



12 Best Things to Do on the Isle of Skye, Scotland

Description

Planning a Visit to the Isle of Skye? Read This First!

*"Wherever I wander, wherever I rove
Robert Burns*



view on Portree before sunset, Isle of Skye, Scotland

We researched Scotland and looked at thousands of photos before our travels, but nothing prepares you for what it will be like in person, especially the Scottish Highlands. There is something exceptional about this almost perfect area of the world. As you wander the countryside and get to know the people, there will be WOW moments, one after another. After a while, you think it can't get better, and somehow it does. Scotland has everything: picturesque landscapes, impressive castles, fine whiskey, kind people, a rugged coastline, endless farmlands, friendly sheep, charming villages, and fascinating cities.

One of the most memorable stops during our travels to Scotland was the Isle of Skye, a true blessing from heaven. It has sandy beaches, raw natural beauty, medieval castles, and charming villages with the finest and most spectacular views. You will also discover along with its renowned castles, its world-famous mountain ranges, and rocky slopes (known as "Cuillin Hills"). The hills dominate most of its landscape and offer some dramatic, breathtaking scenery.

Eilean Donan Castle brought us to one of the most photographed castles in Scotland, but the whole Isle captured our hearts in short order. If you can visit only one part of Scotland, let it be the Isle of Skye.

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Where is the Isle of Skye Located in Scotland?

This scenic Isle of Skye is located on the west coast of Scotland. It is in the Highlands of Scotland.

The Isle is 50 miles long and has the Skye Bridge, which provides access to the Scottish mainland village of Kyle of Lochalsh and the town of Kyleakin on the Isle. It has a total area of 639 square miles (1,656 square km)—five times bigger than Malta, four times bigger than Barbados, and three times bigger than Ibiza.

Although this island has no railway tracks, you can still get to the closest stations, which connect to local bus routes: Kyle of Lochalsh Train Station and Duirinish Train Station. They provide unforgettable

rail experiences from wherever you originate.

To explore authentic Scottish culture, visit the Isle of Skye. Its bustling port and thriving cultural history attract thousands of tourists annually.

Map of the Isle of Skye

- [Portree](#)

Our [Scotland Travel Guide](#) can be an excellent resource for planning your next trip to Scotland!

Fun facts about the Isle of Syke

- It is the second-largest island in Scotland. Currently, around 12,000 people live on the Isle of Skye full-time, and most of those residents live in the villages dotted along the coastline.
- Portree is the capital of Skye, and like the rest of the island, it is sparsely populated. Only around 2,500 people live here.
- Isle of Skye's main economic trades are tourism, whiskey, and agriculture.
- The Isle of Skye is famous for its whiskey. You'll be able to take tours of Talisker, for example, which is one of Scotland's most famous distilleries and whiskey brands.
- Aside from giants, other mythological creatures rumored to live on the island are fairies and selkies (seal folk that change from human to seal form by shedding their skin).
- 007 was born here. The Isle of Skye is where author Ian Fleming created the character of James Bond. It's also where some of the movies Skyfall, the 23rd Bond movie, were filmed.
- A legend states that if you put your face in some of the water running through Skye, you'll receive the gift of eternal beauty. To attain eternal beauty, it has to be the water running through the Old Sligachan Bridge.



From Adobe Stock Images Isle of Skye

12 Things to Do In the Isle of Skye

Want to make your visit the most memorable it can be? These 12 activities will keep you busy and reveal the magic of this crown jewel of Scotland.



Adobe Stock Photo of the Pinnacle with the backdrop of the mountains on the Isle of Skye

The Old Man of Storr

This place is quite popular, but it is more incredible in real life than the posts you see on social media. It is a spectacular rocky hill in the area of Trotternish. If we say this place is the most photographed highlight on the Isle of Skye, we mean it.

Quiraing Walk

The 2-hour Quiraing Walk will be one of the most thrilling walks of your life. It is a loop; you return to

the same point. However, the views it offers are amazing. The landscapes you see are gripping and a true definition of natural beauty.

