

# POLITICALTOURS

Travel beyond the headlines

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## Scotland & Independence

Dates: 6 nights

**Sunday, 27 June – Saturday, 3 July 2021**

### Glasgow, Edinburgh

*Led by Brian Taylor*

Britain is arguably on the verge of the most significant change in 200 years. Repeated polls show Scottish voters want their country to leave the UK and become a separate state. Our Scotland Tour traces how this turn of events has come about and, notably, the impact of Brexit. We look at the rise of the SNP, the impact of devolution on Scotland and the UK as a whole, and look at what kind of state Scotland might become. The result might ultimately mean the end of the United Kingdom as we know it; neither side is taking anything for granted. The tour takes place in the wake of **Scotland's Parliamentary elections** and starts in **Glasgow**, weaves through **Stirling** and **Bannockburn**, before ending in **Edinburgh**.

The tour is led by **Brian Taylor**, formerly the BBC's Political Editor in Scotland and one of Scotland's best-known reporters. He is now a columnist with the Glasgow Herald.

**Price: £3370.00**

Single Supplement: £420.00

Breakfast, lunch and all accommodation are included in the price. Dinners where conditions permit. As on all our expert-led tours, the groups are deliberately small and will not exceed 14 people. Flights are not included and need to be arranged with your own travel agent.

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*Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.*

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## Itinerary

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### **Day One – Sunday: Glasgow**

The tour starts in the evening with a discussion – “Scotland and independence?” – the state of the debate for and against. *Overnight Glasgow*

### **Day Two – Monday: Glasgow Turns Yellow**

A century ago Glasgow was at the heart of the British Empire and Scottish identity was a very different thing. We briefly trace the shifts in politics and history from the end of the Victorian era to the eve of devolution. As the shipyards and factories that traded with the world went into decline, Glasgow emerged as a Labour heartland. But since then **Glasgow** has seen a major political shift. A leading political analyst takes us through the city. We meet former Labour supporters at a working men’s club and see how the SNP has taken a foothold in recent years. Clydeside and The Gorbals – lunch at the ubiquitous chip shop. Meetings with local journalists and Scots writers. *Overnight Glasgow*

### **Day Three – Tuesday: Sectarianism, Religion & Politics**

In the morning we visit Scotland’s best-selling broadsheet for their take on the city. We look at the role of religion in politics. Sectarianism exists but has waned and Protestants are no longer as wedded to the Union as they once were. Football itself tells a story (Ibrox Stadium). We also examine how the SNP has courted ethnic minorities including Glasgow’s thriving Asian community (Pollokshields). Talk with a leading Scottish writer. *Overnight Glasgow*

### **Day Four – Wednesday: Bannockburn, Stirling, Edinburgh**

The battle of two nations – a local historian takes us through Anglo-Scot relations and looks at how it is being argued over today. Lunch in Stirling and travel on to Edinburgh. We visit the Scottish Parliament – a pollster traces the inexorable rise of the SNP and the impact of Brexit on recent polls. *Overnight Edinburgh*

### **Day Five – Thursday: Independence & A Constitutional Crisis**

We focus on the arguments for an independent Scotland; just how viable would it be, how much do those arguments play in a possible referendum campaign and Scotland’s place in the European Economy. We also look at Westminster’s response to Scottish nationalism. The future of the UK is also in the hands of Scottish voters. A leading Scottish Unionist puts forward the case for the status quo. Legal and constitutional experts also look at the possible fallout for the rest of the UK if Scotland were to break away. *Overnight Edinburgh*

### **Day Six – Friday: Salmond vs Sturgeon – Identity Politics**

Just as the SNP’s case for independence seemed invincible, an almighty battle between the party’s most powerful figures erupted into a constitutional crisis. We look at how the “Salmond Affair” evolved and how the former SNP’s new party Alba might affect the independence debate. Ultimately though Scotland’s, and indeed the UK’s, future may rest on how people see themselves; in other words, identity may be the biggest decider in the independence debate. Brian Taylor and others review the tour and look at how Scots identity has evolved in recent years.

You will be able to put your questions to leading politicians and former civil servants. We review the tour over drinks on Friday evening. *Overnight Edinburgh*

### **Day Seven – Saturday**

*Tour ends after breakfast*