

The Land of Whisky

A visitor guide to one of Scotland's five whisky regions.

Lowland



Whisky

The practice of distilling *whisky* has been lovingly perfected throughout Scotland for centuries and began as a way of turning rain-soaked barley into a drinkable spirit, using the fresh water from Scotland's crystal-clear springs, streams and burns.

To this day, distilleries across the country continue the tradition of using pure spring water from the same sources that have been used for centuries.

From the source of the water and the shape of the still to the wood of the cask used to mature the spirit, there are many factors that make Scotch whisky so wonderfully different and varied from distillery to distillery.

No two are the same; each has its own proud heritage, unique setting and its own way of doing things that has evolved and been refined over time. Paying a visit to a distillery lets you discover more about the environment and the people who shape the taste of the Scotch whisky you enjoy. So, when you're sitting back and relaxing with a dram of our most famous export at the end of your distillery tour, you'll be appreciating the essence of Scotland as it swirls in your glass.

Home to the greatest concentration of distilleries in the world, Scotland is divided into five distinct *whisky regions*. These are Islay, Speyside, Highland, Lowland and Campbeltown.

Find out more information about whisky, how it's made, what foods to pair it with and more:

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Lowland

With miles of rolling farmland and neat woodlands, the Lowlands is one of the most charming and accessible whisky regions in Scotland. Encompassing the great cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as the historic Kingdom of Fife, the Lowlands reaches from the invisible Highland/Lowland divide, down to the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway, and out west to Ayrshire & Arran.

Boasting a mild climate and flat farmland, the Lowlands is an ideal region for growing barley, and, consequently, for producing whisky. The region is famous for producing light, traditionally unpeated whiskies that are renowned for their sweet, grassy notes and gentle style, earning them the affectionate nickname the 'Lowland Ladies'.

Although many of the Lowlands' historic distilleries went into decline in the 18th and 19th centuries following the rise in the popularity of blended whisky, which favoured more robust single malts, a few long-established single malt distilleries still remain open today and continue to produce classic Lowland malts that are hugely popular for their fresh flavours and gentle style.

In recent years, several brand-new distilleries have opened their doors too, and the Lowlands are

also home to five of the country's seven high-volume grain distilleries, which, although they aren't open to the public, continue to produce the grain whiskies that are used in some of the world's most famous whisky blends.

Take advantage of the Lowlands' great transport links to go on a tour of the region's diverse single malt distilleries. Learn about the skill behind creating a brand-new single malt at a newly-opened artisan distillery, or visit one of the area's long established distilleries to discover more about Lowland whisky production in times gone past, tour their famous buildings and sample a delicious dram.

While you're in the region, why not pop into the **A.D. Rattray Whisky Experience** in Kirkoswald, to nose and taste an incredible selection of malts, fill your own bottle straight from a cask or book a delicious whisky tasting session? You could also learn about the whisky making process on a terrific 'barrel ride' at the **Scotch Whisky Experience**, located on the historic Royal Mile in Edinburgh, where you'll also learn about the different whisky regions and see the largest collection of whisky in the world.

Read on to learn more about the Lowlands' wonderful whisky distilleries and plan your trip around the area.

Be sure to check out our guides for the other four whisky regions: **Campbeltown, Islay, Highland and Speyside.**
www.visitscotland.com/distilleries-guides

Ailsa Bay Distillery

LOCATION

Girvan, Ayrshire.

OVERVIEW

Ailsa Bay Distillery is owned by William Grant & Sons and was named after Ailsa Craig, a rocky island just off the Ayrshire coast. It was opened in 2007 to supply single malt whisky for the popular blended whisky Grants.

Not open to the public

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Ailsa Craig*
- *McKechnie Institute*
- *A.D. Rattray Whisky Experience – Kirkoswald, Ayrshire*
- *Arran Distillery – Arran*
- *Annandale Distillery – Dumfries & Galloway*

Annandale Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

Annan, Dumfries & Galloway.

HOW TO GET THERE

It is easy to get to from the main arterial road into Scotland, the M74. Take junction 22 and drive along the A75 to Annan where the distillery will be signposted. Alternatively, you can also exit the M74 at junction 20 and take the B722 all the way to the distillery gates.

OVERVIEW

Like many other distilleries before it, Annandale was mothballed and consigned to the history



books. That is, until a couple of whisky enthusiasts decided to resurrect the distillery and rebuild it from its derelict and crumbling remains. Originally established back in 1830, the distillery finally re-opened its doors in November 2014 and has started to make its first whisky in nearly 100 years.

Local history is at the heart of the new distillery’s identity. Its signature malts, Man O’Sword and Man O’Words, are named after two national heroes with local connections; Scottish king Robert the Bruce and poet Robert Burns respectively. The Bruce was 7th Lord of Annandale while Burns resided in Dumfries up until his premature death. Annan was also once an established port of emigration for many Scots to the New World. As a tribute, the distillery’s branding has incorporated a sail in the letter ‘A’ in Annandale.

