



ABOUT ARGYLL

Walking Holidays in Scotland

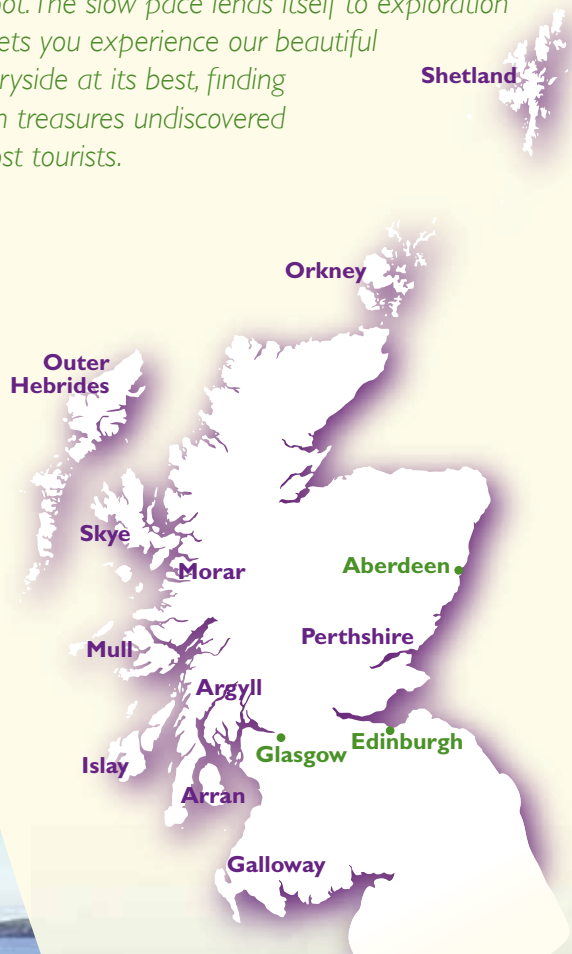


YOUR PARTNER FOR TAILOR MADE HIKING TOURS





There is no better way to discover Scotland than on foot. The slow pace lends itself to exploration and lets you experience our beautiful countryside at its best, finding hidden treasures undiscovered by most tourists.



Much of the beauty and tranquillity of the highlands and islands of Scotland is best seen on foot, allowing for in-depth exploration, discussion and diversion. Exploring Scotland's beautiful countryside in this way, with the help of our knowledgeable guides, means you will experience it in a unique way not accessible to regular tour groups.

Our walking tours and hiking holidays will take you to quiet, remote corners that can only be reached on foot, enabling you to enjoy the solitude of Scotland's secret places. With About Argyll Walking Holidays you can discover more about the history and culture, the nature and landscape of what is one of the world's most excitingly varied small countries, all the while enjoying the sheer pleasure and exhilaration of being outside in the clean air.



Tailor-made guided hiking

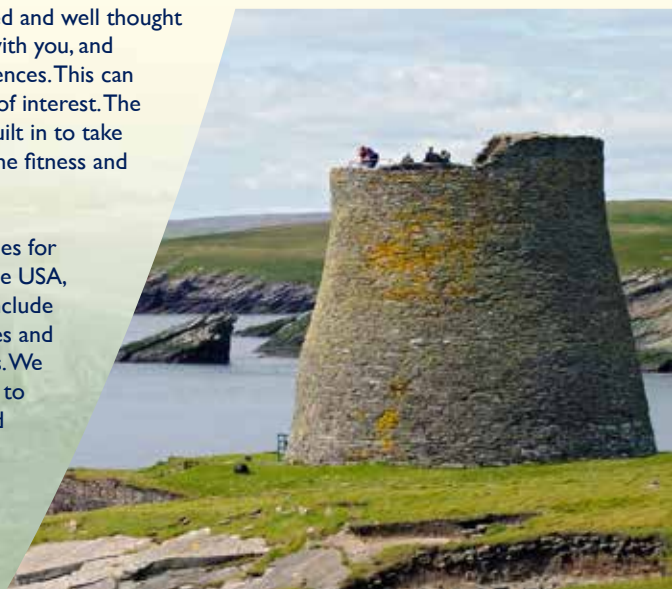
We offer tailor-made hiking tours for up to 18 people. We take full advantage of the walking element in the tours; and since many of the places of interest we visit can only be reached on foot, the unique quality of the experience is ensured. Tours can be themed with a strong academic component, or if you prefer, we can design a general interest trip customised to your requirements.




Well designed itinerary

When you discuss a prospective tour with us, we will draw up a custom-built, well designed and well thought out itinerary in close consultation with you, and according to your needs and preferences. This can include non-walking visits to places of interest. The itinerary will have some flexibility built in to take account of weather variations and the fitness and particular interests of the group.

We have run private guided itineraries for many individuals and groups from the USA, Canada, Europe and Britain. These include educational hiking tours for institutes and university alumni travel programmes. We have the knowledge and experience to make your hiking tour a success, and we have the references to prove it.





Itineraries can be themed to meet your special interest

Archaeology and history

In Scotland you are never very far from the past. Our history themed walking tours will give an insight into the daily lives of people from the earliest Mesolithic hunters to those who helped shape events of the 18th and 19th centuries. These people left an amazing wealth of archaeological sites. Houses, tombs, stone circles and standing stones dating back 5,000 years share the landscape with Bronze Age cemeteries, 2,000 year old brochs, Viking ruins, Medieval churches, castles and the humble, now-deserted townships of ordinary country folk whose descendants are scattered across the English-speaking world. An history-themed hiking tour can cover the history of Scotland from Neolithic times up to the present day, or it may cover a specific era, depending on your interests.



