

Group Tours 2010

Blair Castle Tour



Explore seven centuries of history through the fascinating historic interior of Blair Castle. As a draughty medieval castle, a stately Georgian mansion, or a comfortable Victorian family home, Blair Castle has been a magnet to visitors down the generations. An extensive tour includes up to 30 rooms full of treasures and alive with the stories and personalities of their former occupants.

Guided tours are available free to groups of 12 or more, subject to availability on the day. Pre-booking is recommended and booked tours are given priority.

Summer Opening: 28 March to 29 October 2010, daily from 9.30am – 5.30pm
Tickets: Adults £6.70, Children £4.95, Student £6.70, Seniors £6.70

Winter Opening: Tuesdays and Saturdays from 2 November 2010 to 29 March 2011, 9.30am – 2.30pm

Tickets: Adults £5.75, Children £3.85, Student £5.75, Seniors £5.75
Open to groups on other days by prior arrangement.

Blair Castle Garden Tour



Blair Castle is at the hub of a breathtaking historic landscape most of which was laid out in the 18th century and features a magnificent walled garden, a peaceful wooded grove, the ruined St Brides Kirk, a red deer park and a whimsical gothic folly.

Guided tours of the Hercules Garden are available. This stunning 9 acre-walled garden was recently restored to its original Georgian design and incorporates landscaped ponds, a folly, a Chinese bridge and an impressive orchard of more than 100 fruit trees. The glory of this garden in summer are the herbaceous borders which run 275m along the south-facing wall.

See opening times above.

Tickets: £1 per person (plus Gardens entry)

Pre-booking essential. A minimum of 12 and a maximum of 25 people per tour.

Attics Tour



Discover the secrets of Blair Castle's attics. Hidden from view in the attic maze of rooms and corridors are many interesting and surprising artefacts. See the fascinating collection of objects revealed in Baron Maule's room. Leaf through some of our historic estate records and marvel at the diverse collections of family paintings, walking sticks, weaponry and period costume. The tour culminates in a climb to the castle rooftops for breathtaking panoramic views of the castle gardens (weather permitting).

Tickets: £11 per person

Minimum fee payable £110. Numbers limited to 10 people per tour.

Please note that this tour involves many flights of spiral stairs, the occasional tight space and heights and is only suitable for the fully able.

The Atholl Highlanders Tour



The Atholl Highlanders are Europe's last remaining private army. Granted the right to bear arms by Queen Victoria after they mounted the guard during her stay at Blair Castle in 1844, the regiment's history is rooted in Blair and many artefacts can be seen on display throughout the castle.

The most recent addition to the collection is a heraldic shield dating from 1839. This was used in a medieval-style tournament organised by the Earl of Eglinton at Eglinton Castle in Ayrshire. Lord Glenlyon (later the 6th Duke), attended as Knight of the Gael and took a group of over 60 Atholl men as his bodyguard. This brightly coloured shield was probably employed as a crest or motif mounted on a pole or tent to represent the presence of the Duke of Atholl. It depicts the Atholl coat of arms, with the stars representing "The Murrays", the checks on argent representing "The Stewarts" and the three legs representing the Isle of Man.

Tickets: £11 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £132 for up to 12 people.
The maximum number for this tour is 25 people.

Combine this tour with the annual Atholl Highlanders parade on Saturday 29 May or the Atholl Gathering on Sunday 30 May when you can see the army in action.

Lady Evelyn – The Great Embroiderer Tour



Enigmatic, reclusive and possessing an extraordinary gift for needlework, Lady Evelyn is one of the most fascinating female characters in Blair's history. Her beautiful lacework armorial panel is widely regarded as one of the finest examples of 20th Century British embroidery and is just one of many exquisite pieces which form part of the castle's collection. Her passion for needlework was only matched by her love of Gaelic folk tales which she collected from all over Highland Perthshire.

Tickets: £11 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £132 for up to 12 people.
The maximum number for this tour is 25 people.

