

SCOTLAND: DAY-DREAMING IN THE LAND OF MAGIC



Blairgowrie, Edinburgh, Stirling, beautiful nature and living history through the eyes of a first-time traveler to Scotland.

Imagine you suddenly find yourself plunged into an idyllic atmosphere, where deep-green hills gently surround you in an endless embrace, and a swirling river flows, tirelessly letting the memories of the dreamlike sound of bagpipes vibrate in the air. An anticipatory vision of heaven? No, this is Scotland.

Never had I thought that Scotland is so strikingly beautiful... until I went there last year. We were a group of five people: my parents, my uncle, my cousin Silvia and me. The only things we knew were that we had booked a flight, rented a car (after overcoming the anxiety about driving on the left!), and that we would stay in an authentic Scottish castle! The rest was to be a staggering surprise! After landing at Prestwick, **Blairgowrie was our first destination**: it is a small village about 20 miles north of Perth, in the middle of Scotland. A friend of my uncle's holds a castle there... and there we were!

We thoroughly planned our week in order not to waste our time. Edinburgh and Stirling are worth seeing, of course. These two medieval towns spread their ancient spirit which you can breathe and sense in the air. Walking along the streets, you pass magnificent churches, visit imposing castles and buildings where the history and legend of William Wallace fighting for Scottish independence from the English Crown go hand in hand, leaving you unsure whether all this really happened or not. What is most unforgettable about Scotland though is the undeniable power of nature: it is sovereign in this country. Immense parks surround Glamis and Blair Castles, Scone Palace (Perth) and Hopetoun House (Edinburgh): giant trees and flowers of unknown origin leave you speechless. The harmonious co-existence of architecture and nature does the rest.

The most remarkable experience, however, happened to be when we drove along a panoramic route facing the North Sea and leading to Dunnottar Castle (Stonehaven). Not a living soul, only silence, dark clouds reflecting their gloomy light on a likewise dark sea, steep cliffs falling away to nowhere, and the ruins of the castle. Being in this spot, you really have the puzzling impression that time stands still. What remains today of this trip are a hundred pictures and a warm feeling inside me when I remember those moments of day-dreaming.

By Martina Cristofori

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