



" Highland Adventure Tour "
- The Smell of Scotland -

"An experience you'll never forget"
- create your own fragrenced portfolio now -

What: A 10 Day guided tour through the Highlands
Where: Edinburgh - Fort William - Isle of Skye - Isle of
Mull - Glencoe - Edinburgh
When: All year around
Bookings for June are open now
More information at: www.thesmellofscotland.com



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1. What is “The Smell of Scotland” ?

Have you ever found yourself in a moment, where you smelled a scent that triggered a certain memory and that you wished you could hold onto? In Germany there is a proverb called „Marmeladenglasmoment“, which is used to describe the longing to preserve a moment in an empty jar of glass forever. Due to modern technology we are able to capture moments through taking pictures, so would it not be the next step to collect these memories in terms of a fragranced portfolio?

On behalf of a cooperation with the national tourist organization “Visit Scotland”, our team of Smellstudy Experts surrounding Ethnologist Marie Gronemeyer, is eager to present you Scotland's first Smellscape tour through the Highlands. Launching this June, our customers will be able to book the new “Highland Adventure Tour” package, a 10 day guided tour through the most stunning landscapes Scotland has to offer. The adventure begins in Scotland's heart, the capital Edinburgh, with its charming old architecture and rich culture. Further locations are Fort William, the Isle of Skye, the Isle of Mull and Glencoe, this route is designed to ensure the best conditions for our scent based scavenger hunt.

This special program¹ is led by Ethnologist Marie Gronemeyer, who is specialized in the “Ethnology of Senses” and will instruct you to collect your samples for creating a customized fragranced portfolio. Due to the “scratch-and-sniff-methodology”², which is commonly used in perfume test patches, you will be able to capture your favorite memories forever. The methodology is based on using an abrasive patch of paper, that is infused with the molecules of the scents you collected (vgl. Fischer 2019). When you want to be taken back in time, all you have to do is cause friction to the patch and the molecules will be released., thus causing the scent (vgl. ebd.). In the past couple years Marie Gronemeyer and her team of scientists were dedicated to develop a technique to

1 This is an imagined scenario I created for this seminar

2 Commonly used by the perfume industry, but in this context being published by the journal of the british Architectural Association to showcase the scents of the „Glass House“ (Fischer 2019)

Disclaimer: Not my invention

preserve these scents long term, so they would not fade after usage.

2. What is the history behind smell based guided tours and preserving scents ?

The concept of smell based city tours is gaining popularity in the last few years, countries as for example Switzerland and Germany offer these for quite some time now. Thanks to our Ethnologist Marie Gronemeyer, which is based in Bremen (Germany), we were able to join a project of the international “City- Smell Initiative”, with partners all around the globe.

One of these partners is the German city of Holzminden, which is known for its odor and flavor industry. Their marketing department is providing different activities like scent and flavor seminars, scented souvenirs as well as historical and educational smell walks (vgl. Stadtmarketing Holzminden GmbH 2021).

Furthermore we were informed that the city of Ulm has come up with a handicapped accessible concept of city tours. Helmut Dorow is a blind city guide, who is approaching his surroundings through smell and is inviting blind attendees and those with vision to do the same. The tour ends with a visit to the garden of aroma and touch, thus making Ulm a good role model for an accessible city (vgl. Müller 2014).

Whereas in the Swiss city of Bern you will be able to learn about the entry of Napoleon's grande Armee and his connection to scents, while attending their aroma and fragrance tour. Visitors will learn interesting anecdotes as for example Napoleon's preferred scents and the history of soap. The tour ends at the atelier of “art of scent”, where perfumiere Brigitte Witchi is guiding the attendees to create their very own signature perfume (Old city of Bern 2021).

Why is our memory triggered when sensing a certain scent?

Biological studies have shown that from the olfactory bulbs, the sensory information attains the piriform cortex, an area in the brain that is connected to the limbic system (Herz 2006: 22). The latter is a brain area subject to the experience of emotions. The amygdala, which is responsible for the ability to express and experience emotions, is divided from the olfactory bulbs by only two synapses (vgl. ebd.). Whereas the hippocampus, which is associated with associative learning and different forms of memory, is divided by only three synapses. Furthermore it was stated that the olfactory area – from all the senses-, has the most immediate connection to both the amygdala and the hippocampus (vgl. ebd.).