A Royal Visit - Behind the Scenes Tour



Queen Victoria's passion for the Scottish Highlands is well known but it was also her firm friendship with Duchess Anne that drew her to Atholl. The Queen's visit to Blair Castle in 1844 had a huge impact on everyone involved. The servants had to prepare the house, bring in more furniture and stock the larders, and even Anne along with her husband Lord Glenlyon (later the 6th Duke), had to move out to the Factor's house to make room for the Royal party.

This fascinating tour will give an insight into what the Royal visit meant for all concerned, how they prepared for and looked after their monarch.

Tickets: £11 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £132 for up to 12 people.
The maximum number for this tour is 25 people.

Conflict and Rebellion – The Jacobites Tour



A troubled period of Scottish history, families divided, father against son, brother against brother. In the complex world of 18th century politics the Atholl family pulled off an extraordinary feat of survival. Having members on both sides of the political divide caused fierce quarrels but ultimately preserved the family fortunes.

Blair Castle was of huge strategic importance at the time of the Battle of Killiecrankie and during the 1745 uprising. The Jacobites scored a decisive victory at Killiecrankie but their legendary commander Bonnie Dundee was killed. He was buried at St Brides Kirk in the castle grounds. His armour can be viewed today inside the castle.

Tickets: £11 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £132 for up to 12 people.
The maximum number for this tour is 25 people.

Duchess Kitty Tour

The life-story of Duchess Kitty, Scotland's first female MP and the 8th Duchess of Atholl is remarkable. One of the most forward-thinking and outspoken politicians of her day, her relentless campaign for political freedom against the backdrop of an increasingly totalitarian pre-war Europe caused widespread controversy. A fascinating insight into a turbulent life lived through turbulent times.

Duchess Kitty was recently the subject of a half hour programme by Elizabeth Quigley for BBC Scotland.

Tickets: £11 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £132 for up to 12 people.
The maximum number for this tour is 25 people.



Refreshments

The Blair Castle Tullibardine Restaurant will be happy to arrange refreshments for your group.

The restaurant seats up to 125 people and is open during the summer season from 10am until 5pm daily. During the winter season, the restaurant is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays until 2pm (cooked lunches are available on other days for groups by prior arrangement). The restaurant serves a range of meals and refreshments including hot meals, sandwiches, soups, salads and cakes.

Breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon tea options are all available. Picnic lunches can also be supplied.



Tractor Tours



Explore the grounds of Blair Castle and the surrounding landscape on a 90 minute vintage tractor and trailer ride. Travelling at a leisurely pace you'll visit parts of the castle grounds many visitors never get to see as you travel through farmland, woodland and the maze of estate tracks. The tour offers many opportunities to see the animals that live on the estate including red deer, Highland ponies and Highland cows. A real favourite with children, this tour is a fun way to discover more of the estate.

Tickets: £5 per person

The minimum fee payable for this tour is £80 for up to 16 people. For each additional person, up to a maximum of 30 people, £5 per Adult and £3 per Child (under 16) will be payable.

Land Rover Safaris



Most of Scotland's iconic wildlife live in the countryside and wilderness of Atholl Estates. Red deer, golden eagle, salmon, red squirrel, otter, black and red grouse being just a sample.

Most are quite elusive and factors such as season, habitat and time of day greatly influence your chance of catching a glimpse.

Your best chance to see these beautiful creatures is with an experienced guide which is why our private landrover safaris are hosted by people who live on the estate and have a life time of experience working with the land and the wildlife.

Each safari is catered to your party's individual interest and although we cannot guarantee sightings, our guides work hard to give you the best possible chances.

- Our half day safari (2.5 hours) aims to take you out on the estate and within sight of at least one key species, passing through areas rich in natural beauty and historic significance.
- The full day safari (5 hours) takes you deep into the wilder areas of the estate and hopes to bag you a MacNab – sight of three key species and a stop off for picnic lunch just at the right place for an unforgettable eating experience of great food and awe inspiring view.

Alternatively you may simply want a leisurely safari of the estate with your guide relating stories and explanations of the places, people and activity that you pass by. At any time you can opt to stop and enjoy the view or simply take a walk off the track.

Maximum group size is 6.

Rates: £180 for a half day or £320 for a full day (not including picnic)