Visitors can learn more about the distillery’s rebirth on various tours, including special tours with the distillery manager Malcolm Rennie or by appointment with the distillery owner Professor David Thomson.

OPENING TIMES

Open all year around, except Christmas and New Year’s Day.

SAMPLE

- Man O’Sword and Man O’Words not yet released but Rascally Liquor (new-make spirit) available.

WHERE TO BUY

As the distillery only re-opened in 2014, its first single malts will need to mature for at least three years. They are widely expected to be available from 2018. New-make spirit is now on sale online and from the distillery shop.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Gretna Green Famous Blacksmiths Shop*
- *7stanes*
- *The Globe Inn in Dumfries*
- *Andy Goldsworthy’s Striding Arches*
- *Cream o’Galloway Dairy Co.*
- *Wigtown Book Town*

Annandale Distillery at night

Auchentoshan Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

By Dalmuir, Clydebank, Glasgow.

HOW TO GET THERE

Situated on the A82 between Glasgow and Loch Lomond, Auchentoshan is easy to get to by car. You could also take the train from Glasgow Queen Street out to Kilpatrick and walk to the distillery from there. The walk only takes around 20 minutes, though be sure to use a map so you don’t get lost as the roads around this area can be busy.

OVERVIEW

Established in 1823, Auchentoshan Distillery is famously the only distillery in Scotland to practice the art of ‘triple distillation’, a process

where the spirit is passed through three separate whisky stills before being transferred to the cask. Visit Auchentoshan to discover more about how they produce their unique single malts, and marvel at the strong notes of fruit and citrus in their delicately smooth whisky.

With seven tours on offer, ranging in price from £6 for The Classic Tour to £200 for the exclusive Behind Closed Doors tour, Auchentoshan has plenty of whisky experiences for you to choose from.

For something a little bit different book onto The Story of Oak tour and discover how the distillery’s carefully selected casks act as key influencers on the flavour of the finished whisky. Priced at £35 this tour provides a great insight into the importance of the whisky cask, and you’ll be given four of Auchentoshan’s remarkable whiskies to taste, as well as a

sample from one of their specially selected single malt casks

OPENING TIMES

Seven days a week, from 10:00 till 17:00

SAMPLE

- Auchentoshan American Oak
- Auchentoshan Three Wood
- Auchentoshan 12 Year Old
- Auchentoshan 18 Year Old
- Auchentoshan 21 Year Old

WHERE TO BUY

Most major retailers and online.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Glengoyne Distillery*
- *Deanston Distillery*
- *A.D. Rattray Whisky Experience*
- *Titan Crane*
- *Clydebank Museum*
- *Dumbarton Castle*

Auchentoshan Distillery



Bladnoch Distillery

LOCATION

Near Wigtown, Dumfries & Galloway.

HOW TO GET THERE

Scotland’s most southerly distillery is found nestled deep in the scenic landscape beside the River Bladnoch near Wigtown in Dumfries and Galloway.

OVERVIEW

Established in 1817 by John and Thomas McClelland, Bladnoch was blessed by surrounding farmland and rich barley to utilise in the whisky-making process.

The distillery has changed hands over the years, and is currently seeking a new owner.

(Shop is open, currently no tours)

SAMPLE

- Bladnoch 10 Year Old
- Bladnoch 16 Year Old First Cask
- Bladnoch 22 Year Old Mackillop’s Choice

WHERE TO BUY

The Bladnoch distillery shop is currently open or buy online

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Annandale Distillery*
- *Creetown Gem Rock Museum*
- *Cardoness Castle*
- *The Whithorn Story*
- *Cally Gardens*

Cameronbridge Distillery

LOCATION

Leven, Fife.

OVERVIEW

Cameronbridge is the largest grain distillery in Scotland. Now owned by Diageo, this distillery’s origin dates back to 1824 when it was built by John Haig. Two years later, it pioneered the column still method of distillation, where the still has two columns. In 1877 John Haig & Co merged with five other whisky companies to form the Distillers Company.

In the late 1980 and early 1990s, the distiller underwent some major renovations, when the grain distillery switched to a multipurpose site, producing white and other spirits. Another major overhaul took place in 2000 and today, Gordon’s gin, Tanqueray Gins, Smirnoff, Pimm’s and Archers are produced on the site. The grain spirit is used in blended whiskies including Johnnie Walker, Bell’s, Haig Gold Whisky and Black & White.

Recently, the Diageo have released Haig Club Single Grain Scotch Whisky, which is produced at Cameronbridge. It’s packaged in a distinctive-looking square blue bottle, and the television advert was directed by Guy Ritchie and starred former footballer and celebrity David Beckham.

