

A man in a light blue t-shirt and a red and black plaid kilt is captured in the middle of a caber toss. He is holding a large wooden caber above his head with both hands, his mouth open in a shout. He is wearing red socks with yellow bands and white sneakers. In the background, a crowd of spectators is gathered behind a green rope barrier. A man in a dark blue jacket and a traditional Scottish kilt and sporrans stands nearby. A white tent is visible in the background, and a banner with the letters 'ATHC' is partially visible. The setting is a grassy field with a dense forest of evergreen trees in the background.

Your guide to Scotland's epic Highland games

HISTORY & TRADITION :: POWER & PASSION :: COLOUR & SPECTACLE



Introduction

Scotland's Highland games date back almost a thousand years. Held across the country from May to September, this national tradition is said to stem from the earliest days of the clan system.

Chieftains would select their best fighters and household retainers after summoning their clansmen to a gathering to judge their athleticism, strength and prowess in the martial arts, as well as their talent in music and dancing.

Following the suppression of traditional Highland culture in the wake of the failed Jacobite rebellion under Bonnie Prince Charlie, the games went into decline. It was Queen Victoria and her love for all things Scottish which brought about their revival in the 19th century.

Today the influence of the Highland games reaches far beyond the country of its origin, with games held throughout the world including the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. But

nothing can compare to witnessing the spectacle of a traditional Highland games set against the backdrop of the stunning Scottish scenery.

From the playing fields of small towns and villages to the grounds of magnificent castles, Highland games take place in a huge variety of settings. But whatever their backdrop, you'll discover time-honoured heavy events like the caber toss, hammer throw, shot put and tug o' war, track and field competitions and tartan-clad Highland dancers, all wrapped up in the incredible sound of the marching pipes and drums.

A spectacular celebration of community spirit and Scottish identity, Highland games are a chance to experience the very best in traditional Highland sport, culture and hospitality.

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Fast facts



1

Games and sports have been part of Scottish culture for centuries. Some believe the roots of the Highland games date as far back as the 11th century, when King Malcolm III called a foot race to the summit of Craig Choinnich, near Braemar, in the hopes of finding the fastest runner in the land to become his personal courier.

2

In the modern format we know today, Highland games have been celebrated around Scotland since the 1800s and regularly draw in crowds of thousands. Amongst the most historic is the Braemar Gathering, which was awarded Royal Patronage by Queen Victoria and is still regularly attended by the reigning monarch and other members of the Royal Family.

3

An authentic Highland games combines sport, fun and culture, all with a unique Scottish twist. Heavy contests like the hammer throw see competitors put their muscles to the test, while field events such as the hill race test speed and stamina. Pipers show off their skills in both solo and band competitions, while dancers give dazzling displays of fancy footwork in pieces including the *Sword Dance* and the famous *Highland Fling*.

4

Perhaps the Games' most iconic event, the caber toss is rumoured to have stemmed from the need to toss logs over chasms. Nowadays, however, it is judged on style rather than distance: competitors aim to flip a log weighing up to 11st so that it falls away from them in the '12 o'clock position'. The length it travels is entirely unimportant.

5

World Records are regularly broken at Highland games in Scotland and beyond. This year the attempt for the most cabers tossed at the same time will be made at the Masters World Championships Highland Games in Inverness. 150 athletes will throw the enormous logs in unison to mark the 150th anniversary of the Northern Meeting Park, the oldest Highland games venue in the world.

6

Highland dancing at the Games was originally an all-male event, and it wasn't until the late 19th century that women started to enter. The Cowal Gathering is renowned for the quality of its Highland dancing, drawing in the best performers from around the globe as they compete in the Scottish and World Championships.

7

For many, one of the most memorable sights of the Highland games is the massed bands, when hundreds of pipers from different groups come together to play and march in unison. Make sure you also check out the solo piping competitions, where you can hear some of Scotland's finest pipers tackle the mighty bagpipes.

8

The record for the world's biggest bowl of porridge was set at the Cupar Highland Games in Fife in 2010. The hearty breakfast contained a staggering 690 litres of delicious porridge and could feed up to 2,000 people.

9

Many games organisers soak their cabers in a burn before the event to make them heavier, as they can dry out over time and lose some of their original weight.

10

The heavy events programme has changed a little since the first Highland games – in the late 19th century, one strength competition included twisting the four legs off a cow, the prize for which was a fat sheep!

11

Several games have boasted famous chieftains. Ewan McGregor (*Star Wars*, *Trainspotting*) was named Chieftain of the games of his hometown Crieff's in 2001, and fellow actor Dougray Scott (*Desperate Housewives*, *Mission Impossible: II*) has held the honour at the Markinch Games in Fife.

12

In the early 20th century some Highland events featured as Olympic sports. Baron Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics, was so greatly impressed by a Highland display he saw at the 1889 Paris Exhibition that he introduced the hammer throw, shot put and the tug o' war to the tournament.

13

Haggis hurling began as a practical joke in the 1970s but is now a popular event at many Highland games – there's even a World Haggis Hurling Association dedicated to the sport! The current world record was set at the Milngavie Highland Games in 2011, when Lorne Coltart hurled a haggis an impressive 217 ft.

14

Highland games now take place all around the world. The mostly northerly are held in Finnmark, Norway and the furthest south in Dundedin in New Zealand. The US and Canada hosts hundreds of Highland games, and there's even a Latin American edition of the event in Brazil's Sapucaia do Sul each year.

Uniquely Scottish

Ever wondered if you have roots in a Highland clan? Why the thistle was chosen as the symbol of Scotland? Who St Andrew was? Or what the Stone of Destiny actually is? Then look no further! This handy guide will give you a whistle stop tour of all things uniquely Scottish



Gaelic

Melodic and beautiful, you're sure to be moved by the rich Gaelic language and its evocative music. Once the main language in Scotland, you'll see Gaelic (pronounced *gah-lick*) influences on many Scottish place names, mountain names and bilingual road and rail signs.



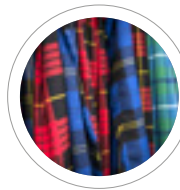
Clans

The history of Scotland's colourful - and often bloody - clan system fascinates anyone with Scottish heritage, but did you know that not everyone in the same clan was actually related to each other? Anyone living on clan land had the right to be counted as part of the clan-chief's followers.



Bagpipes

With deep roots in Scotland's Gaelic culture, the rich sounds and merry notes of Scotland's national instrument are unmistakable and timeless. From buskers on the street to pipe bands, you are likely to hear the joyous sound of the bagpipes before you even see the piper!



Tartan

With its colourful threads in traditional patterns, tartan is Scotland's most famous textile. Originating in the Highlands, tartan's first known mention in Scotland dates from 1538, when clanspeople would use local plants, mosses and berries to dye wool before spinning and weaving it into a fabric.



The Scottish thistle

Alongside tartan, the thistle is perhaps the most identifiable symbols of all things Scottish. Legend has it that the thistle was adopted as the symbol of Scotland after it saved a sleeping party of Scottish warriors from ambush. The story goes that an unsuspecting member of an invading Norse army trod on one with his bare feet and roused the sleeping Scots.



The kilt

The iconic Scottish kilt has evolved over the centuries. From its early origin in the Highlands, the tartan kilt became a fashion statement for Victorian aristocracy before being transformed into the modern and stylish pieces of dress that we see today.



Ceilidhs

Take your partner by the hand and have the time of your life spinning across the floor to some lively ceilidh tunes. This traditional Scottish dance often marks the end of a town's Highland games and is guaranteed to be filled with fun, laughter and toe-tapping music. You're usually talked through the steps before each dance begins, so even beginners can join in. You'll be an expert by the end of the night!



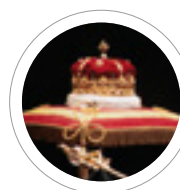
Scotland's patron saint, St Andrew

St Andrew has been the patron saint of Scotland since around the year AD 1000. After his crucifixion in Greece, legend has it that St Andrew's remains were moved to a church on the east coast of Fife, which subsequently became the cathedral of St Andrews. You'll see a likeness to the diagonal X-shaped cross on which St Andrew was martyred on Scotland's national flag, the Saltire.



The Saltire

Believed to be the oldest flag in Europe, Scotland's national flag, known as the Saltire, is recognised the world over by its distinctive azure blue background (Pantone 300 for those with a bit of design knowledge!) and bright white St Andrew's cross.



Scotland's crown jewels

Scotland's priceless crown jewels, known as the Honours of Scotland, were first used together to crown the infant Mary Queen of Scots at Stirling Castle in 1543. You'll see the jewel encrusted crown, elaborate sword and sceptre, together with the Stone of Destiny, on display at Edinburgh Castle.



Haggis

This delicious savoury pudding is one of Scotland's most popular dishes and is served on menus all over the country. Combining meat, oatmeal, salt and spices, if you were surprised to learn that a haggis is a tasty dish and not, in fact, a furry wee animal you'll find at the top of a Scottish mountain, then you have a treat waiting for you! Order this delicious Scottish delicacy next time you see it on a menu and enjoy the savoury flavours.



Whisky

Whisky is Scotland's most famous export and has been lovingly produced throughout the country for hundreds of years. You'll find local distilleries carefully crafting their own unique single malts and whisky blends (often following secret and closely guarded recipes), but a good place to start if you're new to whisky is by learning about the complex and intricate flavours of Scotland's five distinct whisky regions.

Want to find out more? Discover more about Scotland's famous icons, unearth your Scottish roots and plan your perfect day out in Scotland at www.visitscotland.com/uniquelyscottish

Carrick Lowland Gathering

1 JUNE



Victory Park,
Victory Park Road, Girvan,
Ayrshire KA26 9DQ

12:45pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01465 712667



Girvan's Victory Park will be bursting with spectators, sportsmen and women, pipers and Highland dancers during the Lowland Gathering. Set on the Ayrshire coast 56 miles from Glasgow, it will be opened by Elaine Mitchell, the chieftain of the games.

Listen to rousing sounds and see vibrant traditional dress during the pipe band competition throughout the day. You'll be amazed by the displays of Highland dancing, various heavyweight and track and field events. The kids can even join in with the fun-filled mini games, plus there's a range of stalls and fairground rides.

The games also host the Saughill Race which is organised by Girvan Athletics Club. The hill is 960 ft high, and during the race runners will endure a round trip of 2.75 miles – it may be short, but it's also very steep!

Explore more of the Ayrshire coast and discover nearby *Culzean Castle*, set on a dramatic clifftop setting and packed with fascinating items. You'll find delightful coastal walks, with views of the island of Ailsa Craig on the horizon, or inland you can stroll along lush green hillsides on the trails of Carrick Forest.

Markinch Highland Games

1 JUNE



John Dixon Park,
Markinch, Fife KY7 6AQ

10:00am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01592 751667

The first of the Highland games held in Fife, Markinch is a vibrant spectacle of sportsmanship and musical aptitude. Discover a complete range of heavy events and track athletics including running and cycling – the games features the Kingdom of Fife Weight for Distance Championship, plus the 8,000 m Scottish Cycle Championship.

Watch as competitors battle it out for coveted trophies and over £7,500 in prize money while

hearing the rousing sound of traditional Scottish music at the pipe band competition and solo piping and drumming events. With plenty of fairground entertainment and stalls, the Markinch Highland Games offer a fantastic day out for the whole family.

While you're in the area, explore the Fife countryside and take to the paths of the Lomond Hills regional park or head to the quaint coastal villages of *East Neuk*, only a 40 minute's drive.

Cornhill Highland Games

7 JUNE



Cornhill Playing Field,
Cornhill, Banff,
Aberdeenshire AB45 2EH

11.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (children and
senior citizens)

Event website
Tel: 01466 751407



At the Cornhill Highland Games, whatever direction you look in, you'll witness marvellous displays of skill and tradition. See competitors striving to smash previous records during the heavy championship events or watch the steeling grit of sportsmen as they participate in the tug o' war.

Now in its 17th year, this games also hosts track and field events as well as an open Highland dancing competition.

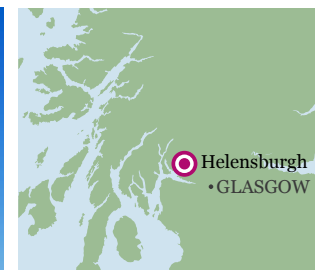
Hear the blast of the pipes during massed pipe bands performances, and wee ones can get involved in the action too during fun races and track and field

events. Bring your trainers if you think you're up to the challenge of the testing 8.5-mile Knock Hill Race or the gentler 3-mile Fernie Road Race. There's also a wide range of stalls which you can browse through, or replenish yourself with some tantalising refreshments before joining in the evening fun at the disco in the marquee.

When in the area, don't miss the *Macduff Marine Aquarium* where you can discover more about the local sealife, or why not plan a trip to one of the many *Speyside distilleries* for a real taste of the region?

Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games

7 JUNE



Helensburgh Rugby Club
Grounds, Rhu Road Higher,
Helensburgh, Argyll G84 8JZ

11.00am

Price
£5 (adults), £3 (concessions),
£2 (children), £12 (family)

Event website
Tel: 01436 675947



Discover a thrilling, testosterone-fuelled spectacle at this traditional Highland games which proudly hosts both the British and Scottish championships for heavyweight and athletic events. Spectators can witness displays of strength and determination during the likes of the caber toss and hammer throw, as well as Scottish wrestling matches.

Sir Malcolm Colquhoun of Luss, Chieftain of Clan Colquhoun, presides over the proceedings which include other classic favourites such as Highland dancing and pipe band marches. Stamina is put to the test during the Hill Run, a gruelling 7.2 km race up and over the summit of Tom na h-Airidh.

Hear the thundering bagpipe rock of Glasgow tribal band 'Clann an-Drumma' as they entertain the crowds. With 40 stalls, there will be some delicious flavours to savour and an abundance of crafts and other items to browse through. Enjoy some

mouth-watering refreshments in the beer tent or tasty chargrilled snacks at the barbecue organised by Helensburgh Rugby Club.

The Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games has enjoyed a hugely successful return to the handsome Victorian holiday resort of Helensburgh after an absence of 56 years. The earlier games were full of fascinating quirks – in 1900, visitors were treated to the sight of a hot air balloon taking off and the descent a parachutist, while in 1903 the games programme featured less traditional activities of tent pegging, lemon cutting, and wrestling on horseback.

Before the games, why not start the day by sampling a local aperitif with a visit to *Auchentoshan Distillery Visitor Centre* or check out the many walking and cycle trails and activities in the *Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park*, only a stone's throw away?

Shotts Highland Games

7 JUNE



Hannah Park, Baton Road,
Shotts, Lanarkshire ML7 4JN

9.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£3 (adults), £2 (child), £2
(concessions)

Event website
Tel: 01501 823560



Things get off to a dramatic start at the Shotts Highland Games with the Chieftain's Parade. Soak up the pomp and ceremony of this pipe band march through this historic town situated midway between Edinburgh and Glasgow to Hannah Park where the games are declared open.

What follows is a gripping spectacle of heavyweight and athletic events, piping and Highland dancing. Marvel at the strength, skill and precision on display as competitors give it their all in the caber toss, hammer, shot put and other traditional Highland sports.

Witness over 40 pipe from around the country battle for supremacy in the West of Scotland Championship and the Open Contest, and watch as

talented Highland dancers of all ages perform the *Highland Fling*, the *Strathspey Reel*, the *Sword Dance* and other intricate dances to the skirl of the pipes.

After a day of fierce competition, incredible music and proud tradition, it's hard to think of a more fitting end to festivities than the unforgettable March Past. The sight of massed pipe bands kitted out in full Highland regalia as they play Salute to the Chieftain is truly breathtaking.

Shotts sits in the heart of Scotland, directly between Scotland's two cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. Head into one of the cities for some culture, or explore the countryside with nearby attractions including several country parks and Almond Valley Heritage Centre.

Strathmore Highland Games

8 JUNE



Glamis Castle, Glamis, Forfar,
Tayside DD8 1RJ

11.00am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01307 840319



Set against the backdrop of *Glamis Castle*, the Strathmore Highland Games offer not just a family-friendly day out of traditional Highland games, but also the chance to explore the stunning home of the Late Queen Mother and the setting of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Take a break out of watching the British Tug O' War Championships and exciting track and field events unfold to enjoy discounted admission to the 600-year-old ancestral home of the Earls of Strathmore and explore its stunning grounds and gardens free of charge.

There will also be other heavy events like the caber toss, and the Highland Dancing

Championship to enjoy, as well as solo and pipe band competitions where you can listen to the haunting drone of the bagpipes reverberate around this grand historic setting.

Not content with being a spectator? You'll be pleased to learn that attendees are more than welcome to take part in the track and field events including running and cycling.

Whether you're after a hand-on Highland games experience, or are happy to simply sit back, relax and soak up the atmosphere, the Strathmore Highland Games offer a day steeped in heritage and spectacle.