The idea of artificially recreating smell experiences was greatly influenced by Jorge Otero-Pailos the director of monument preservation program of Columbia University (NY) and perfumier Rosendu Mateu. Together they recreated the fragrance of houses in 1949, 1959 and 1969, like cigar smoke, whiskey and body odor (vgl. Fischer 2019). Just like us, they were using the Scratch-and-Sniff-Methodology before we evolved it to be more of a permanent experience (vgl. ebd.).

Another influence of our recent studies is Norwegian artist and chemist scientist Sissel Tolaas, who has preserved 52 profiles of metropolises, coasts and oceans in the last 30 years (vgl. ebd.).

Tolaas likes to refer to herself as a “professional inbetweenner”, connecting her odor research with her language and communication studies (Poon 2015). Her clients range from architects and environmentalists to commercial companies, for whom she e.g creates so-called “smell scapes”³ of different cities (ebd.). Collecting different scents since the early 1990s, she has smell profiles of more than 35 cities e.g Berlin, Mexico City, Kansas City and Missouri, as well as 7.000 scents in total (vgl ebd.). One of her latest projects was identifying and recreating scents that make Kansas City an unique and diverse place, she told us that she went on a scavenger hunt at places like “bakeries, laundromats, Ethiopian and Haitian restaurants, and even garbage and body odor”

³ Which were first introduced by Porteous (vgl. Porteous 1985)

(ebd.).

After collecting the samples, she then brings them to her lab and extracts the odor-molecules by means of a machine provided by the “International Flavors & Fragrances Inc.”(ebd.). This very company will also be helping us to identify the key molecules, so we will be able to make a synthetic replicate of the smell. Therefore - she tells us ⁴ - it is important to collect constant smells, thus being more permanent (vgl. ebd.). Toolas also stated, that we would not use our noses as much as we used to, therefore her projects are meant to reconnect us with our noses once more. In terms of our project she questioned, that people are asked to smell commercial products and perfumes, whereas we would not be asked to smell a city or each other. Even though the latter would make extraordinary stories, that could not be told any other way (vgl. ebd.). Thus making our “Highland Adventure Tour” the perfect program to experience Scotland's beautiful landscapes, while also creating long lasting memories through the personalized odor portfolios.

3. The scents of the Highlands- our travel route

3.1 Day one: Edinburgh

Our first stop is Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland. With its cobblestone streets and charming old buildings, as well as its many characteristic scents, Edinburgh is the perfect location to start and end our tour. We will meet at the Edinburgh Castle and make our way through the city, walking small cobblestone alleys. While the attendees will be able to collect samples of smells from the different pubs and multi cultural restaurants of their choice, we will head to the “Royal Botanic Garden”. This green oasis has a lot to offer: rock gardens, Chinese hillside and the woodland garden with its infamous giant redwood trees. But also small ponds with live fish and colorful flower

⁴ Disclaimer: Not my interview, it is an excerpt of the interview with Bloomberg City Lab (vgl. Poon (2015))

fields that smell like summer, honey and softness. One of our favorite places there, is the glass house with its tropical plants. The high ceilings are stacked with greenery, the air is humid and rich with the scent of wet earth, dewdrop and the fresh lush scent of cut grass as well as the watery sweet smell of the lily pads. Not only is the entry free, but the Royal Botanic Garden is a real treat for collecting samples of fresh earth, petals and evergreen leaves. Ethnologist Marie Gronemeyer will instruct and advise the attendees, in terms of safely collecting the samples without harming the organism.

After that our guides will head to the city center once again, stopping at historical sights like Victoria street and Deanvillage, which are lined with different sources of scents like tea-, coffe- and soapstores, as well as bakeries and small galleries. On our way to a traditional Scottish pub, our historical guide Gerhard Kley will explain why Edinburgh was once called "*The old Reekie*". This phrase roughly translates to "*Old Smokey*" and alludes to the dark clouds of smoke that were emitted by coal fires of old town tenements. Back in the 1600's Scotland's capital was described as "overcrowded, stinking and smokey" (Museums & Galleries Edinburgh 2021). Due to its reputation in the early 18th century Poets like Allan Ramsey and Robert Fergusson both included the nickname in their poems. The latter even named one of his poems "Auld Reekie ", in which he recounted the daily life in the city quite graphically (ebd.).