Fairy Pools

The tour of the Isle of Skye can't be complete without visiting this notable highlight. It is a magnificent slice of paradise where you can relish wild swimming in crystal-clear, icy water. Furthermore, the crisp stream and the rushing waterfall make it an ideal place for photography... You must walk almost 1.5 miles from your car park to reach this place.



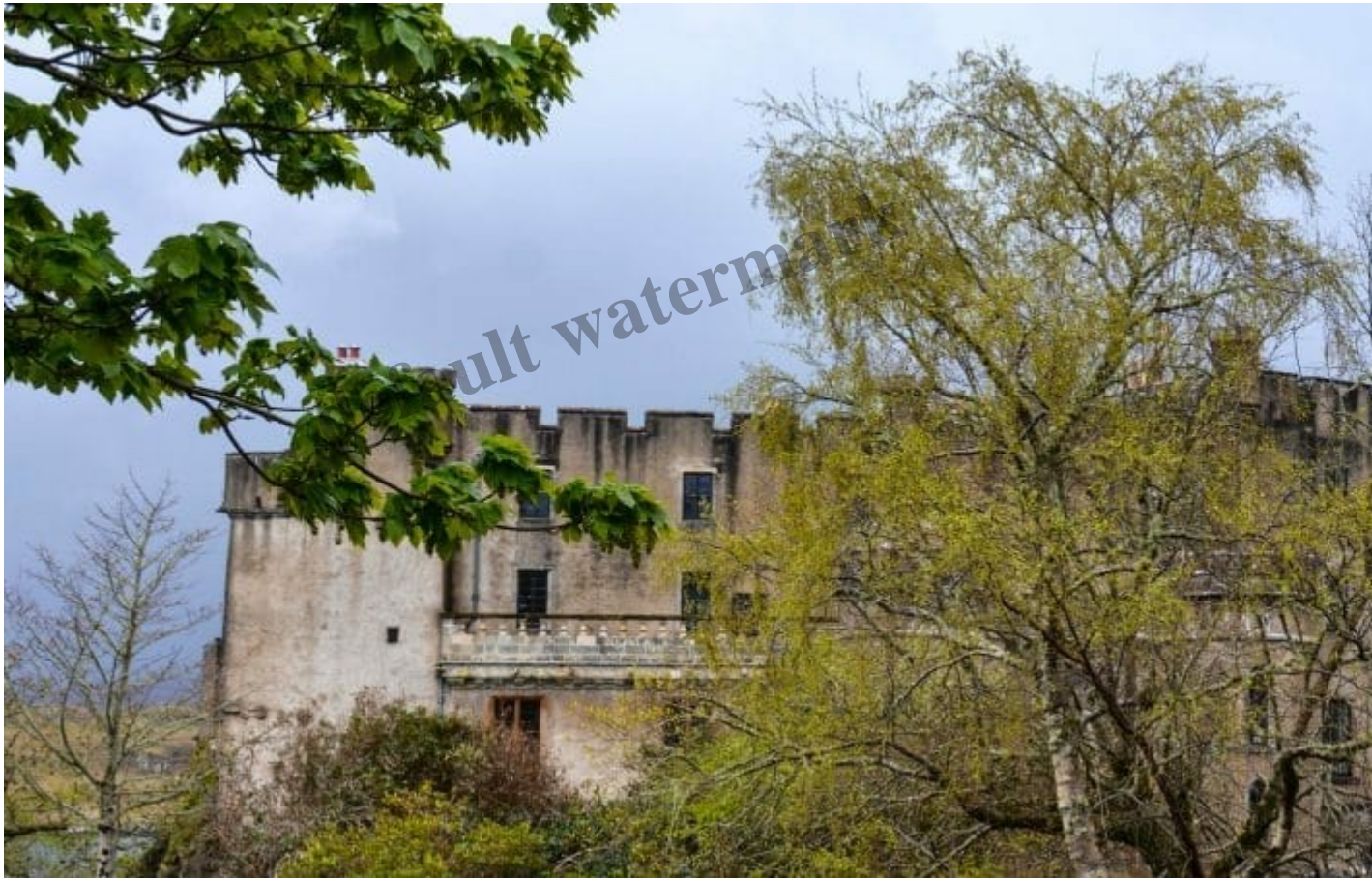
Adobe Stock Photo Fairy Pools

Elgol

Elgol lies on the south coast. It is one of the most famous villages in the Scottish Highlands, with a harbor offering boat trips. Tourists visit Elgol to view all the wildlife the Isle of Skye has to offer.