Cupar Highland Games

14 JUNE



Duffus Park, Cupar,
Fife KY15 4HY

10.30am – 6.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01592 753439



The Cupar Highland Games is nowhere near as old as its home in the pretty medieval market town and former royal burgh of *Cupar*, but it is certainly one of the best-loved Highland games in Fife.

First held in 1979, the Cupar Highland Games were originally founded as an amateur event which made them something of rarity on the Highland games circuit of the time. Now officially recognised by the Scottish Games Association as an open event, the games still uphold many of the unique traditions that have set them apart from other games throughout the years.

One such tradition is the parade which kicks off proceedings. With the Chieftain leading the way and carrying the games flag aloft, watch the vibrant

procession of games officials past and present as they weave their way through the down from the historic St John's Church, all the while enjoying the sound of marching pipe bands as they fill the air.

Upon arriving at the games field the games are declared open and a day of traditional Highland fun, sport and culture begins, with heavyweight and athletic events, Highland dancing, and bagpiping competitions making up an action-packed programme. There are plenty of opportunities for the kids to get involved with special children's races and even a fancy dress parade!

A spectacular performance by St Andrews Pipe Band and the presentation of the trophies to the day's winners brings the games to a fitting finale.

Aberdeen's Highland Games

15 JUNE



Hazlehead Park, Hazlehead,
Aberdeen AB15 8BD

10.00am – 5.30pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01224 523842



Looking for a unique way to spend Father's Day with your family? Head to the 54th Aberdeen Highland Games this year and make this a day you and the kids won't forget in hurry.

With 20,000 spectators expected to descend upon the city's Hazlehead Park, a sprawling, leafy green space on the outskirts of the Granite City, a lively atmosphere at the games is guaranteed.

Take in the sight of determined athletes competing in awe-inspiring feats of strength and stamina during the traditional heavy events, and cheer on from the sidelines as the Scottish Tug O' War Championships unfold.

And it's not just about the sporting highlights! Don't miss the exhilarating sound of the best bagpipers in town as they compete in the solo and band competitions and enjoy the fast-paced, almost balletic display of performing Highland dancers.

There's also a drum major contest which

will see bands from across the country battle it out for the top prize. If you fancy a slice of the action yourself, *visit the website* to download, complete and submit an entry form.

There will be plenty of keep the younger children occupied too. A whole host of family-friendly activities will be on offer, with 9-hole crazy golf, a zip slide, climbing wall, bungee jump, visiting birds of prey, medieval entertainers, and walk-about balloon modellers all on hand to keep the kids happy.

Whether you attend it with your Dad, kids - or maybe even both - Aberdeen's Highland Games guarantee an unforgettable day out for every generation.

Once the games are over, why not head into the beautiful city of *Aberdeen*? Admire its stunning architecture and museums, take advantage of great shopping or simply relax in one of the many restaurants and cafés in the city centre.

Oldmeldrum Sports & Highland Games

21 JUNE



Oldmeldrum Pleasure Park, Park Lane, Oldmeldrum, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB51 0FZ

10.30am – 1.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £4 (concessions), £2 (children 5-15), FREE (under 5s)

Event website
Tel: 01467 624233



Let the kids run off some steam at the Oldmeldrum Sports & Highland Games, which has a 1 mile fun run open to all children. You can even show them how it's done by taking part in the 5 mile fun run, open to everyone aged 15 and above.

But attending this Highland games isn't just a great day out, it's also a chance to help local charities and community organisations. Every penny raised at the games is given to charity – in honour of the founders, who set up the first event in 1930 to raise money for a cocoa fund for local children.

Over 80 years later, the games are still very popular – and you'll see why once you've experienced the incredible sound and spectacle of massed pipe bands. You won't be able to stop yourself from cheering as the competitors take on the impressive challenges of the Glenfiddich Qualifying Heavy Events Championship, the British Caber Championship and the European Tug O' War Championship.

But the kids can do more than just watch – as well as the fun runs, there are children's races and a funfair amongst the tasty treats and stalls. If you're lucky enough to have a talented dancer in the family, they can take part in the open Highland dancing competition, for a chance to prove their grace and embrace their Scottish roots.

Get your toes tapping and join in the celebrations with the drum major and pipe band display, taking place throughout the afternoon.

Oldmeldrum is a small town, but as well as being home to a charitable Highland games, it boasts one of the oldest whisky distilleries in Scotland and a historic golf club.

Play a round on the historic *Oldmeldrum course* and enjoy the breathtaking views. Relax with a dram of whisky at *Glen Garioch Distillery*, which takes its name from the valley of the same name, known for being a great spot for growing barley.

Lorne Highland Games

22 JUNE



Mossfield Park, Mossfield Avenue, Oban, Argyll PA34 4EL

11.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (under 17s), £16 (family ticket)

Event website
Tel: 01592 753439

Experience the feel of a brand-new Highland games in the beautiful seaside town of *Oban* – the Lorne Highland Games is one of the newest events in Scotland, with 2014 being only its second year.

This games may not offer a colourful history, but it is already one of the most highly anticipated events in Argyll's calendar. It's already known locally as 'the People's Games' as it offers everyone the chance to take part in any of the heavy, track or field events, and the tricky hill race.

On this great day out to Oban, you can take part yourself or just watch competitors battle it out in the caber toss, hammer throw, tug o' war and more. Don't miss the graceful dancers taking part in the Highland Dancing Competition or the

magic of the music from the Pipe Band Display.

Get behind your favourite team in the rugby or shinty matches, admire the pedigrees in the Dog Show, or embrace your creative side in the craft tent. Work up an appetite before trying out the great local produce on offer, and relax with a refreshing drink or afternoon tea.

Don't forget while you are here, that Oban is both the "Gateway to the Isles" and the "Seafood Capital of Scotland". So if you've got a day or five to spare, take the ferry across to *Mull*, *Coll* and *Tiree*, or down to *Colonsay*, *Islay* and *Jura*. This is a great part of Scotland to try out the country's fresh seafood, so pop into one of the coastal restaurants to get a taste.

Ceres Highland Games

28 JUNE



The Bow Butts,
St Andrews Road, Ceres, Cupar,
Fife KY15 5QN

12.00pm – 5.30pm

Price
FREE

Event website
Tel: 01592 781467



The Ceres Highland Games celebrate their 700th anniversary this year making them the oldest free games in Scotland. It is said that the original charter to hold the games was bestowed to the people of *Ceres* by Robert the Bruce in 1314 as a reward for their unwavering support at the *Battle of Bannockburn* that same year.

Bow Butts, the village green where the games are staged every year, earned its unusual name from the time when the men of the Ceres were instructed in archery by Sir Robert Keith, Great Marischal of Scotland, in preparation for the battle.

As always, the games offer a spectacular showcase of the very best in Highland culture and showmanship. Alongside the usual heavy events there will be piping, Highland dancing, wrestling, cycling and running. Visitors can grab a bite to eat at the refreshment tent or the famous Games Burger Barbeque. There will also be plenty of stalls to browse as well as old-fashioned funfair entertainment.

Drumtochty Highland Games

28 JUNE



Drumtochty Glen, Auchenblae,
Laurencekirk, Kincardineshire
AB30 1TP

11.00am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01561 320169

Drumtochty boasts one of the most spectacular settings of any Highland games, being held in the grounds of the magnificent Drumtochty Castle. Imagine you're lord of the manor as you roam the gorgeous gardens, enjoying a warm welcome from friendly locals and taking in the fantastic spectacle of the games.

Watch athletes battle it out in heavy, light events and the tug o' war, or catch marvellous displays of Highland dancing and piping from both adults and kids. The exciting programme is jam-packed, but make sure you find time to browse the great craft and refreshment stalls!

Keen runners should remember their trainers, as the programme also includes a wide selection of races. Don your best tartan and take part in the Auld Scottish Kilted Race, enter the Single Ladies' race or challenge yourself to the traditional Hill Race.

As well as a great day out, a trip to the Drumtochty Games is a fantastic opportunity to explore this beautiful part of Aberdeenshire. Visit the *Grassie Gibbon Centre*, dedicated to the *Sunset Song* author, in nearby Arbutnott, or head to the coast to see the region's rich wildlife at the *St Cyrus National Natural Reserve*.

Kenmore Highland Games

2 JULY



Kenmore Sports Field,
Kenmore, Aberfeldy, Perthshire
PH15 2HQ

5.30pm

Price
£5 (adults), FREE (children)

Event website
Tel: 01887 830281



Known locally as the 'Friendly Evening Games', this event has the unique distinction of not getting started until 5.30pm. An annual highlight for the small but vibrant community nestled on the northern banks of the serene *Loch Tay*.

Watch as the games open with an impressive performance by the precociously talented Vale of Atholl Junior Pipe Band before settling down to an evening of gripping, first-class competition in the traditional heavy events. Look out for the 16 lb shot put, the 16 lb and 28 lb hammer throw, caber toss, sheaf toss, 56 lb over the bar, and tug o' war.

Admire the technical expertise of veteran Highland dancers as they perform alongside young novices, and hear the incredible sound of pipers giving it their all in the piping competition, many of whom you can expect to see at other competitions held across Scotland this year.

Alongside all these fantastic events, there's also the chance to witness a heavy event that is entirely unique to *Kenmore*. Throwing the Tirinie stone, a 101lb nearly spherical rock that was originally unearthed on a local farm. Watch with bated breath as this year's participants in the heavy events do their best to hurl it past the current record of 14 ft.

Why not join in the actions yourself? Take part in foot races open to everyone from children as young as five before rising to the challenge of the adult-only 100, 400 and 800 metre races and final open hill race.

While you're in this picturesque area, why not step back in time some 2,500 years with a visit to the fascinating *Scottish Crannog Centre*. The beautifully reconstructed thatched wooden building overlooks Loch Tay and gives a glimpse of how our ancestors used to live.

Luss (Loch Lomond) Highland Gathering

5 JULY



Luss Games Field, Luss,
Loch Lomond, Argyll and Bute
G83 8NZ

10.45am – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01389 762854

First held in 1875, the Luss Highland Gathering has embodied the village's strong community spirit for more almost 140 years now. It's also the location of the annual Clan Colquhoun Gathering, an international event that sees visitors from around the world unite to celebrate their shared heritage.

Sadly, old traditions like sock knitting and shepherd's crook-making have slipped from the events programme over the years, but otherwise the Gathering has remained more or less unchanged. See the festivities kick off with the a march by the Clan Colquhoun Pipe Band before leading into a full programme of caber tossing, hammer throwing, Highland dancing, piping and athletics.

If your surname is Laing, King or Cowan, you can find out more about your *family history* or even meet some (very) distant relatives at the Clan Colquhoun Gathering. The clan covers more than 25 surnames in total, drawing hundreds of clansmen to Loch Lomond - particularly relevant in 2014, *Scotland's Year of Homecoming*.

Set on the banks of Loch Lomond, *Luss* is an ideal setting for a traditional Highland games. Check out the local visitor centre for the *Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park*, or head to nearby Rosdhu House (former home of the Colquhoun Chiefs) for a round of golf at the *Loch Lomond Golf Club* on their fantastic championship course.

Thornton Highland Gathering

5 JULY



Memorial Park, Main Street,
Thornton, Kirkcaldy, Fife
KY1 4AF

11.00am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01592 775069



Dating back to 1851, the Thornton Highland Gathering is a grand old age this year, celebrating its 161st birthday. Held in the tiny Fife village of its namesake which lies nestled between *Kirkcaldy* and *Glenrothes*, this year's programme is set to be as colourful, exciting and firmly traditional as ever.

Promising a fantastic mix of heavyweight and track and field events, Highland dancing and piping competitions, the gathering begins with a rousing, customary pipe band march along the Main Street of Thornton to Memorial Park. What follows is a packed day of edge-of-the seat competitive action as sportsmen and women pit their athleticism, strength and stamina against each other in foot and cycle races spanning a wide range of length and age categories starting from as young as 10.

Standout events include the fiercely contested tug o' war and the 'De'il Tak the Hindmost', roughly translated from Old Scots to the expression 'Every Man for Himself'. It's a gruelling cycle race which draws cyclists from around the local area and across Fife.

And don't miss the pipe band and solo piping competitions and drum majors contest where you can admire the unmistakable sound and skilled musicianship of this iconic Scottish instrument. Throw plenty of funfairground entertainment, stalls by local vendors, and mouth-watering food and drink into the mix, and you have a superb day out that the whole family will enjoy.

A short drive from Thornton lies *Loch Leven Castle* which is well worth a visit. It was where *Mary Queen of Scots* was imprisoned in 1567 and will fascinate all the family with its dramatic history.

Alva Highland Games

12 JULY



Johnstone Park, West Stirling
Street, Alva, Clackmannanshire
FK12 5BS

12.30pm

Price
£6 (adults), £4 (children, senior
citizens), FREE (children)

Event website
Tel: 01786 813523

Dubbed the 'Famous Alva Games', *Clackmannanshire's* oldest Highland games have been a summer highlight for over 150 years. Even the location, Johnstone Park, boasts a long sporting history: it was gifted to the town's residents by a James Johnstone 'for the holding of their annual gymnastic games' back in 1856.

Come along and watch the full range of heavyweight events, Highland dancing, athletics and cycling. Cheer on runners as they tackle a range of short and long distance field events, including the British Championship Hill Race. One of four age-restricted hill races taking place at Alva, it'll see athletes take on a literally breathtaking circuit over Torry, covering 2.5km and a mighty ascent of a 385m.

Visiting from abroad? Do your country proud in one of two races especially for overseas visitors, or join in one a number of fun races with locals and Scots. Otherwise, just relax and enjoy a traditional funfair, refreshments, trade stalls and the unforgettable spectacle of a traditional Highland games.

Alongside its 'Famous Games', Alva is known for the award-winning small-batch beers made at *Harviestoun Brewery*. Pop into a local pub for a taste of the intense *Schiehallion*, the smooth *Old Engine Oil* or the zesty *Bitter & Twisted*, former Supreme Champion Beer of Britain.

Braemar Junior Highland Games

12 JULY



Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, Broombank Terrace, Braemar, Ballater AB35 5YX

1.50pm – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01339 741903



It's hard to believe that the *Braemar* Junior Highland Games celebrates its ninth birthday this year! A chance for children from the ages of 5 to 18 to take part in traditional Highland sports normally reserved for the adults, this unique event is the perfect way to get kids excited about the Highland games.

Ever wondered if your offspring are destined to grow up to become the star athletes of tomorrow's games? As well as being fantastic fun, this is the ideal opportunity to find out!

Head down to Braemar Games Field for an educational and entertaining day out surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of the Grampian Mountains and lush woodlands. Boasting a welcoming and informal atmosphere, children will be able to try their hands at a variety of games including the caber toss, hammer throw and tug o' war with fully qualified, friendly instructors on-hand to help.

Kicking off with a march by the Ballater Pipe Band, kids will have no trouble pretending they're taking part in the official Braemar Games complete with Highland dancing, solo piping and drumming competitions.

They can also choose from a great range of track and field event. One highlight is the Mike Grant Memorial Races which include a 2 km cross-country race for 3 to 8 year olds, and a 3 km cross-country race for 13 to 17 year olds.

Young competitors can then take a well-earned rest and watch as their parents and other grown up attendees are put through their paces at the Creag Choinnich Challenge, a three mile dash from the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park up and back down the summit of Creag Choinnich.

Bigger and better than ever before, children everywhere will relish the chance to take part in their very own Highland games.

Loch Lomond Highland Games

19 JULY



Moss o' Balloch Park, Balloch Road, Balloch, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire G83 8LE

9.30am – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01389 757616

There are few places that can compete with the scenic splendour of *Loch Lomond* on a summer's day, but this beautiful setting is just one of the many reasons why competitors and spectators are drawn to the Loch Lomond Highland Games year after year.

Staged in the charming village of *Balloch* at the southern end of the 'bonnie banks' of this tranquil stretch of water, the Loch Lomond Highland Games is not just one of the most picturesque games held in Scotland, but also the proud host of the only Scottish Highland games triathlon.

This gruelling test of endurance starts with a swim in the icy waters of Loch Lomond, followed by a challenging cycle over rugged woodland terrain and a run through the lovely grounds of Balloch Castle, before finishing with loop around Moss o' Balloch Park in front of cheering crowds.

Established in 1967, the games see athletes from around the UK and even as far afield as Australia and

New Zealand descend upon Balloch to take part in the prestigious Scottish Highland Games Association World Heavyweight Championship which features the traditional events of the caber toss, hammer throw, ball and weight, and weight over the bar.

Expect to see plenty of running and cycle races such as the 80m Scottish Sprint Championship, a tug o' war, and various wrestling contests, including the intensely adversarial Scottish Backhold Cumberland Style Championships.

Savour the stirring sounds of bagpipes at the solo piping competitions and marvel at the advanced musicianship on display in the Piobaireachd contest.

Culminating with a parade of massed pipe bands through the villages, the Loch Lomond Highland Games with its stunning natural backdrop and world-class competition is nothing less than impressive.