Not open to the public

SAMPLE

- Haig Gold Label
- Haig Dimple
- Haig Club Single Grain Scotch Whisky
- Johnnie Walker Black Label

WHERE TO BUY

Retailers and online

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Eden Brewery, St Andrews*
- *St Andrews Farmhouse Cheese, Pittenweem*
- *Cairnie Fruit Farm, Cupar*
- *Balgove Larder, near St Andrews*

Daftmill Distillery

Private Tours

LOCATION

By Cupar, Fife.

OVERVIEW

Daftmill is around a decade-old, making it Scotland’s newest and smallest malt whisky distillery. The distillery and the farm owe their ‘daft’ names to the nearby burn

which, due to the unusual lay of the land, appears to be running upstream. The whisky-making operation at Daftmill however, set against the distant, mist shrouded peaks of West Lomond, is anything but.

A family enterprise, Daftmill is run by the farm’s owners, the Cuthberts, who have been growing malting barley in the Howe of Fife for six generations and have a true understanding of the patience and craftsmanship an outstanding malt demands. Using its own un-peated barley, Daftmill is housed inside a beautifully preserved 18th century barn, and draws its crystal-clear water from an artesian well on the premises.

Producing just 20,000 litres of spirit a year, Daftmill’s whisky is waiting to be bottled for sale. You’ll have to wait a wee while yet before pouring a dram of this ruby-red, full-bodied sherried whisky as it quietly matures in old bourbon casks.

Daftmill is currently not open to public and doesn’t have visitor facilities. However, it may be possible to arrange private tours for small groups by appointment. Visit the site to get in touch.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Hill of Tarvit*
- *The Scottish Deer Centre*
- *Eden Mill Distillery*
- *Balmerino Abbey*

Bladnoch Distillery



Eden Mill Distillery

Tours available on request

LOCATION

St Andrews, Fife.

HOW TO GET THERE

Travel by car along the A91 or A915

OVERVIEW

Visit one of Scotland’s smallest (and newest) whisky, beer and gin producers – all at one location! Eden Mill Distillery was opened in 2014 and has already begun filling casks with the new signature whisky, a lovely, lightly peated coastal Highland style. The distillery is unashamedly small, only racking eight barrels of whisky a week, but this means that they can give every drop all the care and attention a true craft whisky deserves.

Visit Eden Mill to discover how they craft their artisan whisky. Explore the distillery and brewery with your knowledgeable guide before enjoying something delicious to drink in the verdant courtyard garden.

OPENING TIMES

Open all year though tours should be booked in advance.

WHERE TO BUY

Online

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Kingsbarns Distillery*
- *St Andrews Cathedral*
- *St Andrews Botanic Gardens*
- *St Andrews Aquarium*

Girvan Distillery

LOCATION

Girvan, Ayrshire.

OVERVIEW

Located on the outskirts of the lovely seaside town of Girvan, Girvan Distillery was built in 1963 by William Grant & Sons to supply grain whisky for their popular blends. Bottles of its single grain whisky have been released and are also available under the Black Barrel label.

Not open to the public

SAMPLE

- Grants
- Black Barrel
- Girvan Patent Still - Proof Strength
- Girvan Patent Still No. 4 apps

WHERE TO BUY

Bottles of Grants can be bought from most major retailers while bottles of single grain whisky can be bought online.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Ailsa Craig*
- *McKechnie Institute*
- *A.D. Rattray Whisky Experience, Kirkoswald, Ayrshire*
- *Arran Distillery, Arran*
- *Annandale Distillery, Dumfries & Galloway*
- *Stumpy Tower*
- *Crossraguel Abbey*

The still room at Eden Mill Distillery





Glenkinchie Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

Pencaitland, East Lothian.

HOW TO GET THERE

Travel by car along the A1 to the distillery, located just 30 minutes from Edinburgh. The distillery also runs daily minibus services from Edinburgh city centre, starting at £20 per person for the return transport, tour and free tasting.

OVERVIEW

Enjoy charming views of lush East Lothian farmland on a visit to one of Scotland's most famous lowland distilleries. Located south east of Edinburgh, Glenkinchie Distillery's signature style of whisky – light, sweet and malty – certainly contributes towards the lowlands reputation for producing a softer style of whisky and has been a key component in blends, such as Haig's, Dimple and Dewar's, since the distillery was founded.

Visit the distillery for a unique insight into how they craft their single malts using the pure water drawn from the nearby Lammermuir Hills. Begin your tour in the distillery's exhibition, housed on the original malting floors, and see the renowned model distillery, before you join your guide on an in depth tour around the distillery buildings, learning about the whisky making process along the way. Finish your tour in the bar

with a free sample of Glenkinchie's light, fruity and dry Edinburgh Malt.

