

Excerpt from “Dean’s Scottish Golfing Vacation Guide”

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The Highlands

The Highlands of Scotland is one of my favorite areas of Scotland and second only to Scotland. There are far fewer golfing tourists visiting the Highlands than other parts of the country, which is a shame. The golf and this part of the country is wonderful, especially Royal Dornoch and Nairn.

www.nairngolfclub.co.uk Nairn Golf Club was formed in 1887 and hosted the 1999 Walker Cup. Weekdays it is £85 and £115 for the day. I found their greens to be the best in Scotland (Blairgowrie, Edzell and Scotsraig also have excellent greens).

Nairn Dunbar www.nairndunbar.com £42 is nearby and also is worth playing, if you can stay in the town for a day. From Nairn, you should drive to Inverness and then north to Dornoch and stay there for two days. We stayed at Ceol Mara B&B in Nairn for two nights before heading for Dornoch. £25 pp. www.ceolmara.co.uk/ Irene is the host and she makes the best porridge that we have ever found in Scotland. She begins preparing it the night before in a low-heat oven. She also struck us as the original that the Mrs. Doubtfire character must have been based on (but, don’t tell her). Porridge early in the morning stays with you well until the end of your round. Irene was awarded four stars and now likes to rent out the entire house for a week.

If you would instead like to stay at one of the best and most expensive hotels in the area, try the Boath House, www.boath-house.com located by Nairn. It won the runner-up for 2007 as the national Scottish Hotel of the Year just behind the Old Course Hotel in St. Andrews. The hotel is situated on 20 acres and has six large restored bedrooms. The dining is world class. Rooms are £250 to £390 per night for a two-person room.

If you get to the Highlands, you have to play **Royal Dornoch**. www.royaldornoch.com/ (£82). I personally think that it may be the best golf course in Scotland and it certainly is the best Highlands course. If you get there in late April or May, the gorse is in its full yellow bloom and the views are majestic. I have played this course in wind, in rain, and on a calm sunny day. The holes are all beautiful and very challenging. The finishing holes are especially strong. It is worth driving to the Highlands just to play this course. It is very special in the world of golf. The photo on the cover of this Guide, which is repeated below gives you an idea of the panoramic views that you will see at Royal Dornoch.