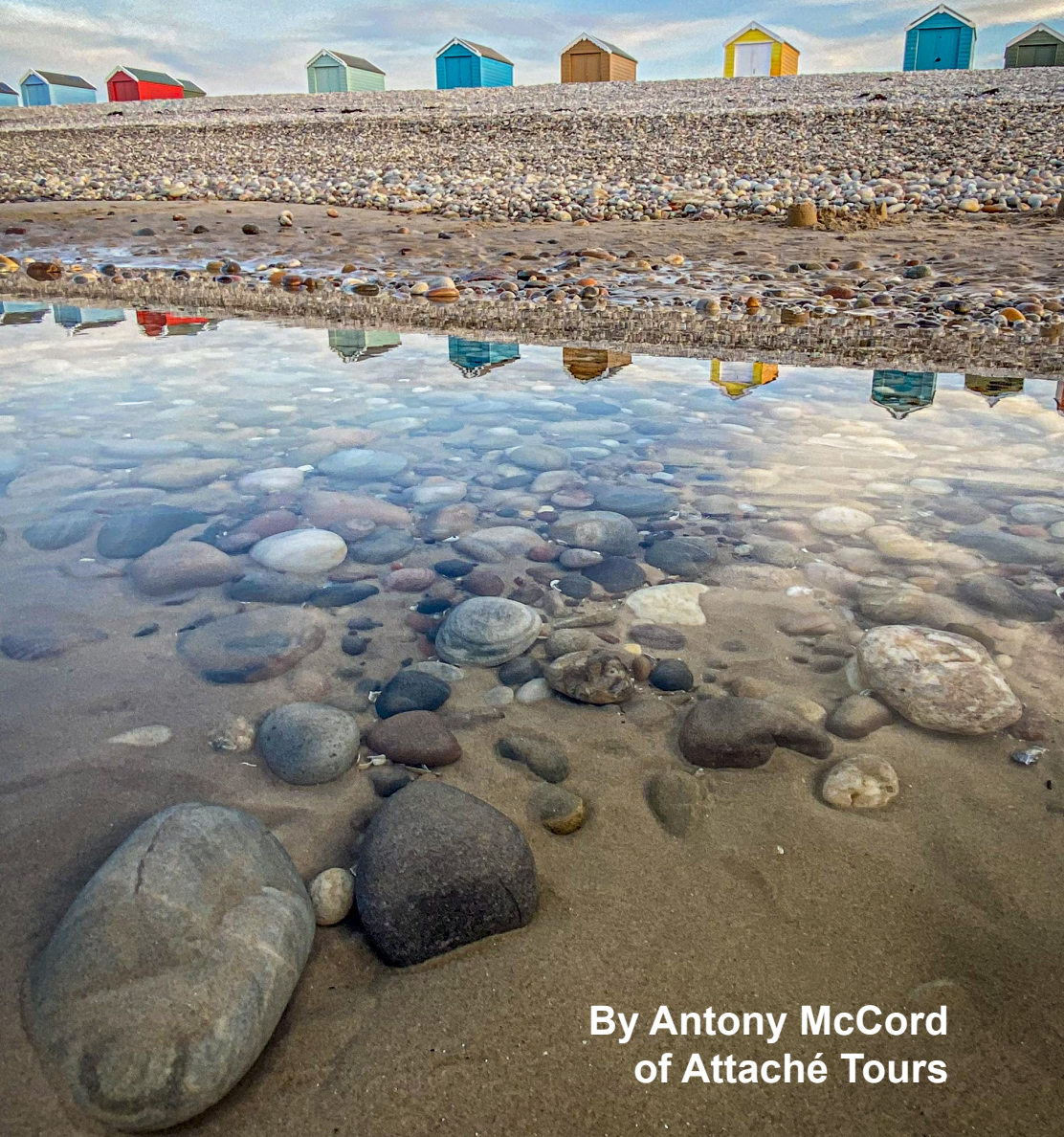


A Perfect Day

Forres to Culloden, Fort George
and Findhorn



By Antony McCord
of Attaché Tours

Every journey I design begins with a sense of place, of time, and of connection. The perfect tour should unfold naturally—never hurried, never contrived—revealing the Highlands in ways that surprise, delight, and endure long after the journey is over.