Lochcarron Highland Games

19 JULY



Attadale Estate, Strathcarron,
Ross-shire IV54 8YX

12.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (senior citizens),
£2 (children)

Event website
Tel: 01520 722603



There are few events in Scotland that are set in such spectacular surroundings as the Lochcarron Highland Games. Not only that, with 2014 being the *Year of Homecoming*, the games will see over 100 members of Clan Matheson in attendance as part of the International Clan Matheson Gathering.

Known locally as the 'The Friendly Games', they are now in their 35th year, taking place at the beautiful Attadale Estate in Wester Ross in the north western Highlands. With traditional heavy events and even a haggis hurl, the whole family will enjoy this day out.

Watch competitors slog it out in a traditional mix of heavy and track and field events alongside the energetic Highland dancing and lung-busting piping displays.

Heavy events will include the open shot, hammer throw, caber toss, tug o' war and famous Hill Race, while the track and field events will

feature running, the high jump and a relay. There will also be five-a-side football and a number of children's and novelty events including the haggis hurl giving everyone, regardless of age or athletic ability, the chance to take part. You have to throw it as far as you can but here's the rub; it has to be edible after it hits the floor.

This year will also see the return of the award-winning Ullapool and District Junior Pipe Band as well as the Lochcarron Highland Dancers.

While you're in the region, take full advantage of the stunning Highland setting and discover the many trails and hikes through the one of the UK's last wildernesses. The nearby *Isle of Skye* is a beautiful spot to explore as well; visit the island's own whisky distillery, *Talisker*, which looks out on a tranquil sea loch, and take in the colourfully-painted town houses of Portree.

Tomintoul Highland Games

19 JULY



Public Park, Tomintoul,
Tomintoul, Ballindalloch,
Banffshire AB37 9EX

11.00am – 5.30pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (seniors children
up to 14), £1 (car parking)

Event website
Tel: 01807 580407



Steeped in history, the Tomintoul Highland Games are by far one of the oldest games in Scotland, celebrating its 173rd anniversary this year. Nestled high on the northern slopes of the Cairngorm Mountains, the village is said to be the highest in Scotland; maybe that's the reason why its Highland games here remain one of the most traditional you'll find in the country, with all the hallmarks of a thoroughly enjoyable games; from colourful Highland dances, sweat-inducing heavy events, equally inspiring light field events, and solo piping.

Open to participants of all ages and athletic capabilities, the games have always been a showcase of time-honoured Scottish tradition and community spirit. If you're planning on taking part, don't forget to pack your Herculean strength to compete in some of the more demanding heavier sports like the

hammer throw, shot put and caber toss.

Alongside the formal competitions, there are also a number of more light-hearted events which include flat races, sack races, a pillow fight, barrel race, fancy dress race, and tilt the barrel – perfect activities for children and children at heart.

While you're visiting *Tomintoul*, it would be a shame not to soak up the atmosphere of the glorious Highland scenery. The cable car to the top of *Cairn Gorm* is a definite highlight, where you can eat at the *Ptarmigan restaurant* on the summit or take a stroll. Tomintoul is also a stone's throw away from Speyside, Scotland's most prolific whisky-producing region, where you can sneak behind the doors of dozens of wonderful *distilleries* and sample Scotland's national drink.

City of Inverness Highland Games and Gathering

19 JULY



Northern Meeting Park,
Ardross Street, Inverness
IV3 5NN

10.30am – 5.00pm

Price
£8 (adults), £4 (seniors, chil-
dren 5-17), FREE (under 5s)

Event website
Tel: 01463 785006



The *Inverness* Highland Games and Gathering are not just one of the most spectacular events of their kind staged in Scotland, they take place in the world's first purpose-built Highland games stadium.

Following their revival in 1822, the games experienced a surge in popularity during the Victorian era, a time during which Highland culture became highly fashionable. To accommodate the thousands of spectators that would arrive at every gathering, a stadium christened the Northern Meeting Park in 1864.

Today the gathering boasts everything from the traditional heavyweight events and Highland dancing to solo piping, track and field events, backhold wrestling and a number of unique events.

Commencing with the Chieftain's Welcoming and Opening Ceremony set to the stirring march of The Inverness Gathering, this year will see a

mass *Highland Fling* and the perennial events of the Inverness Stone and Stonemason's Stone.

The gathering really does offer something for every participant regardless of age or gender. There are both male and female categories in the heavy events of the Scots hammer, weight for distance, Inverness Stone, weight over the bar, and caber toss, while younger competitors can take part in the junior athletics competitions. Even those who have barely begun to walk can get involved in the Mascot Madness Toddlers' Races, while the more mature among you can compete in the senior track and field events.

A proud and vibrant celebration of the very best in traditional Scottish culture, the sheer scale and spectacle of the Inverness Highland Games and Gathering will take your breath away.

Kinlochard Mini Highland Games and Commonwealth Games

20 JULY



Kinlochard Village Hall and Field,
Kinlochard, Stirling FK8 3TL

11.45am – 5.00pm

Price
FREE

Event website
Tel: 01877 387264



Experience a unique day of Highland games in a thriving village community set at the head of Loch Ard in the beautiful *Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park*.

This year's programme is nothing if not eclectic, packed with a whole host of themed events and activities. Don't miss this remarkable celebration of culture and history, which will also embrace the 700th anniversary of the *Battle of Bannockburn* and the *Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games*.

Alongside traditional heavy events, Highland dancing and a pipe band parade from Forest Hills, there will be an appearance from Robert the Bruce himself, costumed beggars plying their crafts, medieval games, and even a knight school where you can learn how to joust and other chivalric arts.

Join Kinlochard as it gets into the spirit of the Commonwealth Games with its own events and colourful Grand Opening Ceremony, the

proceeds of which are in aid of Kinlochard Village Hall. Take part in a giant sack race, and dance the evening away at the family ceilidh. There will also be demonstrations by search and rescue dogs, both adult and junior tug o' wars, a duck race and plenty of fun water-based activities on the loch.

Treat yourself to the scrumptious home baking on offer and enjoy other refreshment at the barbeque, licensed bar and tea and coffee stands. With free entry and nearby parking, plus transport available via shuttle bus from *Aberfoyle*, attending this fantastic event couldn't be easier.

The Kinlochard games is set amidst some incredible natural beauty. Why not extend your stay and explore the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park on foot or on two wheels, or head to nearby *Loch Katrine* when you can enjoy a classic paddle steamer cruise and take in some breathtaking scenery?

Rosneath Peninsula Highland Gathering 20 JULY



Howie Memorial Park, Rosneath,
Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire
G84 0RS

9.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£5 (adults), £2 (children), £3
(concessions), £10 (family with
2 adults and 2 children)

Event website
Tel: 01436 831320



Be part of the Rosneath Peninsula Highland Games in what is set to be one of the most memorable games in many years. Staged in Howie Memorial Park on the shores of Gareloch, near *Helensburgh*, this event will take place just three days before Glasgow welcomes the arrival of the *Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games*. The atmosphere is sure to be electric!

There's probably no better way to get into the spirit of Commonwealth Games than with a day of our traditional Highland games. The Rosneath Games have a distinctly international flavour, with competitors from both Scotland and across the world battling it out, not just in the traditional heavy events, but also track and field events, Highland dancing and solo piping. With top quality competition and infectious enthusiasm guaranteed from everyone involved, the Rosneath Peninsula Highland Games are a standout event in an action-packed summer for the region.

There will also be the chance to witness the

St Modan's Stone Test of Manhood, a gripping event unique to the Rosneath Games. Introduced to the games in 1988 by local wildlife enthusiast Dave Kinsman, the event takes place on what is believed to be the site of the fabled St Modan's Well where Kinsman uncovered an ancient granite stone. At every games since then, the stone has served as a test of manhood – and womanhood – as local youths over the age of 16 challenge one another to lift the stone aloft to chest height and hold it there the longest. Whoever succeeds has successfully made the transition from child to adulthood and take home the prize.

Plan some time to explore Helensburgh and the surrounding area. Design fans will not want to miss out on a visit to *Hill House*, the Charles Rennie Mackintosh-designed dwelling that is deemed to be one of his finest creations. Or why not head to the nearby *Loch Lomond* and enjoy a leisurely cruise on one of Scotland's most famous lochs?

Stonehaven Highland Games 20 JULY



Mackie Academy, Slug Road,
Stonehaven, Kincardineshire
AB39 3DF

1.00pm

Price
£8 (adults), £4 (concessions),
£10.00 (family - 2 adults and 2
children)

Event website
Tel: 01569 762071

Located south of Aberdeen, the pretty harbour town of Stonehaven is famed throughout the world for its spectacular *Fireball Ceremony*, but this July will see it stage another must-see event, the Stonehaven Highland Games.

Returning with a bang after a two-year absence, the Stonehaven Highland Games now offers two whole days of traditional Scottish sport and culture. Make your way to its brand new venue at the playing fields of Mackie Academy and soak up the sights and sounds of this colourful extravaganza.

Boasting a full range of traditional heavyweight events, including the caber toss, hammer throw, and tug o' war, Highland dancing and solo piping, this year will also see two exciting

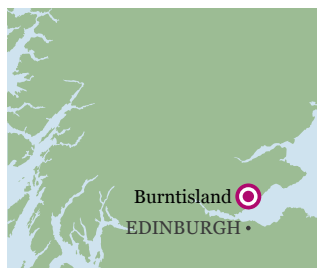
additions: a mini Highland games featuring an inter-schools competition and a pipe band.

Watch talented youngsters take part in 400 and 800 m races, the long and high jump, as well as their very own caber toss and tug o' war, and experience the incredible sound of an open-air pipe band performance.

Discover the other charms of *Stonehaven* while here, such as its Tolbooth Museum on the quayside, or take a boat trip out to see the legions of cliff-dwelling birds that inhabit *Fowlsheugh RSPB Reserve*. Travel just two miles south, and you can even take in the dramatic view of the ruined *Dunnottar Castle*.

Burntisland Highland Games

21 JULY



Burntisland Links,
Kinghorn Road, Burntisland,
Fife KY3 9JW

1.00pm – 5.00pm

Price
£7 (adults), £4 (children and
concessions)

Tel: 01592 873090



Nothing gets a Highland games off to a rousing start like a procession showcasing some of our greatest traditions, and the Burntisland Highland Games doesn't fail to deliver. The official opening ceremony starts with a spectacular parade along the High Street featuring Burntisland Pipe Band.

Now over 350 years old, the Burntisland Highland Games is the second oldest Highland games in the world and attracts competitors from all over Scotland and abroad. It's packed with a complete range of traditional heavy events including the caber toss, hammer throw, tug o' war, as well as track and field events and cycling, making it a visual feast of sport that spectators will love.

There will also be solo piping and Highland dancing and, as ever, the famous Binn Race, a 2.25 mile fun race that follows a course through the town and up and along the Binn, an extinct volcano, before finishing with a lap around the arena. Offering traditional funfair entertainment and over 100 stalls selling delicious local produce, these proudly upheld traditional games are brilliant a day out for everyone, young and old.

When visiting, take some time to have a stroll on the town's beach. You could even plan a trip to nearby *Dunfermline*, Scotland's historic capital, and visit the enchanting palace and abbey, which dates back to the 11th century.

Inveraray Highland Games

22 JULY



Inveraray Castle, Cherrypark,
Inveraray, Argyll PA32 8XE

10:45am

Price
£8 (adults), £5 (seniors),
£3 (children), £18 (family ticket)

Event website
Tel: 01499 302203

The Inveraray Highland Games owes its inception to Mary Queen of Scots. When visiting her half-sister, the Countess of Argyll, in 1563, the young men of the district were called upon to entertain her with their athletic prowess.

At today's games challengers compete in many of the same tests of strength and endurance tackled by contestants of the original games. These include heavy events such as the Caber World Championship, hammer throw, weight throw, weight over the bar, and stone put.

You'll also see backhold wrestling, track and field events including running, cycling and the high and low jump, as well as plenty of junior events for children aged between 11 and 15.

Listen to crowd-pleasing favourites as pipers compete in the Open Competition for the Great Highland Bagpipe, and see talented participants of all ages give it their all as they perform traditional Highland dances, including the *Highland Fling*, the *Sword Dance* and *Seann Triubhas*.

Located in stunning Argyll, *Inveraray* is beautiful town overlooking the tranquil waters of Loch Fyne. As well as the historic Highland games at Winterton Park, neo-gothic *Inveraray Castle* is also well worth visiting, as is the neoclassical church and *Inveraray Jail and Courthouse*.

South Uist Games & Piping Society Highland Games

23 JULY



Askernish machair,
Lochboisdale, Isle of South Uist
HS8 5TH

10.00am – 6.00pm

Price
£5 (adults), £1 (children)



Soak in the raw beauty of the Askernish machair as you watch stunning displays of Highland dancing and piping at the South Uist Games & Piping Society Highland Games.

For one day only in July, this tranquil stretch of *South Uist* countryside becomes an arena of power and endurance as contestants compete in a variety of heavy and lightweight events, alongside track and field competitions.

Browse colourful stalls, cheer on competitors in thrilling events such as wrestling and watch the power and spectacle of a real Scottish tug o' war.

You'll be hard pressed to find a Highland games with an island setting as spectacular as South Uist's. *Askernish* is ideal for *birdwatching*, with everything from hen harriers to short-eared owls, and is home to the historic *Askernish Golf Club*, designed by the legendary Old Tom Morris.

Mull Highland Games

24 JULY



Erray Park, Erray Road,
Tobermory, Isle of Mull
PA75 6PT

10.30am – 5.30pm

Price
£6 (adult), £4 (children and
OAPs), £18 (family ticket)

Event website
Tel: 01688 302001

Set against a picture-postcard backdrop that wonderfully contrasts with the drama unfolding on the games field, the Mull Highland Games offer a Highland games experience quite unlike any other.

Head to Erray Park in *Tobermory*, the charming village famed for its cheerfully coloured harbour-front buildings, recognisable to children from its appearance in the much-loved television series of Balamory.

A perfect site that overlooks the glimmering Sound of Mull and the peninsulas of Movern and Ardnamurchan, the stage is set for a gladiatorial clash between traditionally kilted strongmen as they toss the caber, throw the hammer and join forces in the struggle to emerge victorious in the tug o' war.

While simply watching the athletes compete in the various track and field events is an invigorating

experience in itself, locals and visiting spectators will be given the chance to work up a sweat themselves but taking part in the customary hill race.

Pipe bands will be there to entertain the crowds in the piping competitions alongside talented Scottish country dancers with their spirited yet graceful Highland dancing.

Enchanted by the scenic beauty showcased by the games? Take the time to explore more of *Mull* from its unspoilt 300 mile-long coastline with its pristine beaches and secluded bays and abundant marine and birdlife. Scale the heights of Ben More and take in sweeping panoramic views of the island and beyond, or take a boat ride out to neighbouring *Staffa* to see the waves crashing into the cathedral-like Fingal's Cave.

Durness Highland Gathering

25 JULY



Shore Park, Durness, Lairg,
Sutherland IV27 4PN

12.00pm – 6.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (under 16s and
seniors) £1 (parking),
subject to change

Event website
Tel: 01971 511338



Despite being one of the smaller Highland games taking place in Scotland, the Durness Highland Gathering boasts a setting that can only be described as epic.

The most north westerly point on the British mainland, *Durness* is blessed with dramatic backdrop of craggy, turquoise waters and windswept cliff-tops which never fails to attract visitors to its gathering.

Revived in 1970 after an absence of 10 years, the gathering has been held annually in Shore Park ever since then and is regularly attended by large and lively crowds made up of locals and those outside the *Sutherland* area. Watch the exhilarating spectacle of the heavyweight competitions and get caught up in the excitement and drama of the

track and field events. Watch as dancers of all ages take to the stage to give exuberant Highland dance performance, and listen as the air fills with sound of bagpipes during the piping contests.

Whether you're a competitor or are happy to simply mingle with the other spectators and watch day unfold from the sidelines, the Durness Highland Gathering is an ideal way to spend the day in this beautiful part of the Scottish Highlands.

A *hiker and walker's paradise*, why not take the time to explore the surrounding area on foot? Enjoy a leisurely stroll along the stunning Balnakiel Beach, or pay a visit to the atmospheric *Smoo Cave*, an immense natural cavern found in a sheer limestone cliff nearby.

Airth Highland Games

26 JULY



The Wilderness, Airth,
Falkirk FK2 8LN

9.00am – 6.00pm

Price
£5 (adults), £2.50 (under 16s)

Event website
Tel: 07837 421 578

Experience one of Scotland's oldest and most traditional Highland games. Although the current games were founded in 1871, the original games are said to predate this and may in fact stem from the games and sports played by James IV's rebel soldiers in 1488 while they were encamped at *Airth* en route to the Battle of Sauchieburn.

Cheer on competitors from the sidelines as heavy athletes and track competitors put their stamina and strength to the test to secure coveted titles and enjoy a bite to eat with fresh local produce available as you watch the colourful displays of Highland dancing and piping competitions.