Dunvegan Castle

This castle is built on the shores of Loch Dunvegan. It is the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Scotland. You can enjoy a wealth of history here and learn about the 800-year-old Chiefs of clan MacLeod.



Dunvegan Castle

Eilean Donan Castle

Eilean Donan is simply a stunning castle. It is a popular location for films and TV shows, and it is easy to see why. The Isle of Skye and the Castle are featured in many movies, such as *The World Is Not Enough*—James Bond (1999) and *Highlander* (1986). This castle was built in the 13th century and has a vibrant history of Clan Mackenzie and its Allies. It sits on its little island, giving a majestic view of forested mountains.

The castle was the highlight of our visit to the Isle of Skye area. **Below, find the shadow box that provides some added history and details about the visit.**



Dino Footprints

Do you have an interest in discovering fossils? Well, you can find the actual dinosaur footprints here. According to researchers from Edinburgh University, Dinosaurs lived in this area and thrived in Skye's ecosystem around 170 million years ago.

The Fairy Bridge



Adobe Stock Photos The Fairy Bridge near Dunvegan, Skye

Local folklores reveal that a fairy said a final goodbye to the chief of Clan MacLeod (her husband) at this bridge. It is worth a visit and an ideal place to have lovely and peaceful moments.

Neist Point

Love watching the sunset? A visit to Neist Point and the lighthouse should be on your agenda. Unfortunately, during the busy summer months, you will deal with large crowds of tourists, but it is still a great place to visit if you wish to see magnificent sunsets, observe whales and dolphins, and photograph lots of common seabirds.



Adobe Stock Photo Neist Point Isle of Skye

Coral Beach

This beautiful beach is north of the Isle of Skye. The coral sand here is gorgeous, and the water is so clear. It is truly a magical place for a picnic.

Boat Trips

If you are interested in seeing wildlife, taking a boat trip is highly recommended. Many excellent boat tours operate from different parts of the island. Leave Elgol and visit the spectacular Loch Coriusk, surrounded by the Cuillin Range. Or take a boat from Portree to one of the smaller neighboring islands, like Raasay or Rona.

Kyle offers an award-winning glass-bottom boat trip, which is well-reviewed on [Tripadvisor](#). Check out the [Seaprobe Atlantis at this link](#).



Adobe photo stock Portree harbor view

Outdoor activities

There are endless choices for outdoor adventures: sea kayaking, mountain biking, hiking, trekking, canoeing, climbing, abseiling, ax throwing, mountaineering, archery, white water rafting, wildlife tours, camping, photography hikes, and the list goes on...



Adobe Stock Photo Isle of Skye

Eilean Donan Castle, The Highlight of Our Visit

Eilean Donan Castle is a Medieval Castle built in the 13 century by Alexander II. It is located in Highlands, Scotland, near the entrance to the Isle of Skye. It is near the picturesque village of Dornie. The castle is one of the most photographed monuments in Scotland. It sits majestically on a small rocky island where three great sea lochs meet: Loch Duich, Loch Alsh, and Loch Long. It was built for

defense by the Vikings to protect the lands of Kintail. At the time, the Vikings had control of much of North Scotland and the Western Isles. The ideal location made for a solid defensive position.

The Castle was partially destroyed during a Jacobite uprising in the early 1700s. The castle was left in ruins and abandoned for almost 200 years when it was purchased in 1911 by Lt Colonel MacRae-Gilstrap. The MacRae clan protected Eilean Donan during the 15th century. Over the next 21 years, he reconstructed Eilean Donan Castle using the surviving ground plan of previous phases. It was completed in 1932 and opened to the public in 1955. Four generations of the Macrae family have overseen the care of this iconic castle. It is now the ancestral seat of the MacRae clan.

