



About Tartan Day on Ellis Island

Tartan Day on Ellis Island is one of the principal Scottish heritage events in the United States. In addition, playing host to literally thousands of domestic and international visitors each day makes this the largest Tartan Day celebration in the world. Ellis Island is a fitting place to observe Tartan Day since the island and its historic buildings represent **America's "Golden Door."**

From 1892 to 1954, more than twelve million immigrants passed through Ellis Island. Although many Scots arrived during the colonial period of our history to help build the new nation, an additional half-million Scots came through Ellis Island. It has been estimated that 40 percent of Americans today can trace at least one ancestor's entry into the United States through Ellis Island.

Describing the program, noted Scottish journalist and author Roddy Martine reported that, of all the Tartan Day events held in the United States, the Ellis Island observance **"stands out as a beacon of what USA Tartan Day is all about: the emigrant ancestors of ordinary Americans who more than three centuries ago crossed the Atlantic Ocean to create the world's greatest democracy."**

Tartan Day on Ellis Island is produced by the Clan Currie Society, one of the preeminent Scottish heritage organizations in the United States. The Society began its successful collaboration with the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in 2002 with the coordination and sponsorship of its first Tartan Day celebration. That year, Clan Currie and the National Museums of Scotland joined forces to host the traveling exhibit *Home and Away: Highland Departures and Returns*.

As part of the celebrations for Tartan Day 2011, the Clan Currie Society commissioned a specially designed Ellis Island Tartan© plaid to mark the Tenth Anniversary of Tartan Day on Ellis Island. Each color in the tartan represents a piece of the American immigrant experience: Blue represents the ocean that had to be crossed to reach the American shores. The copper-green is the color of the Statue of Liberty; the red depicts the bricks of the Ellis Island buildings where twelve million immigrants took their first steps toward freedom. The gold is the golden door that is the United States of America and the dawn of a new life in America.