



SPOTLIGHT ON...

SPIRIT OF SPEYSIDE

Held annually over the first long weekend in May, this whisky-inspired festival offers over 500 events in different venues across Speyside, a region that's home to more than half of all distilleries in Scotland. Spirit of Speyside is now in its 18th year and promises a programme that's suitable for experts, novices and even non-whisky drinkers.

Last year, the 15th-century Gordon Castle played host at the festival for the first time, serving a four-course dinner with specially selected whiskies and wines. A malting event was also added to the programme, giving ticket holders an insight into this often overlooked element of production. Dalmunach Distillery was opened to the public for the very first time, holding exclusive whisky festival tours.

The five-day whisky celebration is a chance to go behind the scenes at traditional distilleries, taste vintage whiskies, discover foods that complement different drams and enjoy outdoor activities, masterclasses, talks, wildlife walks and more.

(Louise Stoddart)

■ Various venues, Speyside, 27 April-1 May, spiritofspeyside.com

15 & 16 APRIL SLOW MARATHON FESTIVAL

OUTDOOR

Various venues, Huntly, deveron-projects.com

This year's Slow Marathon examines places of energy, in the area southeast of Huntly. From Neolithic sites, to hill tops, to renewables; they test the energy in the landscape and recharge batteries through a 42k walk.

18 APRIL SCOTLAND IN SIX - DIG IT!

HERITAGE / MUSIC

Various venues, Scotland, digit2017.com

Celebrate World Heritage Day at one of Scotland's six World Heritage Sites. There is yarn bombing in New Lanark, Picts chasing Romans at the Antonine Wall, glow in-the-dark storytelling on Orkney and more. See panel, page 34.

19-22 APRIL PAISLEY BEER & FOOD FESTIVAL

FOOD & DRINK

Paisley Town Hall, Paisley, paisley2021.co.uk

Four-day festival celebrating the best ales from around the UK and Europe. On 22 April there is a one-day food festival offering street food, cookery demonstrations and live music.

20-22 APRIL KINGDOM OF FIFE REAL ALE, CIDER AND PERRY FESTIVAL

FOOD & DRINK

Rothes Halls, Kingdom Centre, Glenrothes, facebook.com/kingdomoffifestival

A chance to sample real ales from around the country, as well as cider, perry and continental beers. There's live music and guests receive a programme with detailed tasting notes.

20-23 APRIL BIG LIT

LITERATURE

Mill on the Fleet, High Street, Gatehouse of Fleet, millonthefleet.co.uk

A long weekend of book events including talks, stories and poetry from a host of authors.

20-23 APRIL DEAD BY DAWN

FILM & TV

Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, deadbydawn.co.uk
Celebrating 23 years of cinematic scares, the Filmhouse's horror fest hosts a selection of genre premieres, classic features, short films and special guests.

20-23 APRIL LOCH SHIEL SPRING FESTIVAL

MUSIC

Various venues, Loch Shiel, Lochaber, lochshielfestival.com

A festival of Western classical music. From offbeat locations to local traditions, national celebrations to innovative performances, this festival celebrates anything and everything to do with chamber music.

20-30 APRIL UNDEPENDENCE FILM FESTIVAL

FILM & TV

Various venues, Stirling, independence.co.uk

Pop Up! Scotland present independent short films and features.

21 APRIL-21 MAY DANCE INTERNATIONAL GLASGOW

THEATRE & DANCE

Various venues, Glasgow, tramway.org

This biennial dance festival is produced and programmed by Tramway, with events happening all across Glasgow. See Spotlight On, page 33.