Slideshow of Eilean Donan

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The castle's history includes the fact that Robert the Bruce took refuge here when he was being hunted by the British in the 14th century. The Castle was five times its current size, and the outer walls were dismantled and rebuilt during the 15th century for unknown reasons.

Visiting the Castle

The castle, the grounds, and the structure's interior have been beautifully restored; many rooms are in original décor and period pieces. It is a step back in time and an educational and memorable experience. The exhibitions are extraordinary.

Eilean Donan Castle is open seven days a week, with extended hours in the summer. Admission tickets are no longer necessary to pre-book before arrival on site. You can pay at the ticket office or utilize their self-service ticket machines. Check out their website for the most current information.

Where to stay on the Isle of Skye

Portree is the best place to go if you have a multi-day tour plan. It is a bustling town and a cultural hub, with shopping, restaurants, and even a cinema.

Portree also has some beautiful villages around it. For example, Loch Ainort Village is near the sea loch and is rarely visited by tourists. If you prefer quiet, quaint villages, head in that direction. It is stunning and surrounded by Cuillins Hills.



Adobe Stock Photo of Portree

In addition, you can visit Dunvegan, Broadford, and Kyleakin. These are larger villages with lots of character. You will also find some places on the island that feel like they are in the middle of nowhere.

Below are links to hotels, vacation rentals, and even some Bed and Breakfast accommodations on the Isle of Skye. The following section provides more information on finding bed and breakfast accommodations.

Consider a Bed and Breakfast



We often stay in hotels during our trips for many reasons. The one place we do the complete opposite is during visits to Scotland and Ireland. Most of this part of the world is in the countryside and small villages. The hotel reviews didn't draw us in like the glorious reviews of many Bed and Breakfast spots. We refer to the traditional Bed and Breakfast, not AirBnB or vacation rental homes. You get a lovely room in someone's house, and the best part is they provide a generous traditional local breakfast each morning (thus the breakfast part). That breakfast in Scotland often includes toast, beans, fried haggis, potato hash, eggs, back bacon, scones, fried mushrooms, grilled tomatoes, Lorne sausage, and black pudding. We ate it all because when we were in Scotland...

We stayed at a lovely Bed and Breakfast near the village of Luib. It was in a stunning location at the water's edge with incredible sea views. The central location lets you visit all corners of this majestic island. It has had new ownership since we were there.

An added plus is you get to meet locals and hear their stories. How can anyone not listen for hours to that Scottish accent!!! We loved all our Scottish bed and breakfasts, and they made our time there much more special than we expected.

Here is an excellent site for [Isle of Skye Bed and Breakfast accommodations](#).

Dining on the Isle of Skye



You will not run short of options for dining on the Isle. Portree is where you will have plenty of choices, but there is much beyond. Fresh local seafood is always on the menu. Some suggestions include the following:

Bog Myrtle Café is a family-run café on the west coast of Skye. It is for you if you want a delicious, traditional home-cooked lunch. Locally sourced ingredients inspire its dishes.

The Stein Inn is an 18th-century inn on the island, the oldest on the Northwestern coast. It provides a traditional Scottish experience in a uniquely picturesque setting.

Claymore Restaurant A family-run business, Claymore Restaurant provides a light-hearted atmosphere with sea views and a view of Beinn na Caillich, one of the Red Hills of Scotland. Meals are homey and come in large portions.

The Three Chimneys was listed by the New York Times as one of the few restaurants in the UK worth traveling a long distance to try. Set in a 100-year-old stone cottage, it is a world-renowned Scottish restaurant that has won many awards. It is one of the best places to relish moments with your loved ones. The Three Chimneys is known for its fish and seafood and stunning location.

Kinloch Lodge is located at the edge of a native birch forest on the shores of Loch na Dal. It pays tribute to traditional Scottish ingredients and once was a Michelin-starred restaurant. It is also well known for its traditional afternoon tea in the drawing room.

The Old School is set in a school from the 1870s. Main dishes such as Beef cheek in Old Bridge beer or traditional beer-battered haddock are popular.

How do I get to the Isle of Skye?



