



Free Entry Passes for Visiting Scotland

An Outlandish Extra PDF

OutlandishScotland.com

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

Outlandish Scotland Journey

Free Entry Passes for Visiting Scotland

[Updated in June, 2019]

Purchasing a special pass for visiting places in Scotland has the potential of saving you a lot of money in individual entrance fees. If you'll not be visiting enough of the properties included in the pass, however, it could end up costing you more than it's worth.

As with any aspect of planning the best possible Outlandish Scotland Journey, deciding whether or not to buy one of these passes requires a good deal of investigation. This PDF contains tips and directions designed to minimize the amount of time you'll have to spend investigating the passes available.

Plan Parts of Your Holiday *Before* Deciding Whether to Buy a Free Entry Pass

- 1 If you'll be booking a guided Outlander tour, do that FIRST.

[See our Outlander Tours PDF: <http://www.outlandishscotland.com/OutlanderTours.pdf>]

Admission fees for the Outlandish places you'll be taken to are sometimes included in the guided tour fee, so you may not need a Free Entry Pass to visit them.

- 2 After successfully booking a guided tour—or, if you'll *not* be booking one—make a list of the places you plan to visit during your *self*-guided touring days.
- 3 Compare your self-guided Outlandish site list to the properties included in the Free Entry Passes available.

[On the last page of this PDF is a table that lists all of the Outlander-related properties associated with each of the Scottish Free Entry Passes, with individual entry and pass fees.]

- 4 After performing a comparison, you should be able to determine which pass will save you enough money to be worthwhile.
- 5 Create itineraries for your self-guided touring days based on the time-period limitations for the pass you select. If it seems to meet your needs, buy the pass.



Historic Scotland Explorer Pass



National Trust for Scotland Discover Ticket



Scottish Heritage Pass



Royal Edinburgh Ticket

The National Trust for Scotland discontinued their Discover Ticket in 2019.

"We are currently looking at alternative options. Please keep an eye on the website and our social channels for future updates." <http://www.nts.org.uk/Home/>

We have removed the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) Discover Ticket information from this PDF. Happily, all of the *Outlandish* NTS properties are also available on the Scottish Heritage Pass. Because the Discover Ticket may reappear in future, however, we have left its mention in the *Outlandish Scotland Journey* guidebook chapters. If the NTS reinstates the Discover Ticket (or something like it), we'll update this PDF.



Historic Scotland Explorer Pass



Scottish Heritage Pass



Royal Edinburgh Ticket

The Visit Britain Website Offers Three Scottish Free Entry Passes

Visit Britain sells the Explorer Pass and Royal Edinburgh Ticket for the *same price* as the organizations they are associated with. In other words, you can buy those passes direct from those organizations, if you prefer. The Scottish Heritage Pass is *only* available from a few tour providers or Visit Britain.

Within the individual pass highlight sections we provide links to both the Visit Britain **USA** website page and the Visit Britain **World** website page.

Visit Britain's **USA** website lists pass prices in US Dollars. While this may be *seem* handy for US and Canadian Outlanderites, it can be confusing. The entrance prices presented on the websites of places included in the passes are listed in British Pounds, making it difficult to determine savings.

Those who prefer seeing the pass prices in British Pounds (as *we* do) for comparison purposes, should use the links to Visit Britain **World** webpages, which list prices in British Pounds.

Something else you should know:

If you purchase a Free Entry Pass from Visit Britain's website, you'll be receiving an electronic *voucher*—not the **pass** required to gain free entry. According to Visit Britain:

- When you purchase this product, you will receive an eVoucher [PDF] by email.
- Print this voucher [it contains barcodes] and take it to one of the redemption properties ... where it will be exchanged for a pass.

Within each of our Free Entry Pass highlight sections we provide a list of the Outlander-related properties associated with the pass, and indicate where you can exchange your Visit Britain voucher for the pass. Happily, the available redemption properties are convenient to almost any itinerary.

BTW: If you'll be visiting **London** before or after your Outlandish Scotland Journey, Visit Britain also offers **The London Pass**. It includes 60+ central London attractions, as well as 24 hours of enjoying one of London's Hop-on/off-Buses. They also offer a ticket for one of London's Hop-on/off-Bus companies.

