



# North East Skye

## Snap shot

Spectacular landscape and incredible rock formations make a leisurely drive through the North East of Skye a must do for any itinerary



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# North East Skye



## Spectacular scenic delights abound in North East Skye

In an island of dramatic contrasts, the Trotternish peninsula of north-east Skye has its own particular scenic delights to offer — including the bizarre land formations of the Quiraing and Trotternish Ridge. Winter brings out the harsh majesty of this dramatic geology.

The coastal road north from Portree to Staffin passes the Storr Lochs — Lochs Fada and Leathan — which feed the island's small hydro-electric station. Inland, above the road, towers the plateau of Storr with the giant pillar of the Old Man of Storr. As you

drive further north, there are breathtaking views across the islands of South Rona and Raasay to the mainland beyond.

Lealt Gorge contains one of Skye's most spectacular waterfalls. Further on is another dramatic landmark — the aptly-named Kilt Rock cliffs, plunging down to the sea.

The townships of the Staffin area offer some of the best examples of crofting on Skye. Crofting is a system of agriculture based on a unique form of landholding, which offers statutory security of tenure. It was introduced last

century in an attempt to bring to an end the iniquities of the Highland Clearances in which hundreds of thousands of people were forced off the land by the big landowners to make way for "improvements", be it large-scale sheep farming or deer forests.

Today, crofting is largely a part-time form of agriculture based usually on sheep and cattle production. The crofter will usually have a job — full-time or part-time — as well as working the croft, and many crofters provide bed and breakfast accommodation for visitors.

The crofts at Staffin are clustered ▶





## Don't miss North East Skye

► around a beautiful sandy bay, and as you leave Staffin you are faced with a difficult choice: whether to follow the road around the north coast, or to take the link road to Uig across the Quiraing. If time permits you really shouldn't miss out on either.

The weird rock formations of the Quiraing are like nothing you will see elsewhere in Skye or anywhere in Scotland for that matter. After the steep and tortuous climb over the Quiraing, the road winds through moor and peat bog before rejoining the coast road for the drop into Uig, with fine views out across the Minch and over Loch Snizort to the Waternish peninsula.

Meanwhile, the road north from Staffin passes Flodigarry (what is now the Flodigarry Hotel was once the home of Flora MacDonald of Bonnie Prince Charlie fame) and winds round to Duntulm and Kilmuir. The ruined Duntulm Castle — once a stronghold of the MacDonalds — is easily reached by a short walk along the grassy headland, and while at Kilmuir you should pause to see Flora MacDonald's monument.

On round to Uig, the ferry point for Lochmaddy in North Uist and Tarbert in Harris, and itself a lovely village with a fine bay and wooded glens. From here the road leads back to Portree, past Kingsburgh and through Kensaleyre with its standing stones and views over Loch Snizort Beag. ●

**1 THE OLD MAN OF STORR** A few miles north of Portree, the Old Man is a huge pinnacle of rock standing in front of the Storr Ridge which rises to around 2,300 feet.

**2 KILT ROCK WATERFALL** The vertiginous 200-foot high cliffs, so called because they resemble the pleats of a kilt, is where you will find the Kilt Rock Waterfall flowing over the cliff edge and into the sea below.

**3 FLORA MACDONALD'S MONUMENT AND SKYE MUSEUM OF ISLAND LIFE** A collection of traditional thatched blackhouses which show how islanders used to live. Nearby is the monument to Flora MacDonald who helped Bonnie Prince Charlie escape from his enemies.

**4 STAFFIN** A traditional crofting township overlooking Staffin Island and Staffin Bay.

**5 DUNTULM CASTLE** A Viking stronghold which later became home to the MacLeods and then the MacDonalds. King James V visited the castle in the 16th century. The castle is situated atop cliffs and has great views of the Outer Hebrides.

**6 THE QUIRAING** Incredible rock formations caused by a landslide millions of years ago — drive over the Quiraing to the pretty village of Uig, gateway to the Outer Hebrides.