

# Three Castles and a Wee Dram in Deeside

4th to 10th October

*On this holiday we take a ride on the incredible Falkirk Wheel, see the Kelpies, the biggest equine sculptures in the world, visit some of Scotland's most magnificent castles, visit Speyside Cooperage, the only working cooperage in the UK where you can experience the ancient art of coopering and, of course, have a "wee dram" after a tour of the Glenfiddich Distillery.*



**£660.00 PER PERSON**

*Single Room Supp: £106.00  
Nat Trust Members less £18.00,  
but must bring card*

## What's Included

- ✓ A total of 6 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- ✓ All bedrooms are en-suite with TV, telephone, WiFi & hospitality tray.
- ✓ Boat trip on Falkirk Wheel
- ✓ Entry to Duff House
- ✓ Entry to Drum Castle
- ✓ Entry to Crathes Castle
- ✓ Tour of Speyside Cooperage
- ✓ Tour & tasting at Glenfiddich Distillery
- ✓ Time to explore Banbury

## GRETNA HALL HOTEL & BLACKSMITHS

Originally built in 1710 as a manor house, the hotel, set in 10 acres of beautiful gardens offers the character of a historical building with the facilities you would expect from a contemporary hotel.

## MERCURE ABERDEEN ARDOE HOUSE HOTEL & SPA

A beautiful 19th century mansion house set in 30 acres of tranquil Aberdeenshire countryside with 120

traditionally decorated bedrooms. The hotel has an indoor heated pool.

### **BEST WESTERN PREMIER HALLMARK PRESTON LEYLAND HOTEL**

The hotel has a health club with a large swimming pool, spa bath, sauna & steam room.

**Wednesday 4 October** Departing Oxted early morning, we drive to Gretna Green and our overnight hotel.

**Thursday 5 October** This morning we make our way to the Falkirk Wheel, the world's first and only rotating boat lift. This innovative and dynamic solution to the age old problem of transferring boats between the Forth & Clyde Canal and the Union Canal 35m (115ft) above, underwent an extensive refurbishment in 2016. Here we shall experience first hand this amazing feat of engineering aboard one of a fleet of special boats. Following our ride, we shall have time to find lunch before continuing our journey towards Aberdeen passing the Kelpies, 30-metre high stainless steel horse-head sculptures on our way to our hotel.

**Friday 6 October** After breakfast this morning, we head west to Speyside Cooperage where we shall be accompanied by knowledgeable guides as we tour their exhibition and see the Coopers at work. Following our tour we shall have time to find lunch in their coffee shop before making the short journey to Glenfiddich, one of the oldest family-owned Scotch whisky distilleries. Here we shall enjoy a tour and a "wee dram" before returning to our hotel.

**Saturday 7 October** This morning we make our way to Duff House, a magnificent Georgian mansion designed by William Adam. Standing in extensive parkland, today it houses a beautiful collection of paintings and furniture on loan from National Galleries of Scotland. After exploring the house and

grounds, we shall have time to find a light lunch in the tearoom before the short drive to the neighbouring harbour town of Banff, from which we can appreciate the dramatic coastal views before making our journey southwards to our hotel.

**Sunday 8 October** There are more castles per acre in Aberdeenshire than anywhere else in the UK and today we visit two of the best. Our first visit is to Drum Castle, one of Scotland's oldest tower houses and an excellent example of how a castle evolved through the ages from an original defensive tower into a comfortable country home. From its medieval tower through to the Jacobean mansion and the more recent Victorian additions such as the impressive library converted from the lower hall. The real joy of a visit to Drum Castle is discovering how the work of these three very different eras interact to produce a truly fascinating building. Following our visit, we make the short journey to Crathes Castle, an enchanting and remarkably well-preserved 16th-century tower house surrounded by 240 hectares of formal gardens, woodland walks and rolling Scottish countryside. Here we shall be free to find lunch and explore the castle and gardens.

**Monday 9 October** This morning we commence our homeward journey, making stops along the way and arriving at our overnight hotel late afternoon.

**Tuesday 10 October** Departing after breakfast we continue heading south, making a stop in Banbury for lunch and a look around and arriving back in Oxted early evening.