The Isle is expansive, and the ideal way to get around is by car, as in most of Scotland. The small

charming villages, hikes, and beautiful walks in the countryside are unique. It was ideal to be able to stop at any time at off-the-beaten-path places to grab a beer and meet some locals. One of our favorite pastimes is just driving down some random road to see what we can find.

The Isle of Skye is about 235 miles from Glasgow, 215 miles from Edinburgh, and 120 miles from Inverness. Glasgow to the Isle of Skye has been called one of the most lovely drives in the world! We took that drive, and it was remarkable.

Direct trains run from Inverness and Glasgow, which go to the northernmost part of the mainland, and from there, you can take a ferry and bus to the Isle of Skye. However, public transportation runs infrequently, making getting around the island extremely difficult once you are there.

If you don't have a car, one of the best options to visit the best of the Isle is the ["Skye Scenic Tour."](#) They offer both group and private tours. An experienced guide shows you the most fabulous places and ensures you enjoy the best the Isle of Skye has to offer.

When is the best time to visit?

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The Isle of Skye is one of the most beautiful spots on Earth. It certainly is one of our favorite parts of the country. That said, Scotland is no stranger to rain or midges, so many travelers want to know the best time to visit the Isle of Skye. There is no straightforward answer to this question, as you have to factor in more than just the weather. Crowds and prices play a role, especially in the summer. If you are looking for a time when it doesn't rain, you won't find it; it rains year-round.

September through January are the rainiest months. May and June are known to be the sunniest and driest months. July and August are the warmest and when the midges are at their worst. The weather stays relatively mild throughout the year. While temperatures rarely rise above 60°F, they don't fall below the freezing point.

Let us provide a few tips for adjusting to the climate so you are well-prepared for the land of the Isle of Skye. We believe there is no such thing as bad weather; it is just a wrong choice of clothing.

So take to heart these few tips.

- The ground is often muddy, and the terrain rugged. Your shoes will get wet!! Wear shoes with good ankle support that can be washed.
- Wear layers; it is cold and wet in Scotland, even in the summer. The Scottish don't have the reputation of being strong lads for no reason.
- A good waterproof jacket, ideally with a hood, is a must. Though we always pack an umbrella, that may not work well here. When the wind is "blowing a hoolie," and the rain is falling sideways, an umbrella will not function at the end of the day. It will be more likely inside out, and you will be soaked!
- The average temperature on Skye in the peak summer months of June, July, and August is around 55 degrees Fahrenheit; please note that that is in Fahrenheit! Add an almost constant breeze, and it usually feels colder. As a result, we highly recommend wearing a fleece and a warm hooded jacket.
- Pants should ideally be waterproof or fast-drying. Jeans are never a good idea; you will stay damp all day.

Click here for the [official website for the Isle of Skye](#)



Adobe Stock Photo Panoramic View of Staffin Bay on the Isle of Skye in Scotland

Final Thoughts

A minimum of three days is ideal for exploring the Isle of Skye since there is a lot to do here. If you visit it just for one day, you won't have enough time to experience the best of this place. The beauty of each destination requires ample time.

It will also be the perfect place if you have traveled a lot and need a few days to rest and wind down. There is a peacefulness here and a warm feeling of welcome. So put up those feet, grab a beer or a glass of whisky, and take in the wonder of the Isle of Skye.



