

Destinations in the Tour de BAM (I See Scotland, I See France)

Glasgow: The 3rd largest city in the UK (after London and Birmingham), Glasgow has about 1.2M people and is considered a major hub of art and culture in the UK. Some famous gingers live there.



Loch Lomond: The largest loch in Scotland (by surface area), Loch Lomond is a gorgeous place to hike and take in the pastoral scenery. Also, there is a nudist colony on its island, "Inchmurrin."



Oban: This is a gorgeous little town with sightseeing, a distillery, and apparently a number of famous Obanians, like Stuart Liddell, a bagpipe player, and Andy Gardner, a footballer in 1877. Famous is apparently a subjective term.



Ben Lomond: This is the most southerly Munro, & reaches to a height of 3,200 feet, & is extremely popular thanks to a relatively easy climb. Easy may also be a subjective term, but you get out there and Bag your first Munro.



Glencoe: A scenic and sad place, Glencoe is the site of a terrible massacre in 1692, which saw the death of 38 members of the MacDonald clan (40 more died of exposure after their homes were burned). This all happened after the 1st Jacobite uprising of 1689, when the MacDonalds were too slow to pledge allegiance to the new monarchs, William and Mary. To be fair, William DID warn them, so, you know. Live and learn. (so much sarcasm, obvi)



Fort William: If you're a hiker, you want to be in Fort William – this a great place to Bag some Munros (which means to climb a mountain in Scotland at least 3,000 ft high), start or finish the West Highland Way or the Great Glen Way, and do some extreme mountain biking. It's also named after Prince William, the Duke of Cumberland, who was also called "Butcher Cumberland." It's not surprising that there are frequent demands to change the name of the city to something like Invernevis.



Ben Nevis: Today is the day you bag your 2nd Munro, and where better to do that than the highest mountain in all the British Isles. It's 4,409 ft above sea level, and more than 100K people climb it each year. Ben (or Beinn) is the Gaelic word for mountain, and Nevis (or Nibheis) can be translated as malicious or venomous. Excellent. Let's go.



Uig / Skye: Bonus points if you can pronounce Uig properly! This booming metropolis has 200-300 inhabitants and is way up north on the beautiful Isle of Skye. While you're hiking, you can hum the Skye Boat Song which tells of the escape of Bonnie Prince Charlie from Uist to Skye in 1746. Fun fact, the town of Uigg in Prince Edward Island (Canada), was named by settlers from Uig. (PS – it's OOOig).



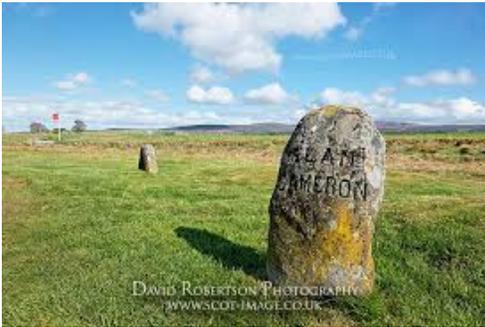
Stornoway: From Skye we've travelled to the Outer Hebrides (or the Western Isles), and have entered a place where 43% of the inhabitants speak Gaelic (vs. 1% in all of Scotland). The beautiful Stornoway castle was built in the mid 1800s by a lovely man (Sir James Matheson) who actually bought the entire island with a fortune he made in the opium trade. Fun fact: he bought the island from the Mackenzies.



Urquhart Castle: This beautiful, ruined castle rests on the banks of Loch Ness. Known for a rather bloody history, it changed hands from Scottish to English several times, was frequently raided by the MacDonald's (obviously an angry bunch), and eventually destroyed (partially) in 1692 to prevent its use by the Jacobites. Also, there is a monster in the water, apparently.



Culloden: Ugh. So depressing and so important to Scottish history. This is the site of the 1746 Jacobite rebellion, in which the highlanders once again fought and lost their cause for freedom from English (Protestant) rule. The battle on Culloden Moor was over in less than an hour, and it is estimated that between 1,500 and 2,000 Jacobites (mostly Highlanders) were killed. All that remains is a number of cairns to mark the mass graves of the clans.



