



## 50 Fascinating Facts about EASTER ROSS

1. Tain is the oldest Royal Burgh in Scotland whose charter dates back to 1066.
2. King MacBeth was born in Dingwall.
3. Glenmorangie Distillery has the tallest stills in Scotland.
4. The Brahan Seer - Scotland's Nostradamus - lived and worked on the Seaforth Estate at Maryburgh, where the Seaforth Highlanders were founded.
5. Munlochy has a 6<sup>th</sup> century healing well known as the Cloutie Well.
6. Easter Ross has a number of single malt whisky distilleries – Balblair, Dalmore, Glenmorangie, Glen Ord and Teaninich.
7. The mermaid of the North is situated at Balintore – she is bigger and better than Copenhagen's Little Mermaid.
8. Black Rock Gorge at Evanton featured in the film 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire'.
9. Fearn Abbey was built in Edderton and was moved to Fearn around 1240. In 1742 the roof collapsed killing 36 people, though it was repaired in 1772 and is still in use as the parish church.
10. Dingwall was the Viking capital of Scotland and became the administrative centre of Ross-shire in 1843 and later the amalgamated Ross and Cromarty in 1889.
11. Renowned Scots engineer Thomas Telford built bridges at Conon Bridge, Alness, Contin, also built Portmahomack pier, Avoch harbour, Balintraid pier and Invergordon ferry pier.
12. Invergordon was called Inverbreakie until around 1700 when it was renamed Invergordon by Sir Adam Gordon.
13. John Shepherd-Baron from Tain invented the ATM cash machine.
14. Nigg old church is home to a carved 9<sup>th</sup> century Pictish stone.
15. Invergordon was a major naval refuelling base during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> world wars. The first visit of a full naval fleet was in 1863 it consisted of 9 ships and 5,000 men.
16. The storehouse of Foulis was built in 1730 as a grain store and is now a visitor centre, deli and restaurant.
17. The spectacular Fyrish monument was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century on the orders of General Sir Hector Munro, allegedly to provide employment for his tenants.
18. Teanninich House was built in 1784 by Captain James Munro and was owned in the 1920s by Charles Harrison, an American who was the model for the novel Little Lord Fauntleroy by Frances Hodgson Burnett. It's now a hotel and restaurant.
19. Alness has been overall winners of Britain in Bloom 5 times.

20. There are bottlenose dolphins in the Moray Firth between Cromarty and Nigg, best viewed from Channonry Point.
21. At the Cromarty Bridge there is one of the largest colonies of common and grey seals in the UK.
22. The Soutars, hills on each side of the entrance to the Cromarty Firth were named after 2 giant brothers, both soutars (Scots name for shoemakers) who owned only one set of cobbling tools which they threw to (or possibly at) each other over the firth.
23. HMS Natal blew up in the Cromarty Firth in December 1915 claiming the lives of over 400 people. Unstable explosives were claimed to be the cause of the explosion.
24. The Invergordon mutiny occurred in 1931 when naval pay was cut by 25%.
25. In 1941 a Junkers 88 bombed the oil storage tanks in Invergordon. Two bombs were dropped, only one exploded. Two men were working on the tanks when the bombs hit, both fell through the tank and out the other side. Both survived and one was found later in a local hostelry recovering from the trauma.
26. Inchindown, 4 miles north of Invergordon, has bombproof oil storage tanks built into the hills.
27. Dingwall is the home of Ross County Football Club, currently playing in the Scottish first division.
28. The father of James Monroe, 5<sup>th</sup> president of the United States (1817 – 1825) hailed from Evanton.
29. The oldest ferry in Scotland (the king's ferry) runs from Cromarty to Nigg.
30. Groam House museum in Rosemarkie houses many Pictish artefacts.
31. St Duthac's shrine in Tain dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. In 1306 the wife, daughter and sister of Robert the Bruce were handed over to the English whilst they were seeking sanctuary in St Duthac's.
32. Fortrose Cathedral is one of the most outstanding examples of late mediaeval architecture in Scotland.
33. Balnagowan Castle was once a ward of court of the state of Delaware due to it being threatened with confiscation by the Inland Revenue. The then Earl of Ross deemed it would be an act of war on America if the Inland Revenue tried to confiscate it.
34. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the Ferintosh Distillery, near Dingwall, was excused from paying duty as compensation for the distillery being burned down by Jacobites in 1689. The duty free status lasted until 1784 when the state bought the distillery and spoilt the party.
35. The first hole at Strathpeffer golf course has the highest drop from tee to green in Scotland.
36. Hugh Miller's house in Cromarty is a museum to Hugh Miller who lived there between 1802 and 1856. He was a stonemason who became interested in geology and journalism who became a notable author and church reformer.
37. Old Tarbat church houses the Tarbat Discovery Centre which plots the history of Portmahomack from Pictish times onward.
38. Tarbat Ness lighthouse is one of the tallest lighthouses in Britain at 40 metres high.
39. The entire population of Portmahomack was evacuated for 6 months during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war in order that rehearsals for the D Day landings could take place.

40. Tulloch Castle in Dingwall, now a hotel, dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, has concealed passageways and a ghost called the Green Lady.
41. Castle Leod near Strathpeffer is the home of the clan Mackenzie founders of the earldom of Cromartie. It is one of the few castles in Scotland still occupied by the original family.
42. The Eagle Stone in Strathpeffer is a small Pictish stone. The Brahan Seer predicted that if it fell 3 times the surrounding valley would be flooded. The stone has fallen twice and is now concreted in place.
43. The Black Isle is not an island but a peninsula. The most popular theory for the black is that when the surrounding countryside is white with snow in winter the Black Isle is not.
44. The million dollar view between Alness and Ardgay on the Struie road is a fine view over the Kyle of Sutherland and beyond.
45. A US air force B17 landed at Evanton during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war for repair. It left after being renamed the Evanton Babe.
46. RAF Tain is the largest live bombing range in Europe.
47. Local landowner Evan Fraser founded Evans Town – Evanton in 1807.
48. The highest peak in Easter Ross is Ben Wyvis at 3,500 feet. The mountain was the site of one of the earliest attempts to create a Scottish ski resort, including a mountain railway.
49. A sheep was killed when a bomb dropped on a farm near Invergordon on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1940.
50. The mussel scalps in the Dornoch Firth belonged to the crown up to 1612. At this time the right to fish for the mussels was bequeathed to the Royal Burgh of Tain, in perpetuity by James VI. The fishery now forms part of the Common Good of the old Royal Burgh area.