.com, tel: 0871 2002233