You could even get involved yourself. Enter on the day to join in on the Smiddy Stone Challenge or the fast-paced tug o' war.

Children will be thrilled by the fairground and you'll find plenty to enjoy in the craft and refreshment tents, where you can sample local produce and shop for vibrant Scottish artwork.

As well as being home to one of Scotland's oldest Highland games, Airth is a pretty conservation village with much to see and do. Admire the town's 17 ft high Mercat Cross or visit nearby Dunmore Park which is home to the famous *Dunmore Pineapple*, a picturesque garden retreat topped with a towering stone pineapple.

Balquhiddier, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Highland Games

26 JULY



Games Field, Lochearnhead,
Perthshire FK19 8PT

12.00pm – 8.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £4 (children, senior
citizens)

Event website
Tel: 07860 644709



This July, experience three Highland games all rolled up into one in the beautiful setting of *Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park*!

Perched at the western edge of the tranquil Loch Earn, the sleepy village of Lochearnhead is transformed into a hub of activity with the arrival of its Highland games which also happen to include those of its neighbours, Balquhiddier and Strathyre. The games boast a myriad of connections to famous clans, most notably the Camerons, and are a wonderful opportunity to meet others who share the same Scottish roots.

The traditional heavyweight events, which include both local and open competitions for the hammer throw, caber toss, shot put, weight over the bar, and tug o' war, are always a thrilling spectacle. The games still hold records for Olympic athletes including Geoff Capes to name just one. But without a doubt, the crowning event of the games has to be

the British Heavyweight Championships which has been hosted by all three villages for many years. Watch from the sidelines to see who will come out top in the ball, hammer and caber events to win the coveted Ewen Cameron Cup.

The games will also see world champions compete in the Highland dancing and piping competitions throughout the afternoon, with the winner of the Piobaireachd competition awarded the Drum a' Charraich Quaich, one of the most prestigious trophies in competitive piping. Track and field events including a gruelling hill race also feature alongside more light hearted events for children and those young at heart to participate in.

Boasting one of the most picturesque settings imaginable, world-class sportsmanship and a rich heritage kept alive very much alive by proud communities, the Balquhiddier, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Highland Games are not to be missed.

Dufftown Highland Games

26 JULY



Mortlach School, York Street,
Dufftown, Keith, Banffshire
AB55 4AU

11.00am – 6.45pm

Price
£6 (adults), £3 (children, senior
citizens)

Event website
Tel: 01340 820471



Held in the *Malt Whisky Capital* of Scotland, the Dufftown Highland Games is a games with a difference, combining traditional Highland sports with a whisky raffle and even the appearance of a vintage 1937 Leyland bus.

As well as watching a full programme of heavy and light events, massed pipe bands and Highland dancing, make sure to buy some tickets for the whisky raffle to be in with the chance of taking a bottle home yourself.

Watch the exciting action unfold from the sidelines or take part in the events yourself. Highlights include the tug o' war, a gruelling

22.4 km hill race up and over the five peaks of Ben Rinnes, and the drum major competition.

Browse the displays of a wide range of stalls and grab a bite to eat at the refreshment tent before enjoying some Highland dancing and massed pipe bands.

As well as holding one of the most diverse Highland games, *Dufftown* is the central point on the whisky trail around the glens of Speyside. Visit *Glenfiddich Distillery* to learn more about how the 'water of life' is crafted or head to the *Keith & Dufftown Railway Association* for a scenic railway journey through Moray.

Halkirk Highland Games

26 JULY



Halkirk Recreation Park, Halkirk,
Caithness KW12 6YT

10.00am – 10.30pm

Price
£7 (adults), £3 (children)

Event website
Tel: 01955 606206



The Halkirk Highland Games have come a long way from their humble beginnings in 1886 when they were first staged in a small field by the then new Gerston Distillery. Now one of the most popular sporting events in the Highlands, they regularly attract around 5,000 spectators to this tiny village situated on the banks of the River Thurso and boast the biggest prize purse in Scotland!

Watch as kilted strongmen from as far afield as the USA, many of them national and world champions, lock horns as they attempt to secure the coveted titles in the heavyweight competitions for the hammer throw, shot put, and weight throw for both height and distance. Alongside these enthralling sporting spectacles visitors can also enjoy and eight-man tug o' war, performances by nimble footed Highland dancers, talented pipes,

running, cycling and clay pigeon shooting.

The games also host the annual gathering of clans Gunn and Sinclair making the event a fantastic opportunity to discover more their family connections to the *Caithness* area. If this is your first Highland games, commentary provided for the duration of the games makes it easy to following the action unfolding on the games field. Families are also superbly catered for with plenty of good old-fashioned funfair games. Be sure to the browse stalls selling all kinds of local crafts and produce, and catch a bite to eat at the food and drink stalls.

The games close with a traditional pipe band march through the main street of Halkirk followed by a dance on the grand marquee, the perfect ending to this unforgettable Highland extravaganza.

St Andrews Highland Games

27 JULY



Station Park, St Andrews,
Fife KY16 9SP

10.30am – 5.00pm

Price
£6 (adults), £4 (concessions)

Event website
Tel: 01334 476305



The town of *St Andrews* is celebrated throughout the world for being *The Home of Golf* and home to Scotland's oldest university. But for the last 30 years it has boasted another string to its already impressive bow, the St Andrews Highland Games.

Practically new compared to most of the Highland games held in Scotland, many of which stretch back over a hundred years, the games were originally held in the grounds of the Strathtyrum Estate on the outskirts of the town.

Having swelled in size and prestige since then, they are now staged in front of the Old Course Hotel which overlooks one of the most sacred golf courses in the world.

Widely considered one of the top Highland games held in Fife today, admire the athletic prowess,

remarkable strength and stamina on display in a superb array of heavy and track and field events. Watch the hammer throw, caber toss, weight over distance and bar, stone put, foot races, and the exciting 'Diel Tak the Hindmost', one of the many adrenaline-pumping cycle races hosted by the games.

Alongside terrific Highland dancing and solo piping performance, there will be plenty of opportunities for spectators to get involved with children's races and even special events for overseas visitors to the games.

Make a plan to attend the St Andrews Highland Games this year and discover a reason other than golf to pay a visit to this charming coastal town with its pristine beaches, medieval buildings and championship courses.

Arisaig Highland Games & Clan Donald Gathering

30 JULY



Traigh Farm, Arisaig,
Inverness-shire PH39 4NT

Check website for times

Price
£6.00 (adults),
£3.00 (concessions)

[Event website](#)



Discover a Highland games in a stunning setting that won't fail to take your breath away. The Arisaig Highland Games and Clan Donald Gathering takes place on Traigh Farm in the pretty village of *Arisaig* on the west coast of the Highlands. With sweeping views across pristine beaches towards the Cuillins of Skye and the Small Isles of *Eigg and Rum*, it's hard to think of a more picturesque venue.

On the evening before the games, join the locals for a pre-games ceilidh held on the games field at Traigh. With live music, a licenced bar, piping hot food and free entry, this lively event is the ideal way to start the festivities.

Witness first-hand a full range of traditional events including solo piping, Highland dancing, the hammer throw, caber toss, and shot put, alongside a number of track and field competitions including

the high and long jump, the hop, step and leap, and running.

See athletes push themselves to the limits during the much-anticipated Mile Race, West Coast Hill Race, and Ladies Race. Young ones can also blow off steam with races especially for those aged 5 to 16.

This year the games will feature a Clan Donald Gathering, hosted by the home clan of Clan Ranald. Don't miss the beginning of the games, which starts with a ceremonial march led by the Lochaber Schools Pipe Band before being officially opened by Ranald, 24th Captain of Clan Ranald.

After all that excitement, wind down with a stroll on some the pristine white sands on the coastline around Arisaig, or pay a visit to the charming fishing village of *Mallaig* and try local delicacies, like delicious west coast langoustines.

Dornoch Highland Gathering

1 AUGUST



The Meadows Park, Tain,
Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3TB

1.00pm

Price
£5.50 (adults), £3.50 (seniors),
£1 (children)

[Event website](#)

Tel: 01463 223745



The *Dornoch* Highland Gathering has been a constant fixture in the busy summer calendar of this thriving community on the unspoilt and sunny north east coast of the Highlands.

Since 1887, apart from two interruptions during the world wars, the gathering has taken place come rain or shine. Held in Meadows Park, the games programme offers both an open section which is free to anyone who wishes to compete, and a local category which see residents from across *Sutherland*, Ross and Caithness take part. Even the children can get involved. Watch from the sidelines as they pit themselves against one another in the fun runs, tackle the obstacles courses, and discover the fantastic array of games and attractions on offer.

Admire the precision and grace of the Highland dancers, cheer on cyclists and athletes in the track and field races, and hold your breath as kilted strongmen summon all their strength

and stamina as they throw the hammer and toss the caber. There will also be the chances to hear pipers of all ages march and play in competitions throughout the day. Hear toe-tapping jigs and marches alongside stirring renditions of the Strathspey and Reel alongside the stately Pibroch.

Take a break from the excitement and enjoy a leisurely browse around the stalls on display or, if you're feeling peckish, wander over to the food and drink stands for a bite to eat.

Welcoming and affordable, the gathering offers an ideal mix of family-friendly entertainment and the very best in Highland sport, dance and music.

Discover more of what the lovely part of the Highlands has to offer. Keen golfers will relish the chance to tee-off on the championship course of *Royal Dornoch Golf Club*, explores miles of golden sandy beach, and pay a visit to *Loch Fleet National Nature Reserve*.

Inverkeithing Highland Games

2 AUGUST



Ballast Bank Playing Fields,
Preston Crescent, Inverkeithing,
Fife KY11 1DS

12.30pm – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01383 414982



Head to this Highland games in Fife and witness awesome displays of sporting prowess and see skilled traditional dancers and talented musicians, as they strive to take the titles in their categories. It's not uncommon for crowds of 4,000 or 5,000 to gather on Ballast Bank to watch the competitions and races, which include track and field activities, cycling, heavyweight events, the tug o' war, solo pipe band and drum major contests, and Highland dancing.

Games and festivals have been an important part of community life in *Inverkeithing* for centuries. Today's Highland games are thought to have their roots in the Royal Burgh's Lammas Fair

Celebrations of 1652, described in local records as 'a great day for fun, frolic, fit races...'

Times may have changed, but the description remains quite accurate. Visit and discover for yourself dozens of exciting events and a lively atmosphere. This games promise an excellent day out for both competitors and spectators.

Inverkeithing sits on the north side of the stunning Forth Road Bridge and Forth Rail Bridge. In September, the *Forth Bridges Festival* will mark the 50th birthday of the road bridge with an exciting programme of events from a torch light procession to a dramatic firework show.

Aberlour Strathspey Highland Games

2 AUGUST



Alice Littler Memorial Park,
Aberlour, Banffshire AB38 9QP

11.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£7 (adults), £4 (concessions)

Event website
Tel: 01340 810436

The *Banffshire* coast is renowned throughout Scotland for its untouched natural beauty. It's no surprise then that the Aberlour Strathspey Highland Gathering boasts a scenic venue that is almost as striking as the dramatic games it plays host to.

Serving as natural amphitheatre, it's almost as if the *Alice Littler Memorial Park* was especially designed for the gathering which celebrates its 71st birthday this year. It offers access to the charms of Aberlour on one side and lovely view of the Speyside Way and the elegant Victoria Bridge which spans the swift-flowing Wester Elchies of the River Spey.

Soak up the pomp and spectacle of the Highland dancing competition which sees competitors, clad in colourful tartan costumes, perform centuries-old dances to the accompaniment of live bagpipes.

Watch athletes show off their brute strength in the traditional heavy events of the hammer throw, stone put, weight for distance and height, and caber toss, and get caught up in the excitement of the fast-paced track and field events including sprints and the long and high jump.

The parade of massed pipe bands in the afternoon is a remarkable sight and sounds to behold, and there are plenty of family-friendly diversions to keep younger children occupied. Enjoy an array of good old-fashioned funfair entertainment from rides and tombolas to bottle stalls and even a pet parade!

Before you leave, be sure to pick up a souvenir of the day from stalls selling delicious local produce and delightful crafts, all in the name of a good cause.

Newtonmore Highland Games

2 AUGUST



The Eilan, Station Road,
Newtonmore, Inverness-shire
PH20 1AR

10.30am – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01540 673 348



Join visitors from Scotland and beyond at the Newtonmore Highland Games, a decidedly international affair set in the tranquil Spey Valley. American spectators can see their countrymen battle it out in a fierce heavyweight contest between Scotland and the USA, while competitors from as far afield as Russia will be showing off their footwork in Highland dancing events.

Taking place as part of the games is the Clan Macpherson Association Gathering, which sees members from around the world unite to celebrate their rich heritage. See the kilted clansmen proudly march from old Ralia to the Eilan – a spectacular sight not to be missed.

Watch runners from around the country tackle the famous Creag Dhush Hill Race, or see at least four pipe bands and solo pipers do their best to impress the judges with their renditions of the Piobaireachd, Strathspey and Reel. In addition to all this, you'll be treated to track and field events and lots of children's competitions, including a caber tossing contest for boys under 15.

Why not spend a few extra days in *Newtonmore* and make the most of all this gorgeous region has to offer? Discover the area's history at the *Highland Folk Museum*, or explore the great outdoors as you go fishing, shooting, mountain biking or walking around this beautiful part of the Highlands.

Aboyne Highland Games

2 AUGUST



Aboyne Village Green,
Charlestown Road, Aboyne,
Aberdeenshire AB34 5HS

10.30am – 6.00pm

Price
£10 (adults), £3 (children 5-15),
FREE (under 5s)

Event website
Tel: 01339 886049



See the population of the small Aberdeenshire village of *Aboyne* double as its annual Highland games get underway this August. Dating back to 1867, the games offer a jam-packed line-up of piping, Highland dancing, heavy and light contests. Don't miss the Scottish Championship events in the 800 m Race and Putting 56 lb Weight for Distance categories, just two of the highlights of this fantastic event.

In addition to its great sporting events, Aboyne is the first Highland games to run an International Fiddle Competition. Pop into the town's hall to be treated to the sounds of talented musicians playing a range of Scottish tunes, from the *Slow Air* and *March to the Strathspey* and Reel. You can also enjoy a wide

range of solo piping competitions, including the traditional (and very tricky) Piobaireachd.

Witness the unforgettable sight of pipe bands parading through the village in the morning before they announce the raising of the chieftain's banner at noon. Should you happen to arrive a little late, don't worry – you can still catch the massed pipe bands marching around the arena in the afternoon, plus the beating retreat at the games' close.

You'll find a great range of activities all just a short drive from Aboyne, not to mention pleasant local cafés in the village itself. Try your hand at rock climbing in nearby *Ballater*, or head to the village of *Dinnet* to stroll around Loch Kinord and explore the *Cairngorms National Park*.

Bridge of Allan Highland Games

3 AUGUST



Strathallan Games Park,
Airthrey Avenue, Bridge of Allan
FK9 4RB

10.00am – 5.15pm

Price
£7 (adults), £3 (concessions,
children)

Event website
Tel: 01786 832682



One of the premier Highland games held in Scotland, Bridge of Allan is hard to beat for atmosphere, regularly attracting crowds of up to 15,000. What's more, it takes place in a setting fit for royalty.

Spectacularly situated in a games field nestled between *Stirling Castle*, the Ochil Hills and the Wallace Monument, the games boast a programme to match their magnificent scenery.

At the 163rd Bridge of Allan Highland Games spectators can expect to see the gripping spectacle of the traditional heavyweight competition which feature the caber toss, weight over the bar and shot put. But the games aren't just a display of muscular strength, stamina and speed will also be put to the test at the track and field events which include flat races and long and triple jump.

Get wrapped up in the excitement of the

wrestling and cycling competitions, and soak up the pageantry of the Highland dancing competition which will see over 200 dancers take part! Watch light-footed dancers perform old favourites like the *Sword Dance*, *Highland Fling* and *Sean Triubhas*.

The games also see some of the finest pipe bands in the world, many of them visiting from overseas, grace the field. Held in the run up to the World Pipe Band Championships, most of them approach the games as a chance to fine tune their performances ahead of the most prestigious competition in the pipe band calendar. While the sound of expertly played bagpipes is fantastic to hear, the experience of watching the Chieftain of the games take the salute as massed pipe bands parade past the grandstand is truly stirring and a suitably grand finale to these historic Highland games.

Isle of Skye Highland Games

5-6 AUGUST



The Lump, off Bank Street,
Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9EJ

12.00pm

Price
£8 (adults), £4 (children)

Event website
Tel: 01478 612540

Located off the west coast of Scotland, the *Isle of Skye* with its heather-clad moors, jagged mountainscape and deep lochs, has a landscape that is at once distinctly Highland and quite unlike any other. The same can be said for its Highland games which date back to 1877 and remain one of the few games in Scotland to feature sailing as part of their events programme.

