



Cullen Heritage Itinerary

[Cullen's](#) historic railway viaduct is not only a bridge over the town - it is a link between the past and present. The imposing structure cuts the seaside town in two, with the old on one side and the more recent section on the other.

The best place to start learning more about Cullen's heritage is in the Seatown in the east, close to the beach. Walk through the collection of 17th century fisher cottages where generations of seafaring families once lived - and see if you can work out the confusing house numbering system!

Continue walking along the seafront and you will come to the Thomas Telford-designed harbour. The structure was completed in 1819, with a further quay added some years later. Dozens of traditional fishing vessels would have used the harbour during the boom years of the herring industry, which also supported countless on-shore jobs.

If the sea air has helped you to build up an appetite, it's time to head up the hill and into the middle of the town in search of some Cullen Skink - a local dish which is now a world famous soup.

If you are visiting during the summer months it's worth stopping off at Cullen Town Hall and chatting with volunteers who run the heritage display and visitor information point. They have extensive material and local photographs, and will be able to share stories about Cullen's heritage. If you have come to research your ancestors, they may even know about your family.

Keep walking up the hill and head towards Cullen Auld Kirk, which dates back to the 13th century. The architecture is beautiful, and here you will also find something significant to Scottish, as well as local, history. The organs of Robert The Bruce's wife, who died while travelling in the area, are interred here and, to this day, an annual stipend is paid to the minister to pray for her soul.

A graveyard is attached to the church, and many of the headstones date back over centuries. Have a look and you will see some of the surnames that are commonplace in Cullen, such as Addison, Mowatt and Donn adorn the top of the stones and span many generations.

Moving back towards the centre of the town, pause to take a look at the Mercat Cross - it may not be there the next time you visit. This cross, which dates back to 1696, was



originally sited in the old part of Cullen before being moved to Castle Hill in 1820 and then to its present location in the town square in 1872.

Walk back down the hill and towards the Grade B-listed viaducts. The three separate viaducts were built as a result of 19th century NIBYISM. The then Countess of Seafield refused to let the railway cross the policies of Cullen House, so engineers had no option but to skirt around her land. The last trains travelled along the tracks in the 1960s, and the viaduct is now part of a coastal walking and cycling route. Make sure you take a trip out towards the west and enjoy the views of the bay.

Don't forget to round off your visit with the most traditional of seaside treats - fish and chips from the wrapper, followed by a cone of Cullen's famous ice cream.

If time permits, take a trip out to the nearby settlement of Deskford where there is a historic church and graveyard which may yield some clues to your ancestral past. The area has previously staged gatherings for people with the surname Longmore, so be sure to visit if you are part of the clan.

Deskford was also the site of the discovery of an ancient carnyx in 1816. The 2,000-year-old war trumpet, which has the shape of a boar's head, was found in a peat bog. It is the only surviving carnyx in Britain and while the original is on display in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, a replica can be found in [Banff Museum](#). The settlement itself dates back to Pictish times and coin hoards have previously been found here.