We will be dining at the "Dirty Dick's" a pub near famous princess street, that is known for its unique decorations. Lining the walls and ceiling are stacks of books, pipes, picture frames, posters, mirrors and all kinds of junk. Our favorite place is a couch area in a corner with a little fireplace, that is illuminated by an old lamp. The light is dimmed and the place is softly glowing in the light of the small candles placed all over the place, making this place a cozy treat after a long day exploring the city. Just as our mission to collect scents the pub seems to be collecting all sorts of knick knacks (clutter), thus being a perfect source for collecting some samples. There is the scent of the worn couch, a mixture of buttery soft leather and warm cigar smoke, smelling like a summer evening. But also the scent of wax and burning wick of the long candle sticks, placed in green bottles. Which scent feels festive, like birthday candles on a cake or candles on an

advent wreath. As well as the smell of cold alcoholic beverages and steaming hot dishes like haggis. Haggis - some sort of meaty pudding- is a traditional Scottish dish, which contains sheep's pluck and oatmeal among other things and is traditionally served in the sheep's stomach. Although most foreigners are appalled by the dish at first, it is said to be surprisingly delicious. If you would rather play it safe or simply do not want to eat meat at all, there is a vegetarian option of haggis, as well as other dishes to choose from. For an authentic experience though, haggis is a must. Maybe someone even wants to take a sample of this Scottish cuisine for their custom memory book. Toolas is convinced that there is no smell hierarchy, therefore all scents would have the potential to tell an interesting story (vgl. Poon 2015). So maybe haggis is just the scent for you!

3.2 Day two and three: Fort William

On our way out of the city heading right for the Highlands, we are stopping in a small town called Fort William. Fort William is located at the shore of Loch Linnhe and surrounded by majestic mountains, such as the Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in Scotland and Great Britain. We plan on hiking Ben Nevis in the early morning, after staying on the camping ground of the mountain's foot, the perfect place to go on a scent based scavenger hunt. It takes approximately two hours to get to a cold mountain lake at the top, therefore we recommend bringing bathing suits. There are no words to describe the refreshment of diving into the crystal clear water, after two hours of sweating. As well as the lake other sources of water, like little streams make their way down the mountain like tears streaming down a face. It is said that these streams are good sources of minerals, hence the encouragement of locals to fill your bottles for a refreshment on the way down. The scent of the lake is lively, the water's scent being infused with the fragrance of the fern and lush grass surrounding it. Whereas the ocean smells like a salty breeze, the lake has an earthy touch to it. Similar to the scent after the rain, when the world smells clean after a long hot day in the sun, washing all but nature's scents away. The next day we will be waking up early, to catch the Jacobite steam train crossing the Glenfinnan Viaduct. The train is commonly known as the "Hogwarts Express" after starring in the popular Harry Potter franchise. The air still carries a scent of the

morningdew, coating the moist grass, the viaduct giving of the scent of wet stone and the biting sharp scent of the iron railroad tracks. Passing us by -the steam released by the historical train- fills the misty air with damp puffy clouds, clashing hard against the cool breeze of air carried over by the nearby lake.

After the train passed us by, we will collect samples of morningdew coated grass and small petals of honey sweet wildflowers.

3.3 Day four- six: The Isle of Skye

First thing in the morning - as we are headed for the Isle of Skye-, is a pit stop at Eilean Donan Castle. This charming old castle is located on a small tidal island and meeting point of three Lochs. After we explore the interior of the castle, we will head outside to the castles shore to collect some samples of the burnt-orange algae that has been washed up. The algae perfectly captures the serene scent of fresh wet grass, the scent of rain, water and algae that has been washed up against the worn cobble stones. The fragrance of the fog covering the lake and almost swallowing the castle whole and the scent of the fish swimming in the depth of the lake.

One of the highlights visiting the island is a magical place called Fairy Glen.

Surrounded by small hills covered in fern, pools, tiny waterfalls and gnarled ancient trees, this place looks like out of another world. It is believed that the circles of stone in its valley, were placed there by some kind of mischievous fairies. Every now and then, there is a soft “baa” of the wild sheep roaming the small path along the hills, creating an idyllic scene.

There are a lot of scents to be taken in: The pieces of bark of the gnarled trees give off a warm comforting and tangy scent after the sun has warmed their surface all day. The prominent scent of the sheep’s wool, that evokes the memory of wide evergreen fields and sensation of bundling up in a thick chunky sweater, as the days get colder. And at

last the earthy and musky scent of the fern, covering Scotland's landscapes in rich emerald green. And which smells as fresh, as the sensation of touching the crystal clear and cool waterfalls after being covered in sweat and dirt from walking around all day.