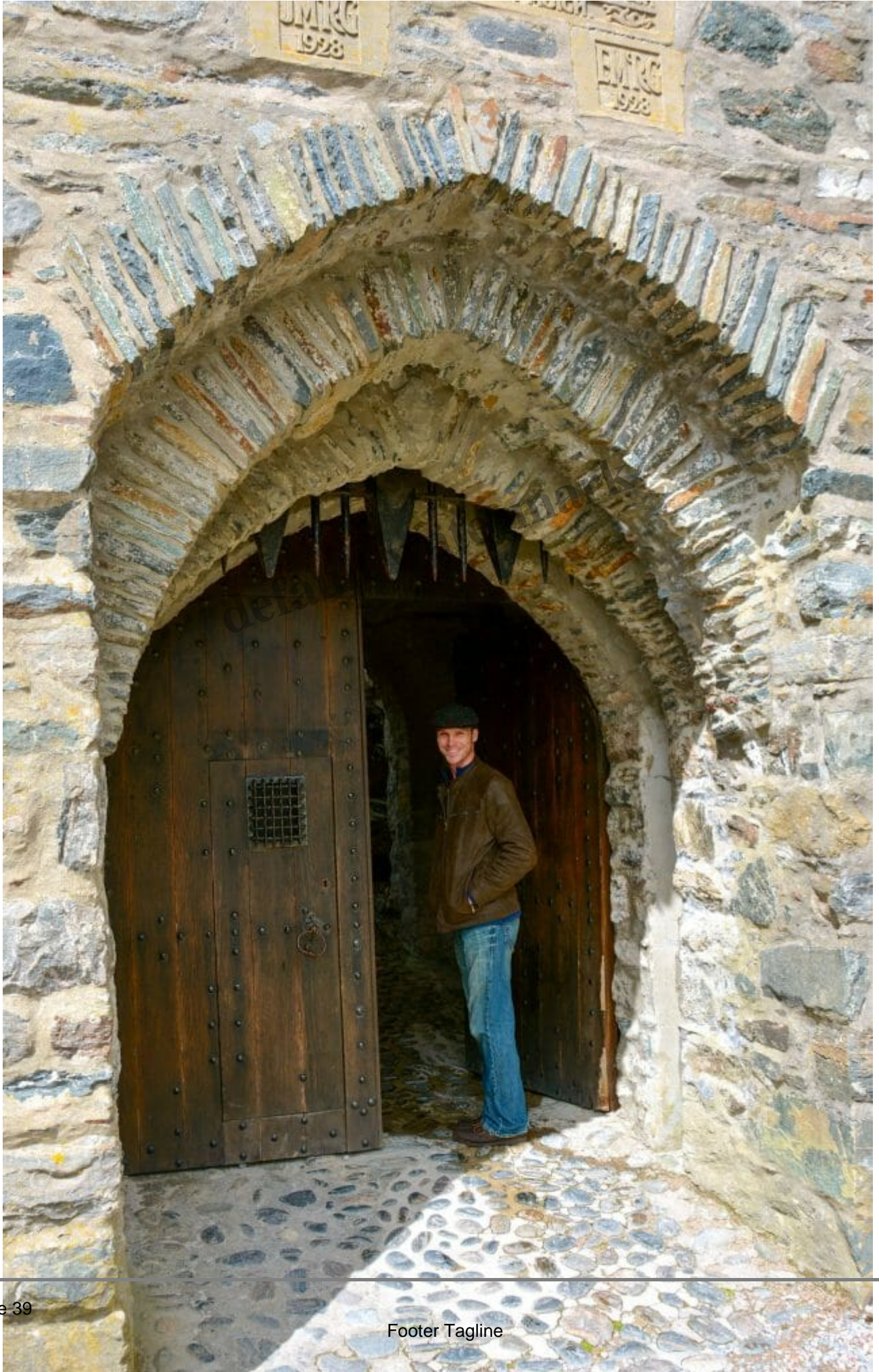
View from Eilean Donan Castle

Isle of Skye Photo Gallery

(a mix of our photos and Adobe stock images)