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/usa/the-london-sightseeing-pass/>

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/world/the-london-sightseeing-pass/>

<https://www.goldentours.com/london-hop-on-hop-off-open-top-bus>

Please Note:

- * When a property listed within this PDF is preceded by a **red asterisk**, it is a *non-Outlander-related* property—but one that many Outlanderites *will* want to visit.
- * When a property listed within this PDF is preceded by a **green asterisk**, it indicates an Outlandish site that **doesn't charge an entry fee**. Although still listed within the pass' properties, it shouldn't be counted as a potential "savings" when considering a pass purchase—though, that's unlikely to make a big difference to your decision.

**Historic Scotland Explorer Pass**

When it was created in 1991, **Historic Scotland** was an executive agency of the Scottish Government responsible for the conservation and maintenance of a number of the country's historic monuments. In October of 2015, Historic Scotland was dissolved and its functions assumed by a new executive, non-departmental, public body called, **Historic Environment Scotland**.

Happily, all of the old Historic Scotland website links redirect to the new organization's website. And, although Historic Environment Scotland calls their Free Entry Pass simply, the "Explorer Pass," it remains commonly known as the **Historic Scotland Explorer Pass**.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/explorer-passes/>

From Historic Environment Scotland's website:

Free admission to Scotland's top visitor attractions is yours with an Explorer Pass. Buy an Explorer Pass valid for 5 or 14 consecutive days and visit as many of our properties as you wish within that time—for no additional cost.

Multiple sites can be visited on any single day, however, you can visit a specific site only once.

Explorer Pass benefits:

- Free admission to over 70 of Scotland's top visitor attractions (40 in winter).
- Free entry to daytime events.
- Fast Track entry to Edinburgh Castle and Stirling Castle.
- 20% discount on audio tours at Edinburgh Castle (must be rented on site).
- 10% retail discount in many of our shops.

When you buy an Explorer Pass online, you'll receive an email with your pass attached as a PDF. This can be printed and used at any site. You must select the date of your first visit when purchasing a pass online—your pass will become valid from this date.

You can also buy an Explorer Pass in person at the first Historic Environment Scotland property you visit.

Historic Environment Scotland *Outlander*-Related (&★) Properties

Aberdour Castle & Gardens	★Edinburgh Castle
Blackness Castle	★Glasgow Cathedral
★Callanish (Calanais) Stones	Linlithgow Palace
Craigmillar Castle	★Stirling Castle
Doune Castle	★Urquhart Castle

Explorer Pass Prices (2019)	5-day pass	14-day pass
Adult (16-59)	£35	£45
Concession (Senior/60+, Student w/valid ID, Unemployed w/qualifying benefit proof)	£28	£36
Child (5-15) [under 5 free]	£21	£27
Family (2 adults & up to 6 children)	£70	£90

Visit Britain’s Historic Scotland Explorer Pass webpages:

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/usa/historic-scotland-explorer-pass/>
<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/world/historic-scotland-explorer-pass/>

You can redeem your Visit Britain eVoucher and obtain your Explorer pass at *any* of the Historic Environment Scotland properties listed above, except for the Callanish Stones Visitor Centre.



Scottish Heritage Pass (2019)	
Adult (16-59)	£55
Concession (Senior, 60+) & Student (with valid ID)	£45
Child (5-15) [under 5 free]	£35

The Scottish Heritage Pass

The Scottish Heritage Pass was created when **Historic Environment Scotland** joined forces with the **National Trust for Scotland** to create a Free Entry Pass that includes more properties than either of these organizations could offer individually.

Scottish Heritage Passes are *not* sold by Historic Environment Scotland or the National Trust for Scotland. You also cannot purchase them at one of the properties you visit. They are exclusively offered to travel trade businesses, so that those businesses can sell them.

If you book one of Alastair Cunningham’s marvelous **Clans & Castles Outlander Tours**, for instance, purchase a Scottish Heritage Pass from him.

<https://www.clansandcastles.scot/scottish-tailored-holidays/heritage-pass>

If you book some other Outlander Tour, check with the tour company to see if they offer a Scottish Heritage Pass.

Those who won't be booking an Outlander Tour can buy your Scottish Heritage Pass from Visit Britain.