Held on Meall na h-Acairseid, also known as the 'Meall' or by its English translation 'The Lump', this luscious green hill overlooks Portree's harbour and juts into Loch Portree, providing a stunning natural amphitheatre with gorgeous views in every direction. The boat race takes place on 5 August and sees a fleet of cruisers and day boats attempt to navigate around the beautiful Portree Bay as swiftly as possible to win the Vice Admiral's Cup. While not

a traditional Highland games event, the boat race is without a doubt one of the most exciting highlights of the games.

Among the more conventional events, you can expect to see all the usual heavyweights, running, the tug o' war, Highland dancing and solo piping. Skye occupies an important place in Scotland's piping heritage, being the home of the esteemed piping family of the MacCrimmons who taught Piobaireachd for many years at their college in Borealg, Glendale. It is for this reason that the games regularly witness some of the most talented pipers from Scotland and beyond in competition.

At once resolutely traditional and markedly distinct from the countless other Highland games held across Scotland, the Isle of Skye offers a games experience with a difference.

Killin Highland Games

6 AUGUST



Breadalbane Park, Main Street,
Killin, Perthshire FK21 8UT

10.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£6 (adults) £4 (children)

Event website

Tel: 07836 514072



Make sure you arrive early at the Killin Highland Games – as you won't want to miss the grand opening ceremony.

The games commence with the Champion of the previous games carrying a ceremonial shield and sword in a procession from the Falls of Dochart to the games field. These are then handed to the Chieftain of the games who then strikes the shield with the sword four times, turning to face each side of the arena as he does so, before declaring the games open.

Another highlight of the games is the Open Hill Race, a rigorous test of stamina which follows a course from the games field to the summit of Sron a'Chlachain and back.

Picturesquely situated by the *Falls of Dochart*, spectacular rapids that flow into the western shore of *Loch Tay*, the little village of *Killin* held its first Highland games in 1993. It has since grown into one of the most popular games in the Tayside area, attracting

athletes from around the world.

Traditional heavyweight events include the shot put, weight for distance, hammer throw, sheaf toss, caber toss, weight over the bar, and tug o' war.

Look out for the mesmerising Highland dancing and piping competitions. Listen to the toe-tapping rhythms of the March, Strathspey, Reel and Jig, and witness the complex skill required of the Piobaireachd as talented pipers compete at the highest level to win over £1,000 in prize money.

With a mini fairground, stalls and more, the Killin Highland Games offers a fantastic day out for all family and friends in the beautiful Breadalbane Park.

The picturesque village of Killin sits within Breadalbane, which marks the beginning of the Highlands at the northern tip of the *Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park*. Look out for the *wildlife* amongst the mountains and forests of this spectacular park.

Assynt Highland Games

8 AUGUST



Culag Park, Lochinver, Assynt,
Sutherland IV27 4LE

12.00pm – 6.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website

Tel: 01571 855215

See the marvellous sights you can catch a glimpse of at the Assynt Highland Games, which brings together a flavour of its history and location with the traditions of a Scottish event.

Based in the fishing village of *Lochinver*, this Highland games features fly-casting contests for trout and salmon – a nod to its beautiful location in the north western corner of Scotland.

Held in Culag Park, the games are renowned for their welcoming atmosphere and open with the Chieftain of the games arriving at Lochinver to the accompaniment of bagpipes.

Watch the spectacle of a whole host of traditional heavyweight events including the caber

toss and tug o' war, as well as solo piping and Highland dancing competitions, various track and field events and a challenging hill race.

Make sure and sample some of the delicious local food and drink, before dancing the night away at the evening dance.

This small fishing port offers amazing views back to Suilven and has a large fish market where you can buy some of their delicious catches. You'll also discover local arts and crafts in this area, including *Highland Stoneware*.

Abernethy Highland Games

9 AUGUST



Games Field, Nethy Bridge,
Inverness-shire PH25 3DA

10.00am – 5.30pm

Price

£7 (adults) £4 (children)

£18 (family - 2 adults and up to
4 children)

Event website

Tel: 01479 821042



Experience a clan gathering and Highland games together in the beautiful Nethy Bridge, set in the heart of Strathspey. The Abernethy Highland Games, which retains the town's old name, features the annual Clan Grant Gathering, with clan members from across Scotland and the world coming together to celebrate.

The Highland games will also feature a unique event, the 10 mile RSPB Road Race around *Abernethy Forest*, and will close with that time-honoured test of strength, the tug o' war.

Widely known as the 'Friendly Games', the day begins with a massed pipe and drum march which forms the Chieftain's Parade, leading the Clan Grant members onto the games field for the games to be declared open.

Look out for the massed piped bands again, as they will march three more times throughout the afternoon and are always a wonderful spectacle.

Enjoy the roaring noise of the solo piping and drumming competitions, see the Highland dancers glide through the air, or watch the fiercely-fought competitions in track and field events, and of course, the traditional heavyweight events.

If arriving from *Aviemore*, why not travel in style aboard the historic steam train from either the town or Boat of Garten on the Strathspey Steam Railway before catching the free bus from Broomhill Station to the games field? This is a great way to soak up the surrounding natural splendour en route to this unforgettable day out in the Highlands.

Nethy Bridge sits on the edge of the *Cairngorms National Park* – so why not spend another day in the area exploring? The park is home to 25 percent of the UK's threatened wildlife species, so you could be lucky enough to spot red squirrels, capercaillies, red deer and golden eagles.

Ardlui Highland Games

9 AUGUST



Ardlui Hotel, Ardlui, Arrochar,
Dunbartonshire G83 7EB

10.00am – 2.00am (10 August)

Price

FREE

Event website

Tel: 01301 704243

If you're after a light-hearted Highland games that the whole family can enjoy, look no further than *Ardlui*. Rather than a formal competition, this friendly clash between the tiny communities of Ardlui and Beinglass is a just fun day out for locals and visitors alike, with races and contests open for all ages.

You may not find any championship titles up for grabs here, but you will see kids and adults alike joining in the fun with activities including tug o' war, caber tossing and races. There'll be mouth-watering

burgers and hotdogs on the barbeque, plus a beer tent providing thirst-quenching drinks. After the games, join the party at the Ardlui Hotel with live music and dancing from 10pm to 2am.

Perched on the banks of Loch Lomond, the village of Ardlui is a firm favourite with walkers and hikers. Take time to explore the wonderful *Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park*, where you'll be treated to gorgeous scenery and rich wildlife, or catch the ferry to the other side of Loch Lomond to join the famous *West Highland Way*.

Atholl & Breadalbane Highland Gathering

9-10 AUGUST



Wade's Park, Poplar Avenue,
Aberfeldy, Perthshire PH15 2BP

9.00am – 5.30pm

Price

Friday: £3 (adults), £1 (concessions) / Saturday: £8 (adults), £6 (senior citizens), £4 (under 14s)

Event website

Tel: 01887 820666



See the Perthshire town of *Aberfeldy* come alive this summer at the Atholl & Breadalbane Agricultural Show & Highland Gathering, a wonderful two-day event mixing traditional Highland games and the gathering of Clan Menzies with livestock displays, equestrian events and more.

Don't miss the carrying of the Menzies Stone, a games tradition unique to Aberfeldy, or the rather more unusual sport of terrier racing. Other highlights include equestrian events and livestock displays, sure to interest farmers and animal fans alike, plus a range of exciting sporting events including wrestling, tug o' war, traditional heavies and hill racing.

Filling up the rest of the weekend's action-packed programme are funfair rides, agricultural merchants, and a Horticultural Show and Craft Fair. Check out the handiwork of some of the region's most talented local gardeners and craft-makers, or pick up a few souvenirs to take home.

Aberfeldy may be small, but this pretty town offers lots to see and do. Have a dram or two at *Dewar's World of Whisky*, or find out more about distiller John Dewar at the interesting heritage exhibition. You'll also be spoilt for choice when it comes to thrilling outdoor *activities* – why not tackle white water rafting, abseiling, gorge walking or canyoning?

Brodick Highland Games

9 AUGUST



Ormidale Sports Pavilion
Brodick, Shore Road, Brodick,
Isle of Arran KA27 8DL

11.00am – 5.00pm

Price

£3 (adult) £1 (children, concessions)

Tel: 01770 860 403

Enjoy the scenery, fun and friendliness of an island Highland games, on the *Isle of Arran*. The Brodick Highland Games have been held in Arran's main town since 1886.

All family and friends will love the excitement of watching the heavyweight competitors taking part in the hammer throw, caber toss and much more. The children can take part in a range of events, but everyone will enjoy the sight of the Highland dancers and the sound of the pipe bands marching around the pavilion.

Arran is an island bursting with natural beauty, and is a great place for outdoor activities

due to its rugged mountains and sublime beaches. Brodick is a lovely town to stay in while you explore all the island has to offer; from the Isle of Arran Heritage Museum and Machrie Moor to Glenashdale Forest and Brodick Castle, which houses a glorious collection of furniture.

Several pipe bands come along to the Brodick Highland Games to entertain the crowds. This year will see the Arran, Kirkintilloch, Kilbarchen, Maybole and Brechin pipe bands playing to a delighted crowd.

Dundonald Highland Games

9 AUGUST



Dundonald Castle, Winehouse Yett, Dundonald, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire KA2 9HD

12.00pm – 5.00pm

Price
FREE

Event website
Tel: 01563 851489



From an excellent programme of heavyweight events, solo piping and Highland dancing to what no Highland games would be complete without – a tug o'war, the Dundonald Highland Games is shaping up to be great fun, including battle re-enactments, streets parades, side stalls, fancy dress and more.

The hotly-anticipated sporting and cultural events in *Ayrshire* this August will see over 100 dancers of all ages from around the country and overseas taking part in 10 events in 5 categories, which span every level from novice to advance.

Pipe bands from as far afield as Canada, Australia, Belgium and even Oman performed in the pipe band and drum major contests historically, and this year will be no different with an equal

international array of pipe bands competing alongside local and regional entries.

The atmosphere will be buzzing already in the run up to the event, with Dundonald Games Week taking place the week preceding the games. There'll be a treasure hunt to take part in, 10 km road race, pet show, a seven-a-side football tournament and the youngest ones shouldn't not miss the kids' fun run.

Come along and join the crowds in the picturesque setting of *Royal Dundonald Castle* on the playing fields, and help it celebrate its 25th anniversary this year. Ayrshire is home to some truly epic nature and geography, with rolling green hills, varied coast line and picturesque beaches, and it's bursting with creativity, arts and culture so there's plenty to see and do while exploring the area.

North Berwick International Highland Games

9 AUGUST



Recreation Ground, Dunbar Road, North Berwick, East Lothian EH39 4DG

9.00am – 6.00pm

Price
£8 (adults) £3 (children up to 16)
£8 (60+ concessions)
£4 (car parking)

Event website
Tel: 0776 058 0009



Embracing all that what Highland games are best known for and more, the *North Berwick* International Highland Games held in the charming seaside town of North Berwick promise a plethora of activities and excitement.

Join in the crowds of thousands of spectators and competitors alike from throughout the UK and all over the world and witness as talented pipe bands and Highland dancers of all ages battle it out to win in the traditional games.

Watch as determined athletes compete during the traditional heavy events showing off their strength and stamina, and cheer them as the competition unfolds.

As the host of the Lothian and Borders Pipe Band Championships, the games bring with them an international array of pipe band competitors.

Visiting pipe bands at previous games have included the New Zealand Police, the City of Blacktown from Australia, the 78th Fraser Highlanders from Canada, the Royal Army of Oman, and the Benoni-McTalla of South Africa.

Before the day comes to a close, make sure you stay to watch the parade of all the participating pipe bands as they walk into the main arena to salute the Chieftain of the games and cheer them as they collect their trophies.

East Lothian, where the games are held, sits just beside the beautiful city of Edinburgh but also boasts a stunning 40 mile coastline. From the golden beaches to the links golf courses and abundance of wildlife, make sure you allow enough time to discover what makes this area so spectacular before continuing to explore the rest of the country.

Strathpeffer Highland Gathering

9 AUGUST



Castle Leod, Strathpeffer,
Ross-shire IV14 9AA

10.30am – 5.00pm

Price
£5 (adults)

Event website
Tel: 01997 433554



Head to the beautiful Victorian town of *Strathpeffer* where one of the longest-established Highland games are held this summer in the stunning grounds of Castle Leod, home to the MacKenzie clan.

Since founded in 1881, the gathering is still going strong over 130 years later, and entertainment in all form and shape is to be expected that will appeal to young and old visitors alike.

Witness staggering displays of strength and determination as the athletes compete in the traditional heavyweight competitions, watch colourful Highland dancing with dancers of all

ages performing to the skirl of the pipe, and enjoy plenty more activities, ranging from horse jumping competitions to hill races and more.

And if you feel a little peckish, there'll be food stalls, BBQs, and a whole range of delicious, locally sourced food and drink to choose from.

Situated within striking distance of the sprawling *Ben Wyvis*, the town of Strathpeffer is a popular base for walkers. The *North Highlands* boasts ancient mountains, beautiful beaches, historic castles and stunning nature reserves, so make sure you experience some of it on your visit to the area.

Perth Highland Games

10 AUGUST



North Inch, Perth, Perthshire
PH1 5DN

9.00am – 5.30pm

Price
£7 (adults), £4 (children, senior citizens)

Event website
Tel: 01738 627782



Experience the excitement of a traditional Highland games in a stunning riverside location with the Perth Highland Games. First set up in 1925, and billed as a 'Highland games and Sports Carnival', the games now take place at the North Inch, which sits to the north of this great new city and on the banks of the beautiful River Tay.

One of the most popular events in the summer calendar, this games features all the marvels of a Highland games – including the impressive athletes who compete in traditional heavyweight events including hammer over the bar, hammer throw, caber toss and tug o' war. Take part yourself in the running events for adults and children, or sit back on the grass and witness the colourful spectacle of Highland dancers performing the *Highland Fling*

and the *Sword Dance*. Listen out for the riveting skirl of the pipes at solo piping competitions and the massively popular pipe band contest which often features a number of international bands.

Take a look around the stalls for some delicious local produce and souvenirs for friends.

Perth is Scotland's newest city, but this fascinating area also has a great history to share with visitors. Nearby the city you can see the original home of the Stone of Destiny, *Scone Palace*, or learn more about the region's military heritage at the *Black Watch Museum* at Balhousie Castle. Inside the city, take a wander around the shops for local gems, enjoy a bite to eat by the river, or visit the attractions including the *Fergusson Gallery*, housed inside a former waterworks building.

Ballater Highland Games

14 AUGUST



Monaltrie Park, Ballater,
Aberdeenshire AB35 5RG

10.00am – 5.00pm

Price
£7 (adults), £2 (children)

Event website
Tel: 01339 755771



If you're looking to make a name for yourself in the sporting world, then the Ballater Highland Games is the place to do it. A truly international event, it draws athletes, pipers and dancers from around the world to compete. Some visiting athletes have even given Scottish competitors a run for their money, becoming local record breakers in the process; Californian David Brown set Ballater's record for Throwing Weight over Bar in 2007, while Sebastian Wenta from Poland has held the Heavy Stone and Light Stone records since 2009.

Having first started in 1869, it is also one of the oldest Highlands games with its overall feel changing little over the centuries. This year's

programme includes the traditional heavy and light events, piping, open and local dancing, a hill race and tilt the bucket, with the Beating Retreat bringing the festivities to an end at 7pm. Adding to its clutch of local records, look out for the Chieftain of the games, Captain Alwyne A. C. Farquharson MC of Invercauld, who has held the post for an amazing 66 years!

Ballater itself is set in the middle of Royal Deeside, a corner of Scotland close to Queen Victoria's heart. Nearby, you'll find her Highland retreat at *Balmoral*, still a favourite of Her Majesty The Queen, set in the wild forests of this beautiful part of Scotland.

Tain Highland Gathering

14 AUGUST



Glenmorangie Field, Tain,
Ross-shire IV19 1AQ

11.00am (local events),
2.00pm (open events)

Price
£5 (adults), £2 (under 16),
FREE (toddlers)

Event website
Tel: 01349 884149



Follow the games chieftains along *Tain's* historic streets before descending upon the Glenmorangie Field for a thrilling day of games events. Now in its 23rd year, the Tain Highland Gathering has a traditional programme includes all the Highland favourites, from Highland dance and piping to a hill run and heavies.

Don't miss the British Championship Medals for both Light and Heavy Hammers or the special caber tossing event, where strong athletes are challenged to turn the longest and heaviest caber in

the Highland games circuit – you'll be astonished at its size. Watch competitors demonstrate displays of speed and stamina during the nail-biting track and field and cycling events.

Whisky enthusiasts shouldn't miss out on the chance to visit the neighbouring *Glenmorangie Distillery* for a taste of their Quarter Century malt, which won Best Highland Single Malt at the World Whisky Awards in 2013. Or step into the past and visit the magnificent *Dunrobin Castle* – it's less than a 30 minute drive away!