3.4 Day seven and eight: The Isle of Mull

Another highlight of this tour is the whale watching tour in Tobermory. With the colorful shops looking right at the ocean, Tobermory is a charming little town right on the Isle of Mull. Besides being praised for one of the best fish and chips you will ever eat - we recommend the smoked Haddock- this town is also known for its popular whale watching tours. The minke whale - we were told at the tour -, is known for its stinking "minke breath" and therefore can be smelled before being seen. Although having a bad breath, you might be surprised to find out, that whales are historically connected with the production of perfume through a substance called ambergris (vgl. Lesger 2018).

Ambergris is a rock like substance, which is developed in the intestines of whales (vgl. ebd.). Sperm whales are known to consume large masses of squid and cuttlefish, but they cannot break down the beaks and pens, to prevent internal injuries a greasy film is formed. When the substance is released from the animal at last, the oxidation caused by the saltwater leads to a further coating of the substance. Fresh ambergris is darker in color and has an unpleasant manure like scent to it, thus making it the least valuable (vgl. Ambergris Connect 2021). While brown ambergris has started oxidating, making it a little more pleasant to the nose, as well as more valuable. Light gray, silver or white ambergris is the most valuable, being almost fully oxidated and therefore giving off a perfume like scent (vgl ebd.).

The substance reached great popularity after being employed as a fixative by European and American perfumers and was even mentioned in the famous novel Moby Dick. In

the 19th century in Europe perfume was being used as a symbol for status, with Queen Victoria wearing “Fleurs de Bulgarie” (ebd.). This signature scent containing “Bulgarian rose, bergamot, musk and ambergris”, is still made with its traditional condiments to this day (ebd.). While homemade perfumes were often made from handpicked flowers and herbs, cities sold premade perfumes containing flavored scents of floral and ambergris, thus increasing the hunting of whales dramatically. However – Ethnologist Marie Gronemeyer tells us - “Ambergris status as a waste product means that it is not covered by animal protection provisions and its use remains legal in the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland and New Zealand” (ebd.). Ambergris still is used by popular high-end brands as Gucci, Givenchy and Chanel, even though synthetic alternatives are available. Since whale populations are depending on our choices, our partners in the fragrance industry renounce animal products, as well as testing on animals (vgl. Lesger 2018).

3.5 Day nine: Glencoe

On our way back we will be spending our day in Glencoe, a charming town surrounded by tall mountains and Lochs. Glencoe offers many different activities such as hiking the Bidean nam Bian mountain or feeding wild deer. We will be staying at the “Red Squirrel Campsite”, which is known for the small little campfires all over the camping grounds. After we have set up our tents in a small valley covered by gnarled trees and a view of the mountains near by, we will prepare for a campfire. Especially in the summer time it is important to put on some Anti Smidge, to shield against some nasty kind of mosquito, which like to crawl into ones eyes, nose, mouth and ears. A lot of Scottish people swear by Anti Smidge and you most likely will be able to smell its citrus scent at any tourist attraction. The feeling of sitting at the campfire under the glistening stars surrounded by mountains, making “Stockbrot” (a german dish were you put dough on a stick and roast

it around the fire) is an experience you will never forget, being the perfect finale for our trip. So you might want to include the warm scent of burn “Stockbrot”, the summery scent of charcoal and the fresh citrus scent of Anti Smidge in your fragrance memory book, to remember this summer night forever.

3.6 Day ten: Edinburgh

Back at Edinburgh, we will make our way back to the headquarter of our scent laboratory, where your collected samples are already waiting for you. By now you might noticed that Edinburgh has a distinct scent to it, a mixture of yeast, bread and beer. This scent – Gerhard Kley explains to us - is malted barley from the city’s breweries, as well as roasted malt from the North British Grain Distillery, the last of the city’s great distilleries. Thus making it the final sample for our customized fragrance portfolios.

As we arrive at our laboratory we meet with Sissl Toolas, who will explain the concept of capturing a city’s scent and will give the attendees instructions on the process of extracting and preserving the scents we collected beforehand. At the end of the day everyone will have designed their very own customized memory book, the perfect souvenir for this trip. Containing the scents of the plants from the royal botanical garden, water from the mountainlake in Fort William, sheep wool from Fairy Glen and maybe even the scent of minke breath, haggis and the Scottish distilleries.

We hope to be able to expand to other countries such as Seol, Sydney, Rotorua and Tokyo in the near future and to be able to tell the stories of these cities as well. Please visit us at www.thesmellofscotland.com for further information and news.

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