Our starting point

This particular day begins in Forres, a royal burgh whose story stretches back more than a millennium. Once the setting for Macbeth's castle and later a proud trading town, Forres remains a place of character and charm.

We meet in the morning, not with a rush but with a pause—over coffee at the 1496 café, a favourite local spot on the High Street. The breakfast and coffee are excellent, the atmosphere relaxed. It's a moment to settle, to talk through the day's plans, and to



enjoy the quiet sense of anticipation that marks the beginning of a good journey.

Leaving Forres, we avoid the main roads and take the slower, more scenic route south and west. The roads wind through farmland and forest, past stone cottages and quiet glens.

We cross the River Findhorn near Logie, not far from Randolph's Leap. It's tempting to pause at Logie Steading—with its craft shops, gardens and woodland trails leading to ruined castles—but not today.

The shifting canvas

In spring, the verges are scattered with wildflowers; in autumn, the trees burn gold and copper. This is the Scotland locals know—the scent of pine, the rhythm of sheep on the road, the play of light across the Moray countryside. The drive itself is part of the experience, a shifting canvas that tells its own story.



By late morning, we reach Culloden Battlefield, just east of Inverness. Few places in Scotland carry such emotional weight. It was here, on 16 April 1746, that the Jacobite Rising came to its tragic end.

Standing on Drummossie Moor, it is easy to imagine the chaos and courage of that morning—the thunder of cannon, the cries of



the clans, the smoke drifting across the heather. As we walk the field, I interpret the terrain: the Government lines, the positions of the Highland regiments, the memorial cairn and the stones that commemorate the clansmen who fell that day.

Where ambition met reality

But Culloden is not simply a story of battle; it is a story of people and consequence. Here ambition met reality, and the Highlands themselves were changed forever. The excellent visitor centre provides context through artefacts, film, and eyewitness accounts, yet it is out on the moor, in the quiet wind, that the past feels most present.

After exploring, we pause for lunch at the Culloden Visitor Centre café or, if guests prefer something more formal, a short drive takes us to Culloden House, a location which also played its part in the Jacobite Uprising. It's an opportunity to relax and reflect before the next chapter of the day.

Our afternoon begins a few miles away at Fort George, one of Europe's finest examples of 18th-century military architecture. Built by order of King George II in the wake of Culloden, the fort was intended to secure the Highlands against future rebellion. Its scale still astonishes: a vast star-shaped fortress projecting into the Moray Firth, with more than 1 km of walkable ramparts, barracks built for around 1,600 soldiers and a grand magazine designed for 2,672 barrels of gunpowder—a monumental statement of post-Culloden power.

Today the fort remains an active military base, home to the Black Watch, 3rd Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland, but visitors are welcome to wander the ramparts and barracks. The panoramic views from the sea wall are breathtaking.

On calm days and if the tide is right, dolphins from the Chanonry Point pod can often be spotted, playing in the currents below.

Inside the Highlanders Museum, Scotland's largest regimental collection outside Edinburgh, the story of the Highland soldier is told through medals, uniforms, letters and photographs—intimate fragments of courage and service stretching from Culloden to



