

Amazing Aberdeenshire

2-5 Day Itinerary



Day 1 - Harbour Life & Coastal Icons

Welcome to Dalriada, where the sea meets serenity. Start your trip by soaking up Stonehaven's authentic charm, beginning in the town centre near the Mercat Cross — think cobbled streets, colourful shopfronts, and local treasures. Stroll down to the harbour for a coffee from a converted shipping container or bakery window, and let the salty breeze set the tone.

🛶 Active mood? Book a coastal paddleboarding experience with Stonehaven Paddleboarding — sunrise sessions and seal sightings practically guaranteed.

Then lace up for the cliffside walk to Dunnottar Castle, where cinematic drama and Scottish history collide. This legendary fortress is perched on the edge of the world — or so it feels. On your way back, pause at the Stonehaven War Memorial, a striking silhouette watching over the bay.

🐟 Dinner tip: Choose between freshly-caught seafood at The Tolbooth, local vibes at The Ship Inn, or The Marine's sleek restaurant-bar combo. Bonus: Harbour views and firepits.



Dunnottar Castle



Stonehaven Paddleboarding



Tolbooth Restaurant




Day 2 - Wildlife, Street Art & Seaside Icons

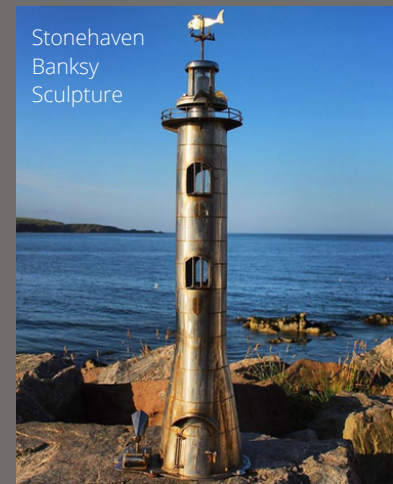
Rise and shine! Today kicks off with cliffside nature therapy at RSPB Fowlsheugh, just south of Stonehaven. From spring to autumn, the skies and sea cliffs thrum with over 100,000 seabirds — puffins, razorbills, and more in full symphonic swoop.




RSPB Fowlsheugh Puffin

 Then rewind history at The Tolbooth Museum, once a jailhouse and town centre, now home to quirky relics like medieval punishment devices. (Yes, the Crank is real.)

Next, hit the boardwalk for coastal breezes and a dose of local intrigue — Stonehaven's own Banksy, Jim Malcolm, has scattered scrap-metal street art along the walk. These sculptures are Instagram gold and crafted entirely from recycled bits and pieces.




Stonehaven Banksy Sculpture

 Refuel like a local: grab legendary chips from The Bay Fish & Chips, then dive into the joyful chaos of Auntie Betty's Ice Cream Parlour. Go wild with flavours. Trust us.



Stonehaven Open Air Pool

 Summer perks: Make time for a retro splash at Stonehaven's open-air art deco pool, then hop aboard the Stoney Express Land Train for a kitschy coastal ride.



Stoney Express



Day 3 - Aberdeen Art & Maritime Magic

Venture into the Granite City, just 15 minutes away — and yes, the shimmer of its buildings is real. Begin at the Aberdeen Art Gallery, a newly renovated space showcasing Scottish and international greats, decorative arts, and rooftop city views.

🍴 Lunch on Belmont Street hits the spot — whether it's the laidback charm of Cup Café, bold flavours at Tango Turtle, or spice-packed dishes at Latinway.

Maritime heritage comes alive at the Aberdeen Maritime Museum, nestled near the harbour. From historic herring fleets to modern offshore wind farms, it's surprisingly immersive.

🐬 Book a boat tour from Aberdeen Harbour — wildlife cruises often bring you face to face with bottlenose dolphins, and even glimpses of offshore wind turbines.

Wrap up the day wandering the quaint village of Footdee (Fittie) — colourful fishing cottages tucked behind the city bustle. For dinner, go upscale at Moonfish Café or opt for relaxed fine dining at Bistro Verde. Either way, it's a win





Day 4 - Royal Routes & Highland Views

Today it's westward to Royal Deeside — Queen Victoria's old stomping ground and one of Scotland's most majestic regions.

🚂 Kick off with the Royal Deeside Railway for a short heritage ride by the River Dee. Then it's on to Balmoral Castle — the Royal Family's highland hideaway. Wander gardens, exhibitions, and maybe glimpse the royals if it's August.



🏰 If you're lucky, catch a quiet moment at Crathie Kirk, a historic church where the royals worship. Lunch in Ballater comes with a royal stamp — from the Royal Station Tearooms to the elegant Rothesay Rooms, it's countryside chic at its finest.

🌍 End the day walking around Loch Muick on the Balmoral Estate — gentle terrain, glorious waterfalls, and Queen Victoria's hidden lodge make this one unforgettable.



🍴 On the way back, book a meal at Tor Na Coille Hotel or Banchory Lodge, or settle into your Dalriada lodge kitchen and watch the sun dip over the bay.





Day 5 - Prison Tours & BrewDog Brews

For your final hurrah, head northeast to Peterhead Prison Museum — once Scotland's toughest jail, now an award-winning exhibit of stories and scandal. The audio tour is gritty and gripping.

☕ Stop for lunch at The Coffee Apothecary in Udney, where small-batch beans meet farmhouse baking. Bonus points for their impossibly good cakes.

🍺 Next, enter craft beer nirvana with a BrewDog Brewery tour in Ellon. Sip, shop, and soak up the bold energy. If you prefer upscale dining to burgers and hops, head to Meldrum House's Pineapple Restaurant or try Fennel in Inverurie for elevated Scottish fare.

Finally, return to Dalriada for one last glass of wine on the deck — the view over Stonehaven Bay deserves a proper farewell.

