**A Wee Dram: Honeymoon in Scotland**

**Article by: Pamela Green of My Newlywed Cooking Adventures, 2014**

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Can I offer you a wee dram? I lost count of how many times we heard this phrase on our honeymoon in Scotland last summer. Being that my husband is not a beach person and I enjoy history and good food, Scotland quickly reached the top of our honeymoon idea list. While perhaps not the traditional post-wedding location for two newlyweds, a trip to Scotland will bring you closer together as you share in a harrowing drive along its skinny roads, toasting with a wee dram of Scotch at one of the almost 100 distilleries, many of them still family run, and hike through the verdant hillsides and mountains of the Scottish highlands.

My husband already enjoyed Canadian whiskey so as we planned our driving tour of the country, we made sure to schedule in Scotch Whisky distillery tours in the different regions. Scotland has 15 distinct regions and we were able to touch on a few of them in our weeklong visit. By the end, my husband was a Scotch convert and we now enjoy happy hour in our home with a wee dram.

**Edinburgh & the Lothians:** We flew into Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, and enjoyed a stay for a few nights in this lovely and historic city. The cobblestone streets culminate at the top of the hill at the Edinburgh Castle, dating back to the 12th century. We indulged in a tasting menu at the famous Balmoral Hotel's Michelin starred Number One Restaurant, that ended with the pièce de résistance, a Whisky cart. Yes, a two-tier, wheeled cart that comes right to your tableside where you can choose from dozens of bottles of Whisky…you can even try more than one. With a stay at the unique and extravagant Witchery Hotel, we were sitting in the lap of luxury while in this old city.

**Inner Hebrides:** After driving from Edinburgh through the tranquil and majestic Trossachs, with a stop at Wallace Monument and Stirling Castle to pay homage to Sir William Wallace, the great Braveheart, we ferried over to the Isle of Skye. This island has a stark and magical landscape with the dark, rocky Cuillins Mountains and fields of wild grasses leading straight to the sparkling sea. It seemed that sheep outnumbered people on this island, and the seafood was delicious; try the traditional Cullen Skink soup in the colorful port town of Portree. Being based at the Conde Nast Traveler recommended Kinloch Lodge, we were set to enjoy the island while returning to Michelin-star dinners in their quaintly elegant dining room. With a short drive around the island you can visit Dunvegan Castle, home of the MacLeod clan for over 800 years and stop at the renowned Talisker Distillery for a tour. Their 10-year single malt Scotch is now my husband's very favorite Scotch. He did not let us leave without a visit to their gift shop where you can peruse their special 25 and 30-year old Scotches.

**Speyside:** No trip to Scotland is complete without a drive along the only Malt Whisky Trail in the world. From Isle of Skye, we drove along Loch Ness, past the Culloden Battle Field, and the River Spey where we watched fishermen catch huge, shimmery Atlantic salmon. With seven Whisky distilleries to visit along the route, you need to spend at least a night or two in the area. We loved the beautifully appointed rooms and four-course dinners at the Boath House, located at the end of the trail in Nairn. My husband enjoyed the hour-long tour at the classic Glenfiddich distillery and I liked Cardhu because it is the only distillery that historically was started by women, Helen and her daughter Elizabeth Cummings in the late 1800s. We spent a couple enjoyable days between whisky tastings doing guided fly-fishing for salmon and trout with Wesley Parke of Fly Fish Dreamer.

**Perthshire:** We capped off our Scottish honeymoon with a visit to Edradour Distillery, just outside Pitlochry. This is the world's smallest malt whisky distillery. Their guided tour feels very personal as opposed to those at the larger big-name distilleries. You get to ask as many questions as you like and visit the cask room that if you peek around a little has barrels dating back 50 years. We stayed in nearby Dunkeld at the hospitable Kinnaird Estate Guest House, an incredibly stunning Georgian manor house perched above the Rivers Tay and Tummel and dating back to 1806. We were treated to custom breakfasts in the bright and cheery breakfast room and dinners in their fancy dining room with views of the perfectly manicured lawns and gardens and with meals befitting the lord and lady of any house.

The author of this article is Pamela Green. She lives in the western United States and is the cookbook author of *Holiday Cooking for Newlyweds: Tips, Tricks and Recipes* available on Amazon.com: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00FHKAIY6> . She is also the creator of My Newlywed Cooking Adventures, a newlywed cooking blog: [www.mynewlywedcookingadventures.com](http://www.mynewlywedcookingadventures.com).

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Malt Whisky Trail Information (with information on Glenfiddich and Cardhu Distilleries)

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