



Loch Tay, Highland Perthshire

Highlands and Islands of Scotland hiking adventure

General interest hiking tour, 10 days

This hiking trip exploring three very different parts of Scotland: the central Highlands with its high mountains, long, deep glens and an abundance of trees, the west Highlands with craggy hills, narrow glens and broken coast with islands large and small and the Isle of Mull bitten into by so many sea lochs that the sight and sound of salt water is never far away. There will be hikes in the Highlands, spectacular coastal walks, archaeology in Kilmartin Glen, walks on the Hebridean isles of Kerrera and Mull and a boat trip to the basalt island of Staffa and St Columba's Isle of Iona..

Highlights

- Hiking on Kenmore Hill with spectacular views across Loch Tay;
- Glen Coe;
- Walking on the Isle of Kerrera;
- The ancient monuments in Kilmartin Glen;
- Tobermory, Mull;
- Boat trip to and walks on the Isle of Staffa with its basalt columns, and Iona with a visit to Iona Abbey;



Gylen Castle, Isle of Kerrera

1. Glasgow - Stirling - Fortingall
2. Loch Tay
3. Glen Tilt
4. Fortingall - Glen Coe - Oban
5. Isle of Kerrera
6. Kilmartin Glen
7. Oban - Tobermory, Mull
8. Treshnish
9. Isles of Staffa and Iona
10. Isle of Mull - Glasgow



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Isle of Staffa

Perthshire, central Highlands

Perthshire in the central Highlands is far from the sea as you can go in Scotland. Perthshire is a very distinctive part of Scotland, contrasting perfectly with the seaboard of the west Highlands. Many parts of Perthshire, three centuries ago, were bare and open. In the 18th century did new forests really get under way in Scotland - nowhere more so than here in Perthshire. Generations of the so-called 'Planting' Dukes of Atholl shaped much of the landscape seen today, especially around Dunkeld. Between 1738 and 1830, the family planted around 27 million conifers. As a result Perthshire is now known as 'Big Tree Country'. It is not only home of many tall trees, the Fortingall Yew, which is believed to be 3,000 years old, is Europe's oldest living thing.

Argyll, west Highlands

Argyll in the west Highlands has a long, broken, islanded coast. The hinterland contains a landscape of gentle farmland and wide peat bog surrounded by hills, secret glens and hidden lochans. At the edge, where crofts (a form of smallholding) may still be found and lobster fishermen ply their trade, is a unique seascape of exposed wildness, with islands large and small scattered across it. The hills of Argyll are



Glen Coe



Standing stones Kilmartin

more rugged than those of Perthshire, and the glens steeper and shorter, with rapid rivers and many waterfalls. The closer you get to the Atlantic coast, the more stunted and wind-sculpted the trees and woods become.

The first inhabitants of Scotland to be known by the name 'Scots' were the Gaelic-speaking Celts who colonised Argyll from the north of Ireland in the early centuries AD. In Ireland, their kingdom was called Dalriada and the same name was applied to the part of Scotland that they occupied. Argyll also has far earlier links with Scotland's past. Prehistoric remains are found all along the west coast of Scotland. They are in unusual concentrations throughout Kilmartin Glen. This is the work of Bronze and Stone Age people, and collectively they take us back as far as 5000 BC and the time of our first settled farming communities.

Isle of Mull, Inner Hebrides

Mull is one of the largest of the Hebridean islands has a long coastline with high cliffs, sandy or rocky bays, caves and arches. There is always something to draw you on around the next corner.

The northern scenery of Mull is a stepped landscape of lava flows from eruptions of around 50 million years ago when the North Atlantic Ocean was beginning to open. The cliffed edges of these flows give numerous waterfalls, some falling straight to the sea out on which, to the west, lie the lava island of Staffa. Monks travelled with the Celts from Ireland. St Columba is the best known of all and you will learn more about him when we visit the Isle of Iona.



Tobermory, Isle of Mull



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