Rannoch Highland Gathering

16 AUGUST



Weller Poley Park,
Kinloch Rannoch, Pitlochry,
Perthshire PH16

1.30pm – 5.00pm

Price
£4 (adults), £10 (family),
£2 (child), £3 (senior citizen)
£1 (parking)

Event website
Tel: 01882 632411

Overlooking the still surface of *Loch Rannoch*, enclosed by swathes of towering pines and rugged mountain, the romantic Highland Perthshire setting of Kinloch Rannoch is simply spell binding.

Aided by the untouched natural beauty of its surroundings, it feels as though time has stood still at the Rannoch Highland Gathering. Founded in 1818, the event programme of the games has changed little in last 133 years. As well as all the traditional heavyweight events such as the caber toss, a highlight of the day is the challenging mile-long hill race up and down the peak of Craig Varr which is open to all able-bodied entrant aged 15 years and over. Introduced by Major James de S. La Terriere in 1958, follow in the footsteps of the countless shepherds, keepers and generations of locals who have competed in the race throughout the year. Why not see if you can beat the record

set by Alan Milligan in 2000 of 19 minutes and 50 seconds, or the 2001 women's record of 25 minutes and 19 seconds held by Kate Jenkins?

Listen as the fresh Highland air fills with the sounds of the talented Auchterhouse Pipe Band, watch light-footed Highland dancers perform, and get wrapped up in the suspense of the Local North v South Tug o' War. Let the kids get a slice of the action at their very own mini Highland games, and take your pick from a delicious selection of homemade baking, produce and other goods for sale in aid of local charities. Don't forget to try the mouth-watering barbeque on offer, and replenish with something to drink at the tea and beer tents

With its gorgeous scenery, friendly atmosphere and time-honoured events programme, the Rannoch Highland Gathering offers a games experience that is as authentic as it gets.

Helmsdale Highland Games

16 AUGUST



Couper Park, West Helmsdale,
Helmsdale, Sutherland
KW8 6HH

10.30am – 9.30pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01431 821272



Be captivated by the rousing spectacle of the chieftain parade. Starting from the village's Bridge Hotel at noon, see the games' chieftain and officials proudly march whilst decked out in splendid full Highland dress. As they stride towards the games' venue, hear the stirring sounds of Sutherland Caledonian Pipe Band and Sutherland Schools Pipe Band.

When you get to Couper Park, you'll easily see why Helmsdale's Highland Games are a regular highlight of the community calendar, not to mention a great day out for families. The thrilling traditional competitions include heavy events, Highland dancing, piping, cycling and track races.

Even the smallest of visitors can get involved and get a taste of tradition at the mini Highland games for kids, with prizes ranging from £1 to £200. Those with a passion for running should join in with

the SGA Scottish Hill Race Championship, tackling the steep hillsides of Creag Bun-ullidh, while less serious athletes can have a go at novelty contests such as haggis hurling or throwing the besom.

Bring your dancing shoes and join in with competitors and visitors alike during some quality entertainment in the evening. Live local musicians will keep things upbeat from 4.30-7pm, and the sounds of Celtic rock band *Slanj* at the Games Night Marquee Dance at 9.30pm is set to end the day's festivities in style.

Make time for a visit to *Clynesh Distillery* at nearby Brora and sample the local amber-coloured spirit at its source. Keen golfers should not miss the opportunity to play some of the region's world famous links courses, including *Brora*, *Royal Dornoch*, *Tain* and *Golspie*, all of which are in easy reach of Helmsdale.

Stirling Highland Games

16 AUGUST



Stirling Sports Village,
Forthside Way, Stirling,
Stirlingshire FK7 7WS

11.30am – 6.00pm

Price
£7 (adults), £5 (children under
16, concessions)

Event website
Tel: 07739 736659

Witness a Highland games where the events really test the physical capabilities of its competitors. See some of the burliest heavy athletes strive to outdo each other in the caber toss, the shot put, hammer throwing, throwing the 56 lb weight over the bar and throwing the weight for distance.

Strength and determination is also put to the test during wrestling matches and the tug o' war – today, prizes and titles and titles may be the main motivation for taking part, but very little has changed since the days when ancient warriors would sweat it out in similar events to prove their worth to clan chiefs.

You'll see remarkable displays of speed and stamina during running, cycling and light field events. Make sure you get a good seat for the Highland dancing competitions and watch nimble dancers demonstrate incredible legwork during energetic performances.

Set in a fantastic sports complex boasting a 3,800-capacity stadium, you are bound to get a great view of all the competitive action, not to mention spectacular views of the nearby *Cambuskenneth Abbey* and *Stirling Castle*.

Sample some brilliant local food and drink and browsing stalls or relax at the on-site bar and soak up the vibrant atmosphere and get your toes tapping to the upbeat live music.

While visiting the area, put your own physical abilities to the test and climb the 246 steps to the top of *the National Wallace Monument*, where you can take in some spectacular views and learn about one of Scotland's most famous historical icons. At nearby Stirling Castle, you can see first-hand one of the UK's best examples of Renaissance architecture and discover more about Scotland's fascinating past monarchs.

The Macallan Nairn Highland Games

16 AUGUST



The Links,
Marine Road,
Nairn IV12

10.30am – 5pm

Price
FREE

Event website
Tel: 01667 452422



Inaugurated almost 150 years ago, in 1867, the very first Nairn Highland Games took place two years later and was established as the largest and most popular gathering in the north.

Enjoy the breathtaking setting of this Highland games, which takes place on the links beside the sparkling Moray Firth. This is a special event in the town's calendar which brings back former Nairn residents from all over the world to witness the heavy events, dancing and piping.

Watch the immense parade of the massed pipe bands, which leaves Viewfield at 12.30pm and marches down the A96 to the games location on the Links.

There is also a half marathon, athletics events and all your favourite Highland games competitions

from the tug o' war to tossing the caber. Watch the competitors battle it out to win the Cuach na Cuiridh, the Cup of the Strong Man, which is presented to the overall winner of the heavy events.

Stroll across the golden sands at Nairn and tackle one of the town's two championship golf courses, Nairn and Nairn Dunbar. Culbin Forest is to the east of Nairn, where you can follow one of the walking trails. Nearby Fort George is one of the best preserved 18th century military fortifications in Europe, while the turreted Cawdor Castle, is famed for its connection to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in which the title character becomes the Thane of Cawdor.

Crieff Highland Gathering

17 AUGUST



Market Park, King Street,
Crieff, Perthshire PH7 3HE

10.00am – 5.30pm

Price
£19 (adult grandstand),
£15 (child/concession grandstand)
£9 (adult standard),
£5 (child/concession standard)

Event website
Tel: 01764 652973



Join crowds of thousands at the immensely popular Crieff Highland Gathering, an annual highlight of Perthshire's exciting summer calendar. With a fantastic grandstand venue and a buzzing atmosphere, the gathering is proud home to the Scottish Professional Heavyweight Championship and this year hosts the Scottish Light Field Championships for the first time.

Marvel at incredible feats of strength as heavyweights from around the world compete for the title of Scottish Champion in categories such as stone put and hammer throw. In the light field categories, you'll see talented athletes from Scotland and beyond try to set new records for both long and high jump – a must for fans of athletics!

Of course, *Crieff* also features all the traditional events that make up any authentic Highland games. Come along to see wonderful displays of Highland dancing, piping, cycling and tug o' war alongside great trade stalls, tasty local food and a beer tent. Boasting crowds of over 4,000 last year, the gathering always promises an exciting day of sport, music and family fun.

Just 18 miles from *Perth*, Crieff is a blend of bustling country town and magnificent Perthshire scenery. Get a taste of one of Scotland's best-loved whiskies at the interactive *Famous Grouse Experience*, located at Glenturret Distillery, or pop into Caithness Glass at the *Crieff Visitor Centre* to browse handcrafted paperweights and glassware.

Glenisla Highland Games

22 AUGUST



The Haugh, Forter, Glenisla,
PH11 8QW

12.30pm – 5pm

Price
£7 (adult) FREE (children under 14)

Event website
Tel: 01575 582349



Spend a sunny Friday deep in the heart of the Angus Glens, and watch tradition come to life at the Glenisla Highland Games.

This August, soak up the friendly atmosphere and enjoy a memorable day at the Haugh, on the River Isla.

This event is renowned as one of the most traditional Highland games with competitors, visitors, locals, bandmen and dignitaries sharing the beauty of the natural amphitheatre of the games haugh. Towering above is Mount Blair, providing a spectacular route for the hill race.

Catch the Towie & District Pipe Band at 12.30pm and at 3pm, watch the hill race and see the heavyweight athletes compete for prizes. Look out for stunning spectacles including tossing the caber,

throwing the hammer and putting the stone.

The Angus Glens are made up of five glens which run in the same general direction, giving the impression of the fingers of a hand stretching through the sumptuous Angus countryside and finishing at the outer edge of the Cairngorms National Park.

Glenisla is situated in the southern Grampians between Glenshee and Glen Prosen and is the most westerly of the Angus Glens. The River Isla runs for 46 miles, sweeping past the Games Haugh. The largest tributary of the River Tay, it is internationally renowned for its Atlantic salmon and is home to wild brown trout. The glen itself is rich in flora and fauna, including golden eagles, red and roe deer.

Bute Highland Games

23 AUGUST



The Stadium, High Street,
Rothesay, Isle of Bute,
PA20 9BS

10am – 5pm

Price
£8 (adults), £4 (children and
concessions), £20 (families)

Event website
Tel : 01700 505256

The Isle of Bute may be small, but it's welcomed some big names to its annual Highland games: actors Blythe Duff and Johnny Beattie are just two of the famous faces who have previously been invited to be Chieftain of the Games. This year that honour goes to Bute local John Lindsay Bulloch, who will be presiding over a great programme of Highland dancing, heavyweight events, athletics and much more, all in a gorgeous island setting.

See pipe bands and drum majors from near and far parade around the arena, or admire the colourful tartans and fancy footwork of talented young Highland dancers. Watch the heavyweights flex their not-inconsiderable muscles in the caber toss, shot put or Scots hammer contests, and cheer on speedy young athletes in the junior 100, 200 or 800 metre races.

As well as all the traditional favourites, the Bute Highland Games also features a great mix of sports. Watch young athletes battle it out on the pitch in fast-paced games of shinty, an exciting team sport native to the Highlands, or join in the 10k race through Bute's stunning countryside.

Don't miss the vibrant parade along Rothesay's High Street as the games come to an end, and if time allows, why not explore some of Bute's wonderful attractions. Walk or cycle through heather moorlands, sandy beaches and rolling hills to see the best of the island's beautiful landscapes, or pop into the award-winning Victorian mansion of Mount Stuart to explore its extensive gardens and marvel at its majestic rooms and halls.

Invergordon Highland Games

23 AUGUST



Cromarty Firth Industrial Park,
Invergordon, Ross-shire
IV18 0LT

1.00pm – 5.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel : 01862 893952

Experience a spectacle of tradition during the Invergordon Highland Gathering as competitors push themselves to the limit and try to take prestigious challenge trophies. Watch athletes sweat it out during the athletics, cycling and heavyweight contests, including all the traditional favourites such as caber tossing and hammer throwing.

The piping and dancing competitions are vibrant displays of sound and colour. See a blend of the beautiful colours of swishing kilts and skilful, fast-paced steps during Highland dancing competitions, while pipers fill the bellows of their instruments and demonstrate dexterous finger work.

If you can pull your eyes away from the traditional competitions, there's a great range of

more light-hearted events and fun races with cash prizes, along with a raffle and stalls.

For the first time, this gathering will take place at the Cromarty Firth Business Park, which you can get to by free shuttle bus - there are departures from Invergordon's Smelter Pier, Distillery Brae, High Street or South Lodge Primary School.

There's plenty to see and do in the surrounding area too. Why not explore the beauty of the Cromarty Firth and take a boat trip? You might even see the pod of resident *bottlenose dolphins*! Bring your walking boots and discover some excellent walking trails in and around the village.

Lonach Highland Gathering & Games

23 AUGUST



Bellabeg Park, Strathdon,
Aberdeenshire AB36 8UL

12.00pm – 5.30pm

Price

General entry: £7 (adults), £3 (children 5-15), FREE (under 4s). Seat tickets: £10-18 (adults), £6-14 (children)

Event website

Tel: 01975 651772



Colourful flags proudly fly during the Lonach Highland Gathering & Games, an event held on the fourth Saturday of every August with a long tradition – it dates back to the early 19th century and 2014 will mark 173 years of games.

Watch the gathering commence in spectacular style with the March of the Lonach Highlanders, who, garbed in Highland dress from head-to-toe, will march from the village of Bellabeg at 8am, or wait until they will parade around the arena at 1pm and 3pm, followed by massed pipe bands.

The games' events kick off with energetic displays from the Lonach Society School of

Highland Dancing at noon. Trophies are waiting to be won in both Open and Society categories, with numerous prizes for Highland dancing, piping, heavy and light events, and field races. Don your finest kilt and sporran for the chance to win 'Best Dressed Highlander'!

Don't miss the chance to explore some of the vast natural playground that is the *Cairngorm National Park*, the biggest national park in the UK. There are great opportunities for walking, cycling, climbing and *wildlife watching*, as well as a whole host of thrilling *outdoor activities*.

Strathardle Highland Gathering

23 AUGUST



Bannerfield, Kirkmichael,
Blairgowrie, Perthshire
PH10 7NS

9.30am – 5.00pm

Price

Please contact event organiser

Event website

Tel: 0131 663 3475

More than your regular Highland games, *Strathardle* boasts an exciting mix of sport, culture and agriculture, all mixed with lots of family fun. Come along to Bannerfield, Kirkmichael to check out the Agriculture and Home Industries Shows, the Dog Show and even a vintage car display – not to mention caber tossing, tug o' war and all your Highland favourites.

Bring along your baked goods, handcrafts or garden produce to the Home Industries Show to compete in one of 10 classes including Preserves, Knitting and Savouries. Kids can get crafty with special art competitions for each primary class, from finger-painting for children in primary one to greeting cards for those in primary seven.

The Agricultural Show gives animal lovers a chance to admire different breeds of cows and sheep from all across Scotland. See dozens of gorgeous pets in the afternoon Dog Show, or pair up with your own pup to enter categories such as Fancy Dress, Best Tricks or Best 6 Legs.

Be sure to catch the Vintage Vehicle Circuit in the afternoon, and, of course, don't miss out on the fantastic range of traditional Highland games! From well-known competitions such as Highland dancing and piping to the slightly less traditional pastimes of pillow fighting and bale rolling, the 133rd Strathardle Highland Games promises a great day out for all ages.

Glenurquhart Highland Gathering

23 AUGUST



Blairbeg Park,
Drumnadrochit,
Inverness-shire

10.30am – 5pm

Price
£5 (adult), £2 (concessions and
children 5 to 16), FREE (children
under 5)

Event website

For over 60 years, the local community in Glen Urquhart have come together to create a fantastic annual event for all to enjoy.

The Glenurquhart Highland Gathering and Games began straight after World War II but has evolved over the years to become the exciting event it is today.

The official opening takes place at 1.30pm but don't miss the amazing sight of the parade at 10am when Loch Ness Pipes and Drums are joined by local organisations as they march through the streets.

You can also watch the walkers, runners and cyclists in the morning as they take part in the Glen Challenge before arriving at Blairbeg Park.

Look out for the incredible demonstration by Black Dragon Taekwondo at 12.30pm before catching

the Pipe Bands, track and field, and heavy events.

Make sure and keep a close eye on the competitions as you might see someone break one of the Games' records – some of these have been held for over 40 years!

Loch Ness is only a short distance from Drumnadrochit and is famous around the world for its monster, Nessie. Claimed sightings of the Loch Ness monster over the years form the focus of the award-winning Loch Ness Exhibition Centre at Drumnadrochit. You can explore the interactive displays that allow you to uncover the mystery and folklore surrounding this loch. The medieval fortress of Urquhart Castle includes a tower house with superb views of the loch and Great Glen.

World Highland Games Heavy Events Championship

23-24 AUGUST



Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline,
Fife KY12 8QH

12.00pm – 5.00pm

Price
FREE entry for spectators

Event website

Tel: 0141 644 4823



Witness staggering displays of physical strength at the World Highland Games Heavy Events Championship 2014, held in *Dunfermline* from 23 - 24 August. Featuring sportsmen and women from as far afield as Iceland, Poland and South Africa, you'll see some of sport's most impressive heavyweights battle it out in thrilling contests to find the new World Champions of caber tossing, hammer throwing and more.

Don't miss the chance to catch some of Commonwealth Games competitors in action – Shaunagh Brown from London and Scotland's own Kirsty Yates, both of whom have qualified for *Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games*, will be taking part in the European Ladies Highlander Championship, which sees top female athletes

perform remarkable feats of strengths in traditional Highland heavyweight events.