Inverness: Welcome to the northernmost city in the UK, and the capital of the Highlands! This gorgeous place was named the "Happiest Place in Scotland" in 2015, which may or may not have anything to do with the fact that it's close to a number of distilleries. Fun Fact: shinty is an integral part of the Highlands, and Inverness often hosts big tournaments like "The International game of Shinty and Irish Hurling." Irish hurling? Huh.



Ben Hope: The most northerly Munro, Ben Hope is 3,041 ft high, and gives you a lovely view of the Orkneys on a clear day. Which probably isn't often.



John o'Groats: Look up, look waaaay up to the northern tip of Scotland, and you'll find John o'Groats. So who was this Scotsman for whom the town was named? Interestingly, Jan de Groote, who was a Dutchman, of all things. Fun fact: de grote is Dutch for "the large," and people from John o' Groats are known as "Groaters." Not exactly flattering.



Fraserburgh: This little town is the biggest shellfish port in Europe, and is named after the Fraser family who bought the lands in 1504. The title "Lord Saltoun" was established in 1592, and is still in existence and held by a woman: Flora Fraser, 20th Lady Saltoun and head of Clan Fraser. You go Flora!



Aberdeen: This is a REALLY old city, with human settlement going back 8,000 years. Fun fact: one of the nicknames of Aberdeen is “The Silver City with the Golden Sands,” thanks to the granite (which has mica, which is sparkly) used to build many of the older buildings. Odd it’s not its official name.



Lochnagar: Yes, you have to climb another big peak here. But there’s also whisky. Fine, fine whisky. In fact, Royal Lochnagar 12 year old was a favourite of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, since the distillery is close to Balmoral Castle. Fun fact: another name for the mountain is Beinn Chìochan (mountain of breasts), and the summit is referred to as Cac Càrn Beag (small cairn of feces). Lovely.



Perth: Perth is the home of the lovely but ruined Scone Abbey, the location of the Stone of Destiny (upon which the King of Scots was crowned, and which, ironically, is now used by the British monarch during their coronations). Sir Walter Scott called Perth “The Fair City” in his 1828 poem, *Fair Maid of Perth* and really, who are we to argue:



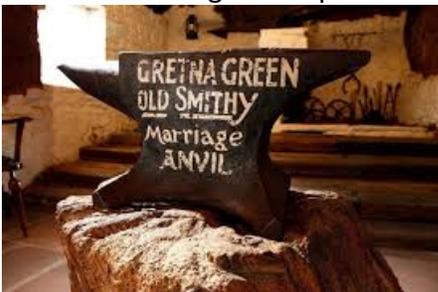
St. Andrews: Fore! Yes, this is the place known around the world as the “home of golf.” Why? For two reasons: first, it’s the most popular venue for “The Open Championship,” the oldest of golf’s four major championships. Second, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (founded in 1754) holds legislative authority over the game worldwide (except the US and Mexico, which seems odd).



Edinburgh: We are now in the capital of Scotland. Home to so much history, architecture, castles, palaces, universities, bagpipes, fringe festivals, and perhaps the ugliest parliament building there is. Just ignore it and look at the castle instead:



Gretna Green: Shotgun wedding anyone? This little place is pretty much the first village you come across when leaving England and entering Scotland. Back in 1754, the law in England and Wales was that you had to either have your parents’ permission or be 21 to wed. In Scotland it was 14 for boys and 12 for girls. Hence, the number of runaways that headed here to begin their lives of wedded bliss. Fun fact: today, one in every six Scottish weddings takes place here!



Paris: We know you know all about Paris. Capital of France, founded in the 3rd century BC by Celts called the “Parisii,” home of baguettes, grueyere, champagne, Chanel, Monet, the Moulin Rouge, and Versailles. This is your last stop on the Tour de BAM, so go freshen up and head out to a café to celebrate your success. Well done, you Badass, you!