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/usa/scottish-heritage-pass/>
<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/world/scottish-heritage-pass/>

Please Note: This pass is available to purchase year-round, but can only be used to visit heritage sites from April 1st to October 31st.

From Visit Britain's website:

Valid from April to October, the Scottish Heritage Pass is an exceptional value for the money and includes access to Scotland's finest castles, grandest palaces, and most popular stately homes and gardens.

- Free access to more than 120 sites across Scotland.
- Popular attractions include Edinburgh Castle, Stirling Castle, Culzean Castle, Glasgow Cathedral and the Culloden Battlefield.
- Visit just five popular attractions and save over 25% on individual entry prices.
- Pass is valid for 7 consecutive days.
- The pass is activated when you exchange your e-voucher.

When you purchase this product, you will receive an eVoucher by email that is valid for one year unless otherwise stated. Print this voucher and take it to one of the redemption properties where it will be exchanged for a pass.

Please Note: The Scottish Heritage Pass includes both Historic Scotland locations and National Trust for Scotland locations, but **the pass can only be redeemed from an Historic Environment Scotland property**. [Identified in the list below with a ✓.]

Scottish Heritage Pass Outlander-Related (&★) Properties:

Aberdour Castle & Gardens ✓	Falkland Palace & Garden
Blackness Castle ✓	★Glasgow Cathedral
★Castle Fraser, Garden & Estate	★Glencoe & Glencoe Visitor Centre
Craigmillar Castle ✓	Glenfinnan Monument
Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre	Linlithgow Palace ✓
Culross Palace & Garden (★Please see the note below.)	Pollok House
★Glencoe Visitor Centre	Preston Mill & Phantassie Doocot
★Doune Castle ✓	★Stirling Castle ✓ (Pass includes Fast Track entry)
★Edinburgh Castle ✓ (Pass includes Fast Track entry)	★Urquhart Castle ✓

★If you follow our recommendation to begin your Outlandish Scotland Journey by heading north from the Edinburgh airport [saving the city of Edinburgh (Site #39) for later in your holiday], Culross Village is the site most efficiently visited first. If you purchase a Scottish Heritage Pass, however,

you'll have to visit Aberdour Castle first, where you can exchange your voucher for a pass, then head to Culross. Happily, your drive time for the sites listed in *Outlandish Scotland Journey Part One* will be increased by only 15 minutes.

If you've booked a guided Outlander tour that includes Culross Village, no worries! You may not need your Culross Palace & Garden Free Entry Pass there, and can simply exchange your Scottish Heritage Pass voucher at the first Historic Environment Scotland property you visit.



The Royal Edinburgh Ticket

This Free Entry Pass can be purchased from **Edinburgh Tours**:

<https://edinburghtour.com/royal-edinburgh-ticket/>

Or, from **Visit Britain**:

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/usa/royal-edinburgh-ticket/>

<https://www.visitbritainshop.com/world/royal-edinburgh-ticket/>

The Royal Edinburgh Ticket is valid for two days (48 hours) from first use, and includes:

- ✳ Edinburgh Castle—“Scotland’s most popular attraction, with 1,000 years of history and great views of the city.”
- Palace of Holyroodhouse—an *Outlander* Novel Location (Site #46)—“The Queen’s official Scottish residence and a glorious regal palace.”
- Royal Yacht Britannia—“Take a fascinating and intimate [2 hour] tour of the ship, officially owned by the Royal Family.” (A site not at all related to *Outlander*.)
- Fast Track entry to each of the three attractions.
- Two days of unlimited travel on all three of Edinburgh Tours’ Hop-on/off-Bus tours.

The table below demonstrates the Adult entry fees for the individual attractions, a 48-hour pass for all three of Edinburgh Tours’ Hop-on/off-Bus tours, and the Royal Edinburgh Ticket.

Edinburgh Castle	£17.50 online (£19.50 on site)
Palace of Holyroodhouse	£15 online or on site
Royal Yacht Britannia	£16.50 online or on site
48-hour pass for all 3 of Edinburgh Tours’ Hop-on/off-Bus city tours	£24.00
Total Individual Entry & 48-hour Buss Pass Fees:	£73 (£75)
Adult Royal Edinburgh Ticket:	£57.00
Result:	£16 (£18) Savings

But, Wait! Although this ticket looks good at first glance, it may *not* be the bargain it seems.