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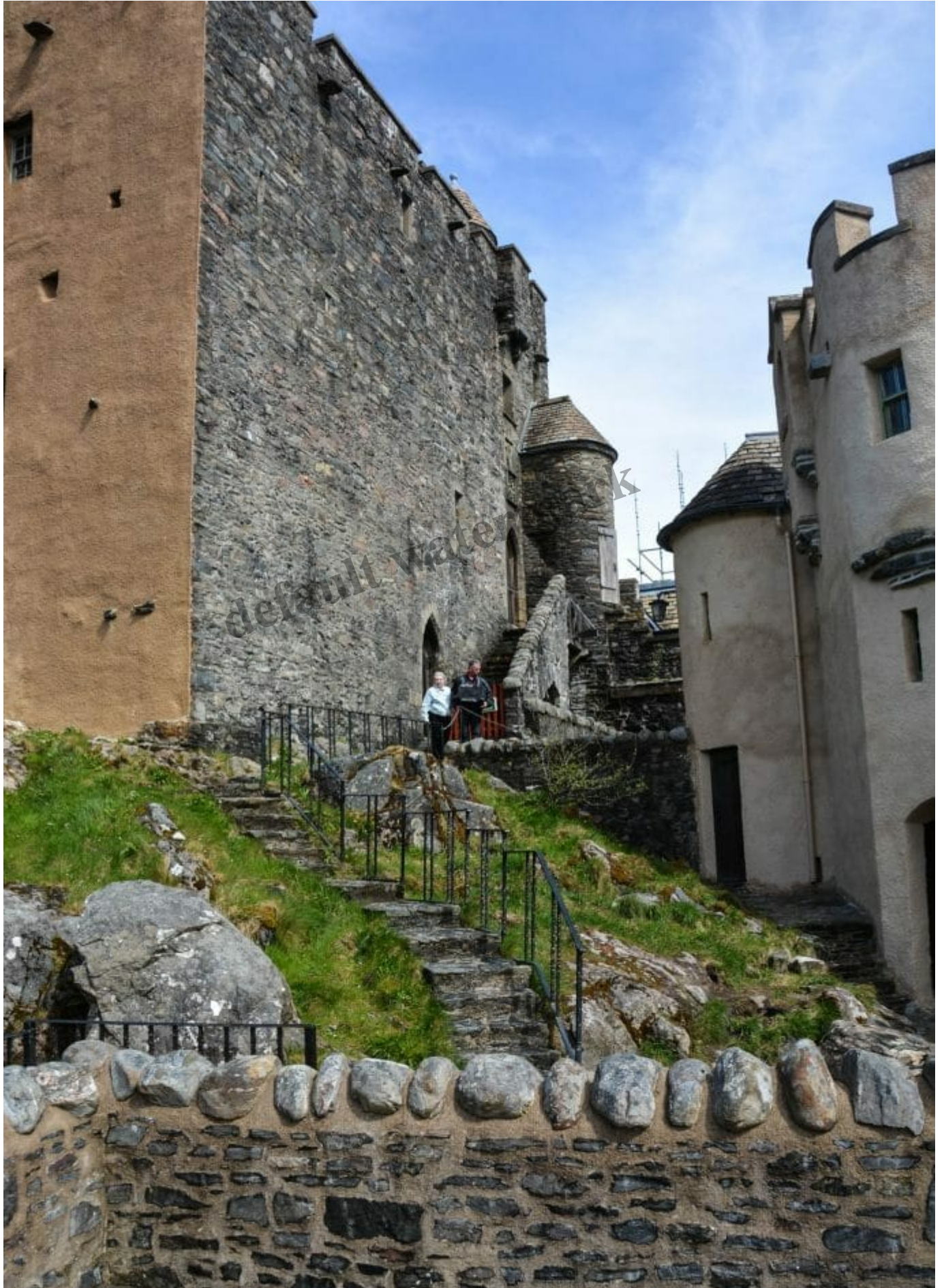