You may not be World Heavy material, but amateur and budding athletes can still join in the fun! Try your hand at haggis hurling, wellie throwing or the colourful kilted race as the kids enjoy bouncy castles, special rides and their very own Junior Highland Games. Entry is free for spectators, too – what better choice for a great family day out?

Make sure you enjoy all there is to see and do in Dunfermline while you're in town. Take a peaceful walks around the lovely woodlands of *Pittencrieff Park*, or wander down the road to find out more about the town's remarkable history at the iconic *Dunfermline Palace & Abbey* or the fascinating *Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum*.

Granttown-on-Spey Highland Games

24 AUGUST



Heathfield Park, Granttown-on-Spey, Morayshire PH26 3LG

1.00pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01479 873237

Head to *Granttown-on-Spey* on 24 August for a fantastic Highland games featuring all the traditional favourites.

Don't miss the games' very own special event, the 56 lb Weight for Distance Championship, where tough heavies from around Scotland will vie to set a new record.

See colourful displays of Highland dancing, hear excellent solo pipers from around the region, or catch the awe-inspiring sights and sounds of the Massed Pipe Bands. Caber toss, tug o' war and cycling are also on the menu, making for a great day out in a gorgeous Highland setting.

Situated on the edge of the spectacular *Cairngorms National Park*, Granttown-on-Spey make a great base for exploring Strathspey. Follow the Speyside *Malt Whisky Trail* to sample some of Scotland's finest tipples, or embark on long walks through the stunning countryside.

Find out about the region's history at the *Granttown Museum*, a 4-star attraction located in the heart of the charming Highland town. There's a brilliant *18-hole course* for those who fancy a round of golf, while the award-winning *Speyside Centre* combines a garden centre with a restaurant, art gallery and even an antiques shop.

Argyllshire Gathering

28 AUGUST



Mossfield Park, Mossfield Avenue, Oban, Argyll PA34 4EL

1.00pm

Price
£10 (adults), £5 (under 14s),
£8 (concessions),
£25 (family of 4)

Event website
Tel: 01631 770230

The Argyllshire Gathering is a games which gets off with a bang – or, more fittingly, a blast. During the Stewards March, hundreds of competitors and games-goers follow an impressive procession of pipers from *Oban's* Station Square to the games field at Mossfield.

Come and see the cream of the Highland dancing crop. There are a remarkable 22 categories of dance competition including the *Fling*, *Gillie Chaliun*, *Sean Triubhas*, *Strathspey* and *Reel*.

Fun events including a pillow fight, toss the sheaf and the tug o' war are open to all, and displays from the MacDougall Clan Society and *Oban Distillery* will give visitors a taste of the history and whisky-making heritage of this beautiful region. Watch live displays of sporting prowess during the

track and field events from the stadium to get the best views of the action.

The Argyllshire Gathering boasts a long and rich history, having been established as a way of fostering friendships and loyalties between the region's clans. To this day, the event still unites a host of local clansmen, as well as competitors and spectators from the UK and beyond. Look out for the colourful clan banners proudly displayed outside the members' enclosure.

While you're in the area, why not sample the local whisky at its source at the Oban Distillery or take a day trip to one of the surrounding islands, such as the enchanting *Isle of Mull*? Book a trip with a local wildlife operator to see this island's amazing breeding sea eagles in the wild.

Cowal Highland Gathering

28–30 AUGUST



Dunoon Stadium, Argyll Street,
Dunoon, Argyll PA23 7RL

Phone for times

Price

Thursday £5 (adults) £2 (children 5-16);
Friday £7 (adults) £2 (children 5-16);
Saturday £10 in advance/£13 on the day
(adults) £5 (children 5-16)

Event website

Tel: 01369 703206



Be part of an unparalleled feast of Highland culture and experience the Cowal Gathering. As the world's biggest Highland games, it attracts some 3,500 competitors and an estimated 23,000 spectators every year.

Held in one of Scotland's most breathtaking regions, this three-day spectacular brings together world-class athletes and performers for an action-packed programme of wrestling, piping, Highland dancing, heavy events, races, and much more.

Witness magnificent displays of skill and stamina at the Scottish and World Highland Dancing championships, where the world's finest Highland dancers compete for a renowned Cowal Gold Medal, and see a 1,000 pipers and drummers uniting for the grand finale of the Cowal Pipe Band Championship – both are unforgettable sights.

Listen as pipers show off their dexterity in the *Piobaireachd*, *March* and *Strathspey and Reel*

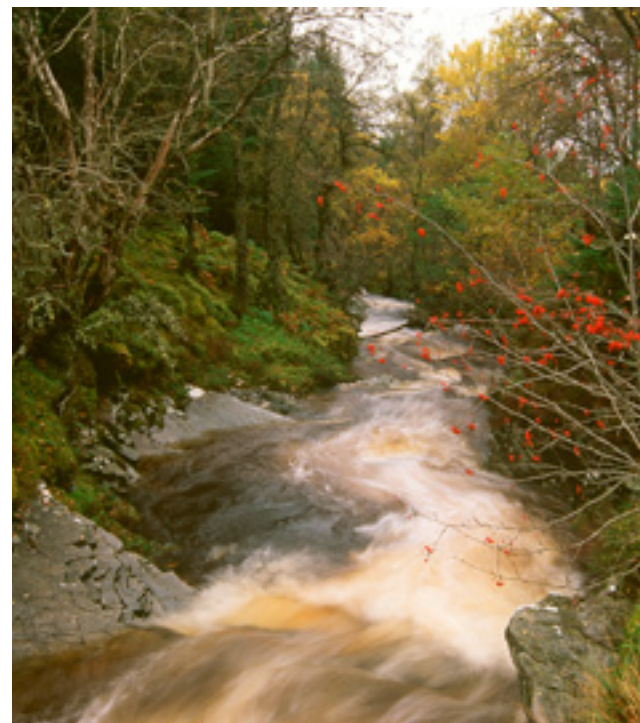
competitions, and marvel at incredible feats of strength as some of Scotland's strongest men and women gather for the awe-inspiring heavies. Perhaps most impressive of is the giant 'Tilhill' Caber event: one of the biggest cabers on the games circuit, it's a taxing feat even for these mighty athletes.

Challenge yourself to the 5k run on 28 August, or start your weekend in style at Friday night's lively family ceilidh in the special Cowal Ceilidh Tent. Special kids' attractions will keep the wee ones busy throughout the weekend, while hungry visitors can feast on fish and chips, smoothies and more at the Gourmet Kitchen.

Turn your visit to this games into a short break and check out the region's many great things to see and do. Experience the beauty of *Benmore Botanic Garden* and be amazed by the towering trees of Redwood Avenue as you enter the gardens, or plan a thrilling island adventure to the nearby *Isle of Bute*.

Birnam Highland Games

30 AUGUST



Games Field, Little Dunkeld,
Dunkeld, Perthshire PH8 0AD

11.00am

Price

Please contact event organiser

Event website

Tel: 01350 720041

Join with competitors and spectators on a lush, green field near *Dunkeld* for the Birnam Highland Games, one of the oldest in Scotland which dates back to 1864.

The backdrop of the stunning Perthshire scenery makes this a remarkable games to behold. It features many traditional games events, including a range of Highland dance competitions, piping contests, field and track events, and heavy favourites such as the caber toss and hammer throw.

A few unique events add an eccentric touch to this great family day out. Don a kilt to take part in the 'Mad Kiltie Dash' fun run, or dig into the World Championship Haggis Eating Competition,

free to anyone who feels their appetite is up to the challenge. Kids will be thrilled by the funfair too.

The nearby *Beatrix Potter Exhibition and Garden* is also a well worth a visit where you can discover more about this author and her much-loved characters, or discover the beautiful landscapes of Highland Perthshire and plan a walk in *Tay Forest Park*.

Peebles Highland Games

6 SEPTEMBER



Hay Lodge Park, Neidpath Road,
Peebles, Tweeddale EH45 8JQ

11.00am – 5.30pm

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01721 721738



Get energised at the start of this games and feel the anticipation build as you join the lively procession of guests, officials and chieftains of past and present as they march from the town centre to Hay Lodge Park. While you are following the parade, dozens of pipers, dancers and athletes will be warming up at the venue on the outskirts of *Peebles* before the competitions swing into action.

Taking place at the end of the Lothian & Borders Pipe Band Circuit, the Peebles Highland Games is a fun, friendly day out but, of course, there's a competitive edge! Dancers of all ages prove their talents in contests spanning novice to advanced levels, and the popular heavy events see

competitors take on the caber toss, shot put and hammer throw for prizes.

The busy programme also includes four levels of pipe band competitions, usually attracting around 30 groups and featuring more than 50 performances. Tuck in at a range of great food stalls, or enjoy a pint in the beer tent as you watch the games get underway.

During your time in the Scottish Borders, visit the magnificent *Traquair House*, which dates back to the 12th century, or test your nerve on a tree top adventure at *Go Ape!* in the luscious Glentress Forest.

Braemar Highland Gathering

6 SEPTEMBER



Princess Royal & Duke Of Fife
Memorial Park, Broombank
Terrace, Braemar, Aberdeenshire
AB35 5YX

9.30am – 5.00pm

Price
General entry: £10 (adults),
£2 (children). Seat tickets
£18-£45

Event website
Tel: 013397 55377

Enjoy the royal affair of the Braemar Highland Gathering. This Highland games, set in the heart of *Royal Deeside*, has enjoyed the fine company of Royal visitors for hundreds of years.

Founded in the 18th century, the games are believed to originate from those held by Malcolm III and were awarded Royal Patronage by Queen Victoria, a firm fan of all things Scottish. Since then the reigning monarch has been patron of the games, and the event has regularly welcomed Royal visitors ever since. Queen Elizabeth II, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales were all in attendance last year.

The gathering also boasts the oldest foot races of any Highland games in the world, having been organised on a regular basis since 1832. Relay racing,

a children's sack race, sprints and the famous Hill Race make up the field and track programme, while you can also enjoy the captivating sight of Highland dancing, caber tossing, piping, putting the stone and the tug o' war.

Hear the varied music of pipe bands from across Aberdeenshire and other parts of Scotland – don't miss the massed pipe display at noon, when the groups come together for one unforgettable performance.

After rubbing shoulders with royalty at the Gathering, continue in their footsteps and explore Royal Deeside. The *Victorian Heritage Trail* links together many of the places enjoyed in the area by Queen Victoria, from the *Balmoral Estate* to the *Old Royal Station* and *Royal Lochnagar Distillery*.

Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games 7 SEPTEMBER



Bogles Field, Essendy Road,
Blairgowrie, Perthshire
PH10 6QU

10.00am

Price
£7 (adult), £4 (concessions),
FREE (children), £18 (family)

Event website
Tel: 01738 827064



Though they date back several decades, Blairgowrie and Rattray are amongst the quirkiest Highland games on the circuit, having spiced up their traditional line-up with a few modern twists.

Put your strength to the test in the Ardblair Stones Challenge, a new event unique to Blairgowrie & Rattray. Inspired by ancient Scottish rituals, competitors are challenged to lift a range of enormous stones made by the Chieftain's son using Scottish cement and sand from the venue, Bogles Field.

They might not be quite big enough to lift a boulder or toss a caber yet, but kids can get practising with their very own mini Highland games. See them play toss the totem pole, try haggis hurling or race in the fun run – there's even a small prize for every little competitor.

Pet owners will be glad to hear that the family's four-legged members can now join in the

fun, too. Bring your dogs along to the Cool Canines Show for a chance to win the revered Scott Cup and join in novelty races and agility courses for both pets and handlers.

And of course, all the old favourites are still on the programme! From hammer throwing to Highland dancing, you'll see all the feats of strength and skill that make the Highland games so memorable. Why not join in the community tug o' war, when the friendly rivalry between the villages of Blairgowrie and Rattray is put to the test?

Located just a short drive from Perth, *Blairgowrie* is known for walking, angling and soft fruits. Visit a berry farm to pick your own raspberries and strawberries, or pop into the *VisitScotland Information Centre* in Blairgowrie for more tips on things to see and do in the region.

Masters World Championships

12-14 SEPTEMBER



Northern Meeting Park,
Ardross Street, Inverness
IV3 5NS

Telephone for times

Price
FREE

Event website
Tel: 01463 785006

Celebrate *Homecoming Scotland 2014* and the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Northern Meeting Park, the oldest Highland games stadium in the world. The Masters World Championships is a three-day spectacular of sport, cultural events and more.

Begin the extravaganza with the Parade of the Highland Clans, a beautiful torchlight procession through the streets of the charming city of *Inverness* to *Eden Court Theatre* on 12 September.

Watch 190 heavy athletes from 13 different countries, including Norway, Australia and Japan, attempt to be crowned the strongest, with the Masters World Championships, returning to Inverness for the third time.

Saturday is also a chance for you to see the 2014 Camanachd Cup Final, the most important tournament in *shinty* take place.

Finally, on the third and final day of this amazing event, you can watch the traditional caber toss and weight over the bar.

Inverness is a stunning city, perfect for a break this summer, as you can explore the streets, enjoy shopping and dining out, or venture outside to visit an array of great historic attractions including *Fort George*, *Cawdor Castle* and *Urquhart Castle*. The city is also within reach of the famous *Loch Ness*, so why not see if you can catch a glimpse of the Loch Ness Monster?

Pitlochry Highland Games

13 SEPTEMBER



Recreation Ground, Ferry Crescent, Pitlochry, Perthshire PH16 5DZ

10.30am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01796 473488



See some of Scotland's finest athletes compete for national titles at the Pitlochry Highland Games, a highlight of Perthshire's cultural calendar since 1852. One of the last games of the season, *Pitlochry* is home to a number of championship finals, making it an enthralling event for spectators and athletes alike.

Witness awesome feats of athleticism as young sportsmen and women zoom around the track in the Scottish Athletics Clubs Junior Relay Final, or leap towards gold in the Scottish Junior Championship for Long, Triple and High Jump. The country's toughest teams will battle it out in the British Tug o' War Championship, while local strongmen show off their stuff in the Perthshire Heavyweight League final.

Bagpipe fans are in for a treat, as the games are filled with the stirring sound of pipes from start

to finish. Follow the Pipe Band parade through the picturesque streets of Pitlochry at 11.40am, and don't miss the individual Pipe Band Championship, Solo Piping and Massed Bands in the afternoon.

As if that weren't enough, you'll also find the caber toss, shot put, hammer throw, Highland dancing and a whole host of Highland favourites on the programme. Throw in fun stalls and great local food, and you've got a fantastic day out for the whole family.

Need to unwind after all that excitement? Kick back with a dram of *Edradour Whisky*, made just a few minutes away in Scotland's smallest distillery. Take a wander through the charming town to find wonderful shops and restaurants, or check out what's on at the prestigious *Pitlochry Festival Theatre*.

Invercharron Highland Games

20 SEPTEMBER



Balblair Farm, Balblair, Ardgay, Sutherland IV24 3AW

10.30am

Price
Please contact event organiser

Event website
Tel: 01863 766841

Last but not least is Invercharron, the final – and one of the most exciting – Highland games of the year. This is where many of the important Scottish Games Association league results are decided, meaning competitive athletes will be giving it their all in a last-minute shot at the top.

Make sure you arrive sharp to catch the spectacular opening ceremony, a dramatic affair featuring the historic Beating of the Targe. These traditional circular shields were said to be used at the battles of *Bannockburn* and *Culloden*, providing a touch of historical inspiration for the games' warrior-like heavies.

If you're a keen runner, make sure you pack your trainers! The games include a great range of running events, with the challenging Hill Race offering a rather impressive senior prize of £300.

Your littlest athletes will love running in the sack, toddler or novelty races, and under 12s and 16s can put their speed to the test in the 100, 200 or 400m categories.

Prefer to spectate? Sit back and watch dazzling displays of Highland dancing, impressive heavy events, fierce tugs o' war and slick-fingered piping. One of the games' many highlights is the exciting 'De'il Tak the Hindmost' cycle race where the last cyclist drops out at the end of each lap, leaving only the fastest to zip around the track.

Located just north of Bonar Bridge in Kyle of Sutherland, Invercharron combines an action-packed programme with a gorgeous Highland setting. Take a walk through *Balblair Forest* for great views across to Carbisdale Castle, or play nine holes at the nearby *Bonar-Bridge Ardgay Golf Club*.