- If you purchase an Explorer Pass or Scottish Heritage Pass for your holiday—something we *highly* recommend—you’ll already have free Fast Track admission to Edinburgh Castle.
- Holyrood Palace tickets purchased online also provide Fast Track entry.
- Some Outlanderites may not be interested in spending 2 hours visiting the Royal Yacht Britannia—instead devoting their time to the many *Outlander* sites in Edinburgh.
- As you’ll learn when reading the **Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Buses** PDF posted in our **Edinburgh Planning** directory:

Those interested in riding an open-top bus to enjoy spectacular views of Edinburgh City Centre and its architecture (a full-route tour on any of the 3 buses is at least 1 hour) don’t need to purchase more than a 24 hour ticket; £16—choose between the 3 bus routes.

It often is faster to *walk* between Outlandish city centre sites than to ride a Hop-on/off-Bus between them. The buses have frequent stops, and the bus journey may not be as direct as walking.

Hop-on/off-Buses will not take you between the city centre and your Edinburgh lodgings.

You’ll need to use a Lothian bus, or taxi, for those journeys.

<http://outlandishscotland.com/EdinburghHopOnOffBuses.pdf>

Below is the cost comparison for Outlanderites with an Explorer Pass or Scottish Heritage Pass (Edinburgh Castle free fast-track entry) who wish to tour the Palace of Holyroodhouse *and* Royal Yacht Britannia, but are only interested in a 24 hour Hop-on/off-Bus tour.

Palace of Holyroodhouse	£15 online or on site
Royal Yacht Britannia	£16.50 online or on site
24-hour-pass on 1 of Edinburgh Tours’ three Hop-on/off-Bus city tours	£16.00
Total Individual Entry & Buss Pass Fees:	£47.50
Adult Royal Edinburgh Ticket:	£57
Result:	It costs £9.50 <i>more</i> for a Royal Edinburgh Ticket

Outlanderites with an Explorer Pass/Scottish Heritage Pass who are only interested in a 24 hour Hop-on/off-Bus tour, and *don’t* wish to tour the Royal Yacht Britannia, will save £26 by *not* buying the Royal Edinburgh Ticket.

We Recommend the Royal Edinburgh Ticket ONLY for Outlanderites:

- Who won’t be purchasing an Explorer Pass or Scottish Heritage Pass.
- Who *are* interested in spending 2 hours touring the Royal Yacht Britannia.
- Who would enjoy riding *each* of the three open-top Edinburgh Hop-on/off-Buses over two days.

Free Entry Pass Comparison Table

* a non-Outlander property of great interest * a Free Entry property (donations accepted)

Pass Type	Outlander-Related Properties & 2019 Adult Entry Fees	2019 Pass Prices And Extras		
Historic Scotland Explorer Pass	Aberdour Castle & Gardens: £6 Blackness Castle: £6 *Callanish Stones: Free Craigmillar Castle: £6 Doune Castle: £9 *Edinburgh Castle: £17.50 (online) *Glasgow Cathedral: Free Linlithgow Palace: £8 *Stirling Castle: £15 (online) *Urquhart Castle: £12		5-day pass	14-day pass
		Adult	£35	£45
		Senior or Student	£28	£36
		Child	£21	£27
		Family	£70	£90
		Fast Track entry to Edinburgh Castle and Stirling Castle 20% off audio tours 10% discount at many site gift shops		
Scottish Heritage Pass	Aberdour Castle & Gardens: £6 Blackness Castle: £6 *Castle Fraser, Garden & Estate: £12 Craigmillar Castle: £6 Culloden Visitor Centre: £11 Culross Palace & Garden: £10.50 Doune Castle: £9 *Edinburgh Castle: £17.50 (online) Falkland Palace & Garden: £13 *Glasgow Cathedral: Free *Glencoe Visitor Centre (£4 to park) Glenfinnan Monument: £4 Linlithgow Palace: £8 Pollok House: £7.50 Preston Mill & Phantassie Doocot: £6.50 *Stirling Castle: £15 (online) *Urquhart Castle: £12	Valid for 7 consecutive days Adult: £55, Senior: £45, Child: £35 Includes fast-track entry to Edinburgh and Stirling Castles		