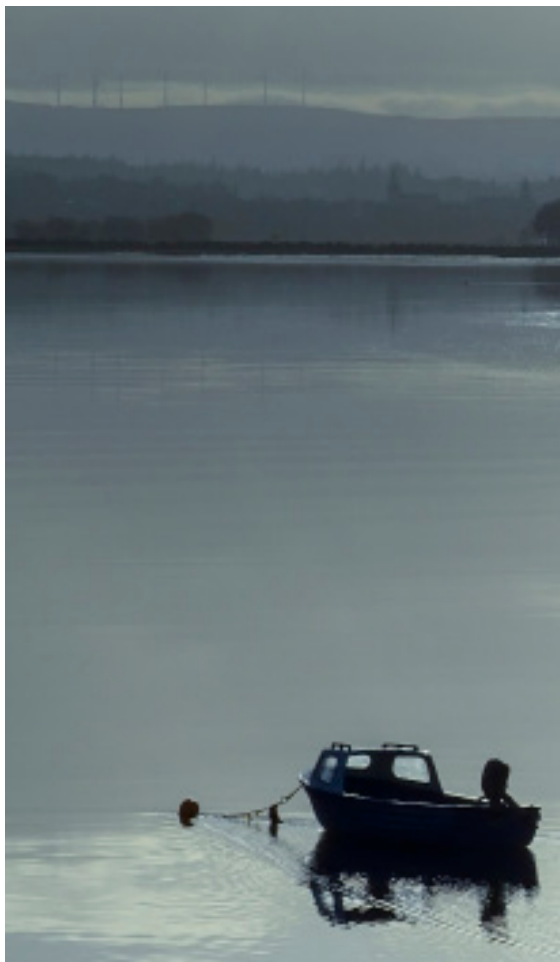
Afghanistan. The curator and his team are more than happy to help with those conducting detailed research.

Guests are free to explore at their own pace. Some linger in the quiet of the chapel, where the regimental colours hang in stillness; others prefer the fresh air of the ramparts and the call of seabirds over the firth. For me, Culloden and Fort George are bound together. One marked the end of an old Highland world; the other began a new chapter—one shaped by discipline, order and service to the Crown.

Back to Findhorn

As the afternoon light begins to soften, we turn east, tracing the coast back towards Findhorn Bay. It is a place of beauty and balance; the friendly village, the shallow basin and the remarkable beach stretching for miles. Once a fishing port, Findhorn has evolved into a place known for both tranquillity and community. It is a fitting end to the day, where nature and reflection come together.

If time and conditions allow, we stroll along the harbour and beach, where the view is spectacular, across the bay to Culbin Forest to the west and the Black Isle and beyond to the north.



The light here is mercurial—silver one moment, deep blue the next—and the sea air brings a sense of peace that contrasts with the drama of the morning’s history.

As evening approaches, we gather for dinner at The Kimberley Inn, a true local favourite. The menu changes with the seasons but fish and other local produce dominate, though I usually find it hard to resist the mussels or classic fish and chips!

The atmosphere is warm and informal, the fire often lit, the conversation easy. Over a glass of wine or a local craft beer, we share stories from the day—the wind at Culloden, the dolphins at Fort George, the stillness of Findhorn Bay. It is in these moments,



between laughter and reflection, that the essence of Highland hospitality shines through.

The day ends not with a grand finale but with a quiet sense of completion. Guests often tell me that Findhorn feels like a gift: a place that gathers everything seen and felt along the way—history, landscape, community, and calm. As we step out into the evening air, perhaps catching the last glow of the sunset over the bay or the Northern Lights, it's easy to see why.

Throughout this journey, what matters most is not the number of miles travelled or the sites ticked off. It is the connections made: between past and present, between landscape and story, between traveller and guide. My role is simply to weave those threads together, creating a day that is both meaningful and memorable.

This tour—from Forres to Culloden, Fort George and Findhorn—captures what I strive to offer through Attaché Tours: a curated experience rather than a crowded itinerary; thoughtful pacing rather than haste; insight as well as beauty. It offers context as well as content, and moments of stillness as well as discovery.

As we part company at the end of the evening, my hope is that you carry more than photographs. I hope you carry a sense of connection—to Scotland's land, its history, and its people. Because the perfect tour is never just about where you go. It is about how you feel when you get there, and what stays with you long after you've gone.



– Antony McCord
Founder, Attaché Tours