Tours begin at £8 for a standard adult ticket on the Glenkinchie Tour, which includes one free tasting, or you could opt for the Flavour of Scotland Tour, which is priced at £12 and includes a number of free samples from both Glenkinchie Distillery and other malt whisky distilleries from around Scotland.

Glenkinchie Distillery also offer an excellent shuttle bus service to and from Edinburgh city centre, priced at £20 for the return transport and Glenkinchie Tour or £24 for the return transport and Flavour of Scotland Tour.

OPENING TIMES

Open 7 days a week though opening times vary.

SAMPLE

- Glenkinchie 12 year old
- Glenkinchie Distillers Edition

WHERE TO BUY

Most major retailers and online.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Crichton Castle, Crichton*
- *Museum of Flight, East Fortune*
- *Dirleton Castle, North Berwick*
- *Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick*
- *The Scotch Whisky Experience, Edinburgh*

Glenkinchie Distillery

Kingbarns Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

Near Kingsbarns, Fife.

HOW TO GET THERE

Kingbarns Distillery & Visitor Centre is on East Newhall Farm on the A917, just outside the village of Kingbarns in Fife. It is served by a regular local bus service.

OVERVIEW

Travel to these unassuming renovated farm buildings to witness something new and exciting in the world of whisky – Kingbarns Distillery, established in 2014.

The whisky may be new, but it’s not without heritage – the Wemyss family who own the distillery and

surrounding estate have been in the business for nearly 200 years, both producing high quality grains and independently bottling spirits.

Driven by the imagination and spirit of Douglas Clement, who was once a golf caddy at the nearby course, Kingbarns Distillery is now up and running. The first spirits have been distilled into casks and most will be ready by 2018 at the earliest, when they will have matured for three years and a day, the minimum amount of time required for a single malt Scotch whisky.

Book a tour to explore the journey of a very new distillery from the initial dream to the impending dram. Start your tour in the historic Doocot Visitor Centre to see the very first cask which was filled, see the whisky making process, enjoy a tasting, and perhaps even sample the “new make spirit” - a work in progress of the light, fruity whisky to come.

Check out the café too, and make sure you’re prepared to try out the putting green in the summer months.

OPENING TIMES

Open daily from April to September between 10am and 6pm (5pm October to March).

SAMPLE

Not yet released, early casks available to buy soon.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Kingbarns Golf Links*
- *Cambo Gardens*
- *Crail Museum and Heritage Centre*
- *St Andrews Farmhouse Cheese Company*
- *St Andrews Cathedral*

Kingsbarns Distillery

North British Distillery

LOCATION

Edinburgh.

OVERVIEW

North British Distillery is one of Scotland’s largest grain whisky manufacturers. Founded in 1885, the distillery’s grain whisky is a key component in many world-famous blends, including The Famous Grouse, J&B Rare, Johnnie Walker Black Label and Cutty Sark.

Not open to the public

SAMPLE

- The Famous Grouse
- J&B Rare
- Johnnie Walker Black Label
- Cutty Sark

WHERE TO BUY

Most major retailers and online

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Glenkinchie Distillery, Pencaitland*
- *The Scotch Whisky Experience, Edinburgh*
- *Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh*
- *Edinburgh Gin Distillery, Edinburgh*

Starlaw Distillery

LOCATION

Bathgate, Livingston, West Lothian.

OVERVIEW

One of the newest to be opened in Scotland, Starlaw Distillery first began producing grain whisky in 2011. It is sometimes referred to as the Glen Turner Distillery, Glen Turner being a subsidiary of the French parent company, La Martiniquais - makers of Label 5 and Sir Edwards whisky, popular blended whiskies in France.

Not open to the public

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *Edinburgh Castle*
- *National Museum of Scotland*
- *Royal Yacht Britannia*
- *Glenkinchie Distillery*
- *Royal Botanic Garden*
- *Palace of Holyroodhouse*
- *Scottish Parliament*
- *Falkirk Wheel*
- *The Helix/Kelpies*
- *Linlithgow Palace*

Strathclyde Distillery

LOCATION

Glasgow.

OVERVIEW

The Strathclyde Distillery is a grain distillery, which produces large amounts of grain whisky to be used in blends on Moffat Street in Glasgow. Like most grain distilleries, Strathclyde is classed as a Lowlands distillery. It has no official bottlings, only a few cask strength bottles have been produced independently. The water source is Loch Katrine, a freshwater loch placed within the remarkable landscapes of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park.

Not open to the public.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- *The Pot Still*
- *Dram!*
- *The Scotia Bar*
- *Glasgow Green*
- *People’s Palace & Winter Gardens*
- *Tron Theatre*





Be sure to check out our guides for the other **four regions**.

Driving around Scotland is a great way to see more of the country but before you head out exploring by car, there are a few rules and regulations you should be aware of: www.visitscotland.com/travel/information/driving-in-scotland

Drink responsibly: find useful information about drinking: www.drinksarter.org