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Aberdeen City & Shire



Harbour in Portsoy, Aberdeenshire

Traditionally home to the Royal Family during the summer months, Aberdeenshire boasts unspoilt landscapes, striking architecture, majestic castles, sumptuous local produce and some of the best beaches in Britain. This year you'll find a range of fantastic Highland games taking place from the mountainside village of Braemar to the charming harbour town of Stonehaven and beyond, all within easy access of Aberdeen itself. Take time during your visit to stroll through award-winning blooms in one of the Granite City's many gardens, or witness the awesome cliff-top ruins of Dunnottar Castle for a glimpse of the region's dramatic past.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
7 June: Cornhill Highland Games	20 July: Stonehaven Highland Games
15 June: Aberdeen's Highland Games	2 August: Aboyne Highland Games
21 June: Oldmeldrum Sports & Highland Games	14 August: Ballater Highland Games
28 June: Drumtochty Highland Games	23 August: Lonach Highland Gathering & Games
12 July: Braemar Junior Highland Games	6 September: Braemar Highland Gathering

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Argyll & The Isles



Kiloran Bay, Isle of Colonsay

Dramatic landscapes meet rich heritage and peaceful island life in Argyll & The Isles. Located on Scotland's south west coast, this magnificent region boasts some of the country's most breathtaking scenery, from the idyllic white sands of Kiloran Beach on Colonsay, to the avenue of towering Giant Redwoods at the stunning Benmore Botanic Gardens. The area is also home to the world's largest Highland games, the Cowal Gathering, and is widely renowned for its whisky – those fond of a tippie should make a trip to Islay, where no fewer than eight distilleries produce some of Scotland's finest malts.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
7 June: Helensburgh & Lomond Highland Games	23 August Bute Highland Games
22 June: Lorne Highland Games	28 August: Argyllshire Gathering
22 July: Inveraray Highland Games	28 - 30 August: Cowal Highland Gathering
24 July: Mull Highland Games	

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Ayrshire & Arran



Dunure Castle, Dunure, South Ayrshire

A region of striking contrasts, Ayrshire & Arran offers an easily accessible rural idyll on the west coast of Scotland. Exhilarating outdoor adventures, pristine beaches and mouth-watering seafood await you on the Isle of Arran which provides a breathtakingly lovely backdrop to the Brodick Highland Games. Take the time to discover Ayrshire’s bustling market towns, prestigious golf courses, and the natural beauty of the Galloway Forest Park. Gaze up at the stars at the Scottish Dark Sky Observatory and trace the life of Scotland’s National Bard and Ayrshire native, Robert Burns.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
1 June: Carrick Lowland Gathering	9 August: Dundonald Highland Games
9 August: Brodick Highland Games	

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Dundee & Angus



Glamis Castle, Angus

Dundee & Angus offers something for travellers of all ages, be it remarkable scenery, top golf courses, or wonderful cultural attractions honouring the region’s rich history. Explore the elegant rooms and delightful gardens of Glamis Castle, where the Strathmore Highland Games will be held on 8 June, or pop into the nearby Angus Folk Museum for a look at rural life in the region. Just half an hour’s drive away, the seaside city of Dundee offers fantastic shopping and a range of great attractions including the RRS Discovery, the ship that took Captain Scott on his remarkable voyage to Antarctica.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
8 June: Strathmore Highland Games	
22 August Glenisla Highland Games	

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Edinburgh & The Lothians



View from Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh

Scotland's magnificent capital is home to many of the country's best-loved attractions, from the remarkable Edinburgh Castle to the fascinating National Museum of Scotland, while the surrounding Lothians boast beautiful countryside and picturesque villages. Experience a fantastic Highland games just 45 minutes from Edinburgh in North Berwick, a charming seaside town with sandy beaches, diverse birdlife and a world-class golf course. Walk the eastern end of the John Muir Way to the famed naturalist's birthplace of Dunbar, or pay a visit to Lennoxlove House in nearby Haddington to see fine collections of artwork and Mary Queen of Scots memorabilia.

HIGHLAND GAMES
9 August: North Berwick Highland Games

- EDINBURGH & THE LOTHIAN**
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Glasgow & The Clyde Valley



Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow

This summer the world's attention will be fixed on Glasgow as it hosts the 2014 Commonwealth Games in July and August. Join the thousands of spectators and athletes descending upon this friendly and cosmopolitan city and discover one of the best places to shop in the UK, world-class museums, a lively music scene, and so much more. Venture beyond the city and you'll be greeted by tranquil countryside home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, secluded beauty spots and plentiful walking and cycling trails. Explore inside grand country estates and encounter a surprisingly diverse array of creatures great and small in nature reserves and country parks.

HIGHLAND GAMES
7 June: Shotts Highland Games

- GLASGOW & THE CLYDE VALLEY**
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The Highlands



Walking in Glen Coe

For an authentic Highland games experience, there are few better places than the region where it all began! Visit the original home of the caber toss, the stone put and the iconic *Highland Fling* and discover a region of fascinating history, rich culture and proud traditions – not to mention pristine beaches, diverse wildlife and breathtaking mountain landscapes. You'll find a variety of Highland games all over this wonderful region. From the vibrant city of Inverness and the gorgeous Isle of Skye to charming towns such as Dornoch and Strathpeffer, each event promises a fantastic day out.

HIGHLAND GAMES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 19 July: Lochcarron Highland Games | 6 August: Isle of Skye Highland Games |
| 19 July: Tomintoul Highland Games | 8 August: Assynt Highland Games |
| 19 July: Inverness Highland Games | 9 August: Abernethy Highland Games |
| 25 July: Durness Highland Gathering | 9 August: Strathpeffer Highland Games |
| 26 July: Dufftown Highland Games | 14 August: Tain Highland Gathering |
| 26 July: Halkirk Highland Games | 16 August: The Macallan Nairn Highland Games |
| 30 July: Arisaig Highland Games and
Clan Donald Gathering | 16 August: Helmsdale Highland Games |
| 1 August: Dornoch Highland Gathering | 23 August: Glenurquhart Highland Gathering |
| 2 August: Newtonmore Highland Games | 24 August: Grantown-on-Spey Highland Games |
| 2 August: Aberlour Strathspey Highland Games | 12 - 14 September: Masters World Championships |
| | 20 September: Invercharron Highland Games |

- THE HIGHLANDS**
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The Kingdom of Fife



Anstruther Harbour, Fife

The Kingdom of Fife blends enchanting fishing villages and glorious beaches with historic monuments and a wealth of cultural attractions. This summer you'll find fantastic Highland games taking place all across the region, from the former Royal Burgh of Cupar and the coastal resort of Burntisland to St Andrews, the historic university town famed around the world as The Home of Golf. Make sure you find time during your visit to tuck into Fife's fantastic local produce, be it a decadent three-course meal in one of the region's Michelin-star restaurants or delicious fish 'n' chips at the award-winning Anstruther Fish Bar.

HIGHLAND GAMES

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 June: Markinch Highland Games | 27 July: St Andrews Highland Games |
| 14 June: Cupar Highland Games | 2 August: Inverkeithing Highland Games |
| 28 June: Ceres Highland Games | 23 - 24 August: World Highland Games Heavy
Events Championships |
| 5 July: Thornton Highland Gathering | |
| 21 July: Burntisland Highland Games | |

- THE KINGDOM OF FIFE**
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Loch Lomond, The Trossachs, Stirling & Forth Valley



Stirling Castle, Stirling

Nestled in Scotland’s central belt, Loch Lomond, The Trossachs, Stirling & Forth Valley offer much to discover. The city of Stirling is brimming with history, from its cobbled roads and medieval ruins right to the iconic castle that has housed dozens of kings and queens. Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park comprises 720 miles of verdant glens and shimmering lochs, and the Forth Valley is home to unique attractions including The Falkirk Wheel and the Dunmore Pineapple. No matter which Highland games you choose to attend, you’re sure to find a wealth of delights just around the corner.

HIGHLAND GAMES

- | | |
|--|--|
| 5 July: Luss Highland Games | 26 July: Airth Highland Games |
| 12 July: Alva Games | 3 August: Bridge of Allan Highland Games |
| 19 July: Loch Lomond Highland Games | 9 August: Ardlui Highland Games |
| 20 July: Kinlochard Mini Highland Games and Commonwealth Games | 16 August: Stirling Highland Games |
| 20 July: Rosneath Peninsula Highland Games | 23 August: Invergordon Highland Games |

LOCH LOMOND, THE TROSSACHS, STIRLING & FORTH VALLEY

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Outer Hebrides



Calanais Standing Stones, Calanais, Isle of Lewis

With its wonderfully deserted beaches, turquoise waters and rugged moorland, this beautiful chain of 200 interlinked islands off the north western coast of mainland Scotland offer a serene retreat from busy, urban life. The South Uist Games & Pipe Society Highland Games are a fantastic way to soak up the idyllic surroundings while experiencing the very best in authentic Highland culture. Immerse yourself in the natural beauty of this 130 mile archipelago at 55 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and three National Nature Reserves. Discover its abundant birdlife, visit amazing archaeological sites like the Calanais Standing Stones, and sample local delicacies like Stornoway Black Pudding.

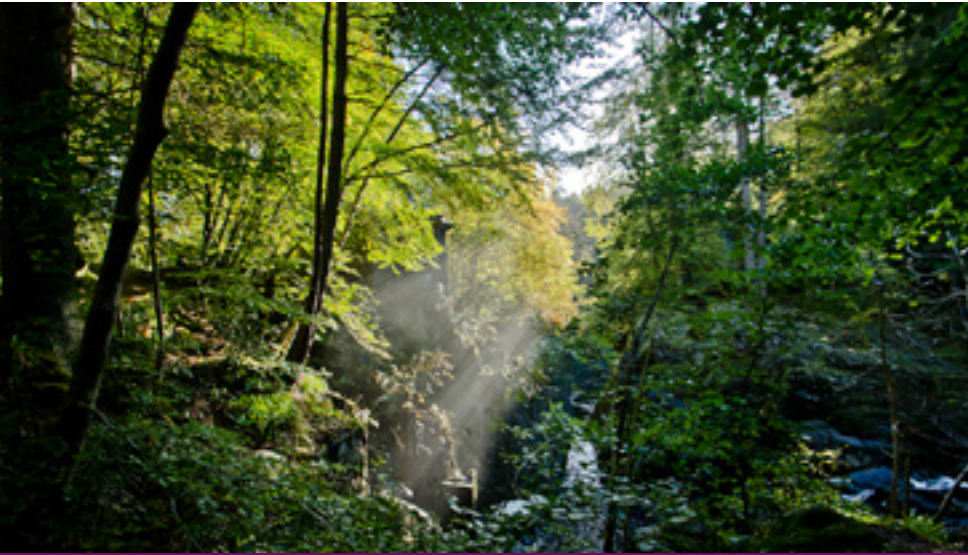
HIGHLAND GAMES

- 23 July: South Uist Games & Piping Society Highland Games

OUTER HEBRIDES

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Perthshire



The Hermitage, Dunkeld

Perthshire boasts dozens of charming towns and villages scattered between spectacular forests, woodlands and parks. A visit to one of the region's Highland games is the perfect opportunity to take in its wonderful scenery. Marvel at the ancient species that have earned it the nickname 'Big Tree Country' at Craigvinean Forest, just a short drive from Blairgowrie, or wander the magical Falls of Braan and the wild 'tree garden' at the Hermitage. Spend a pleasant day in Perth, Scotland's newest city, discover the charming Victorian resort town of Pitlochry, or visit Crieff for a taste of Glenturret at the oldest whisky distillery in Scotland.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
2 July: Kenmore Highland Games	16 August: Rannoch Highland Gathering
26 July: Balquhidder, Lochearnhead & Strathyre Highland Games	17 August: Crieff Highland Games
6 August: Killin Highland Games	23 August: Strathardle Highland Games
9 August: Atholl & Breadalbane Highland Games	30 August: Birnam Highland Games
10 August: Perth Highland Games	7 September: Blairgowrie & Rattray Highland Games
	13 September: Pitlochry Highland Games

PERTSHIRE
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Scottish Borders



The River Tweed at Cardrona

The Scottish Borders are a captivating region of lush valleys, heather-clad moorlands and enchanting gardens replete with colourful blooms. Enjoy a great family day out at the Peebles Highland Games set in a genteel town to the west of the region bordered by the River Tweed. The local golf course offers panoramic views and a challenging game, and outdoor enthusiasts can find adventures aplenty in the neighbouring Glentress Forest Park. Wander its woodlands and look out for local wildlife on one of five forest trails, take in the luscious scenery as you explore the region on horseback, or speed around the renowned 7stanes mountain biking circuit.

HIGHLAND GAMES	
30 August: Peebles Highland Games	

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Clan facts

CLAN DONALD

30 July: Arisaig Highland Games and Clan Donald Gathering

The Highlands

Located in the pretty village of Arisaig on the west coast of the Highlands, the Arisaig Highland Games feature the Clan Donald Gathering, hosted by the home clan of Clan Ranald. Clan Grant

9 August: Abernethy Highland Games

Perthshire

Known as the 'Friendly Games', the Abernethy Highland Games is the setting for the annual Clan Grant Gathering, which sees members from all over the world unite in this charming Strathspey village.

CLAN GUN AND CLAN SINCLAIR

26 July: Halkirk Highland Games

The Highlands

The popular Halkirk games play host to the Gatherings of Clans Gun and Sinclair and are one of the Highlands' most popular sporting events, regularly welcoming crowds of 5,000.

CLAN MACDOUGAL

28 August: Argyllshire Gathering

Argyll & The Isles

The Argyllshire Gathering was originally established to foster friendships between the region's clans, and still features heritage displays from the MacDougall Clan Society.

CLAN MACPHERSON

2 August: Newtonmore Highland Games

The Highlands

The picturesque village of Newtonmore is home to the annual Clan Macpherson Annual Rally and March, which sees clan members from Scotland and beyond gather in the upper reaches of the Spey Valley.

CLAN MATHESON

19 July: Lochcarron Highland Games

The Highlands

Over 100 members of Clan Matheson are due to attend the 2014 Lochcarron Highland Games, which are part of the International Clan Matheson Gathering.

CLAN MENZIES

9 August: Atholl & Breadalbane Highland Gathering

Perthshire

See members of Clan Menzies and the Games Chieftain lead a procession around the arena at the opening of the Atholl & Breadalbane Highland Gathering.



Researching your family roots

Everyone has a story and a rich and unique genealogical history, but some people are still to discover it.

If you're attending one of the exciting Highland games events in Scotland and started wondering if your roots may be Scottish too, or whether you're connected with one of the Scottish clans, why not dig a little into your ancestors' history to find out? There are plenty of easy-to-use tools for delving into your family's past and even more historical sites to visit, so we've rounded up some tips to guide you on your ancestral journey:

EDINBURGH'S RESOURCES

There is a wealth of genealogical and historical materials held in Scottish archives, libraries and record repositories throughout the country. If you live in Scotland or get the chance to visit, begin your search at the **National Records of Scotland**, home to the **ScotlandsPeople Centre** in Edinburgh. One of the most varied collections of public and private archives in Europe, you can search statutory registers of births, marriages and deaths, census returns, Old Parish Registers, Wills and Testaments and browse more than 100 million index entries. This exciting, world-leading initiative is the official Scottish genealogy resource.

Pay a visit to the **Scottish Genealogy Society** on Victoria Street for more information and advice, or become a member of one of **Scotland's family history societies**. Both are valuable sources of information, but best of all – it's where you can meet

like-minded travellers, get some extra guidance and encouragement and share and exchange your experiences and tips with fellow researchers.

The **National Library of Scotland** should certainly be on your list of 'sites-to-explore' too, as it's the world's leading centre for the study of Scotland and the Scots, while at the **Scottish Archive Network**, also accessible online, you will find plenty of digital images of exhibitions, publications and more to help you dig into your past.

And that's not all!

REGIONAL ARCHIVES

Scotland boasts an excellent range of archive centres at local registrars' offices and libraries as well as museums and heritage centres outside of the capital city. The fantastic **Highland Archive Centre** in Inverness is a state-of-the-art facility with a searchroom, archive conservation unit and repository facilities, while the **Heritage Hub** in the Scottish Borders' town of Hawick is a treasure trove of archive materials, offering one of the most advanced facilities of its kind in the UK.

If you think your family may have come from the islands, **Co Leis Thu?** on the Isle of Harris in the Outer Hebrides or **Orkney Family History Society** in Kirkwall are great starting points to get your family tree researched.



FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES

It's undoubtedly a rewarding process having your family roots researched and discovered, but make sure you visit and explore the sites your ancestors lived and worked for a full, first-hand experience.

- Tour your **family castle** and **historical sites** connected with your ancestors
- Visit the **cemetery** or **churchyard** where your ancestors are buried
- Find out if your clan was involved in the last battle fought on British soil at **Culloden Battlefield** near Inverness
- Explore the **Highland Folk Museum** in Newtonmore, an amazing, mile-long recreation site of an old Highland township
- Or to uncover the turbulent Jacobite times in Scottish history, visit **West Highland Museum** in Fort William

USEFUL TIPS

- For an idea of whether your surname is connected with one of Scotland's famous clans and to find out more of where your family may have come from, use the **Ancestral Scotland's** clan search facility
- To track down your family tartan, browse the **Scottish Register of Tartans'** online collection

For more information on researching your Scottish roots and how to follow in the footsteps of your ancestors, visit www.visitscotland.com/ancestry where you will find further guidance, **clan itineraries** and more.



Share your experiences and pictures
from this year's games

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