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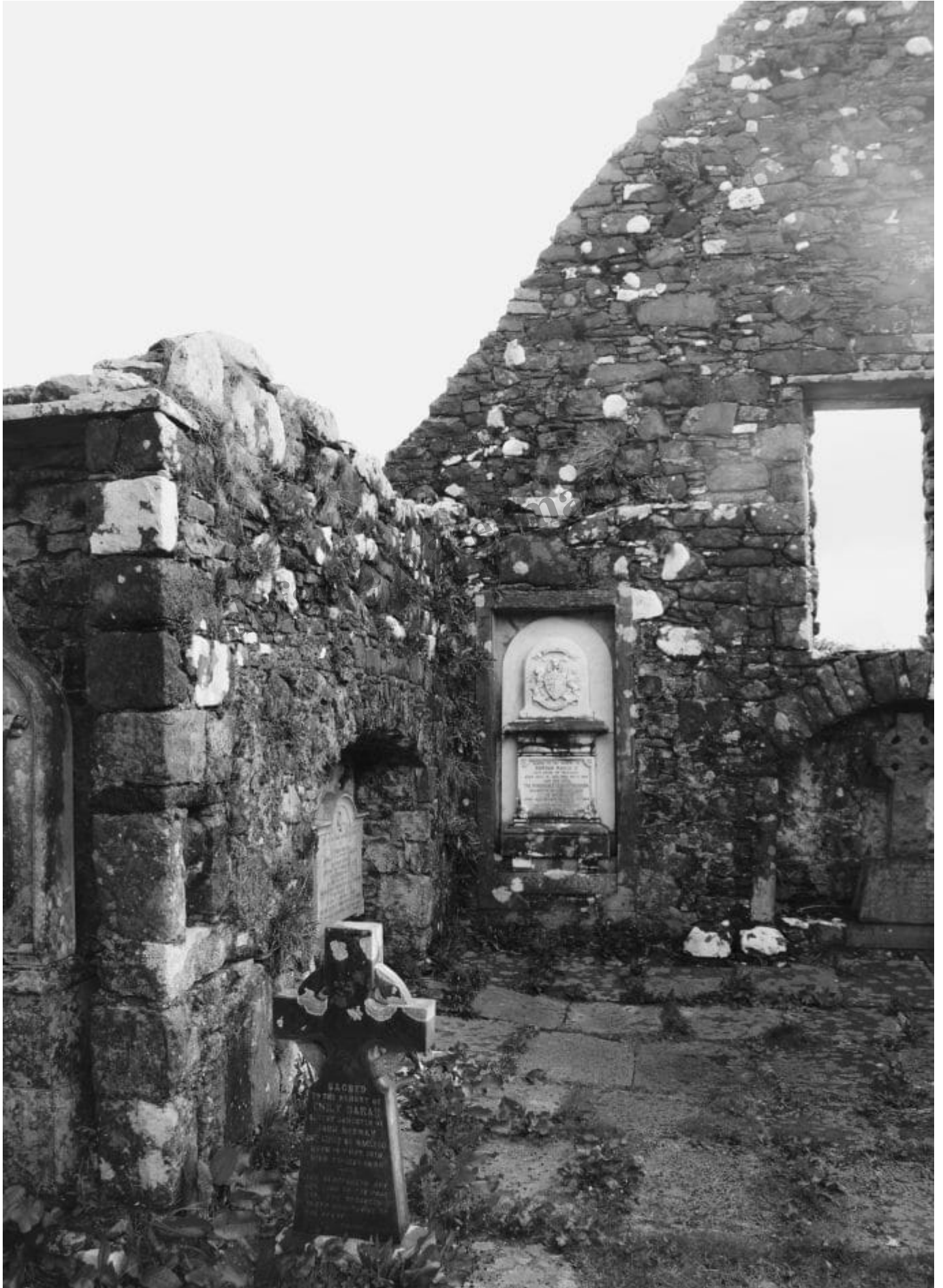








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The TWO CHURCHES' WALK

This circular walk takes you along well made paths to various points of interest, including a viewpoint looking towards Dunvegan Castle and Loch. Depending on the season, a wide variety of wild flowers, ferns and lichens can be found. You may even see an eagle soaring above or perhaps catch a glimpse of a red deer. The woodland section, which starts from Duirinish Church, is one of the most sheltered paths in the north-west of Skye and an interesting place to walk on the wettest of days.



SEA EAGLE

Also known as the White-Tailed Eagle. This huge bird has a pure white, wedge-shaped tail and very broad wings, held horizontally.



OSPREY

Easily distinguished from the Sea Eagle with a squarish (not wedge-shaped) tail. When soaring, this bird holds its wings above horizontal and the wing-tips point slightly upward and forward.



BUZZARD

Common on rocky coasts and hill-sides. Plumage varies from almost black to pure white. Often seen perched on poles or branches.



SPARROWHAWK

Mainly found around woodland. Smaller size, longer tail and short rounded wings distinguish this bird from buzzards, kestrels and kites.



Allow 45 minutes for the circular walk

This is a walk that will challenge the botanist and photographer, but it is the ever-changing atmospheric conditions that will stay in the memory as you move from the enclosed woodland to open moorland where you may see buzzards soaring and hear skylarks singing.

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