Geology

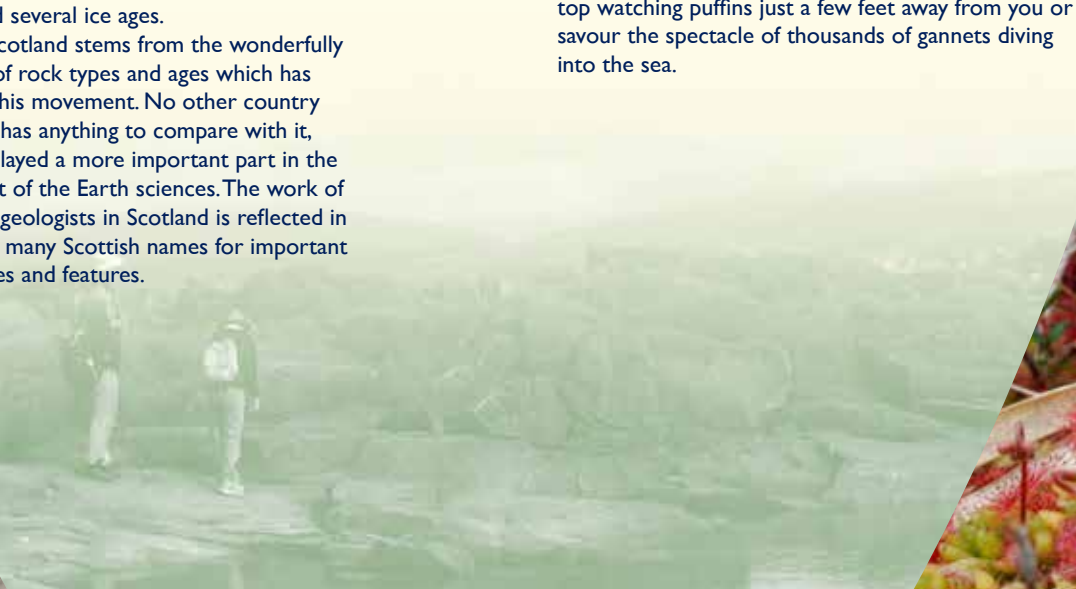
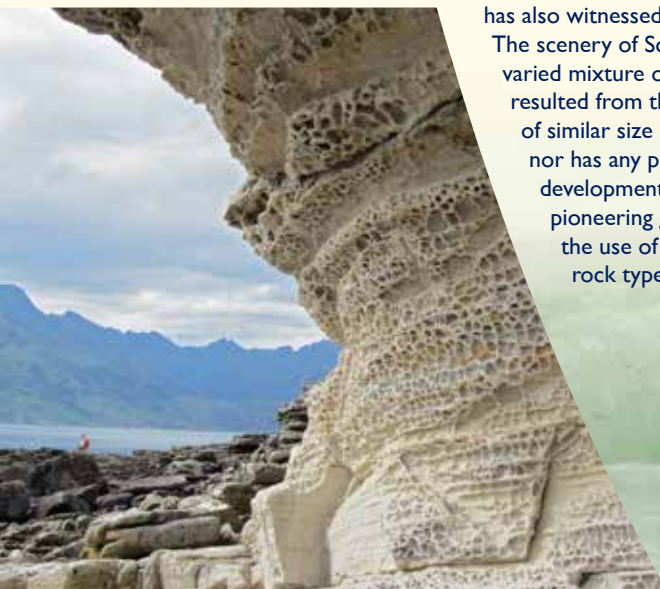
It has taken almost 3,000 million years and a journey across the globe on the Earth's tectonic plates all the way from the South Pole to present day Europe for Scotland to look the way it does now. It has been a desert, a tropical swamp, a volcanic landscape, an ocean floor and has also witnessed several ice ages.

The scenery of Scotland stems from the wonderfully varied mixture of rock types and ages which has resulted from this movement. No other country of similar size has anything to compare with it, nor has any played a more important part in the development of the Earth sciences. The work of pioneering geologists in Scotland is reflected in the use of many Scottish names for important rock types and features.



Natural history

The wide variety of altitude, aspect, shelter, soil and rock type in Scotland results in a great number of habitats. In the central Highlands, rolling heather moorland and ancient native pinewoods fringe wide arctic-alpine plateaux such as the Cairngorms; while in the west the mountains are more thoroughly dissected and craggy, and oak and birch dominate the woodlands. These woods support internationally important communities of Atlantic mosses, liverworts and lichens. Those mammals indigenous to Scotland include red and roe deer, red squirrel, wildcat and pine marten on land; and seals, porpoises, whales and dolphins along the coast. Otters are at home in our rivers and lochs as well as along our shores. Birdlife is abundant, with a wide range of species from red grouse, ptarmigan and golden eagle on the moorlands and mountains, to white-tailed eagle, waders and large seabird colonies along the coast and on the islands. Orkney and Shetland are one of the major seabird breeding and feeding areas in the North Atlantic, where more than a million birds breed in very large colonies. Nowhere else in Britain, and hardly anywhere in Europe, can you get so close, so easily, to so many seabirds. You can sit on a cliff top watching puffins just a few feet away from you or savour the spectacle of thousands of gannets diving into the sea.





Literature

Scotland has raised great writers of its own and has also attracted the attention of many literary outsiders; taken together, their contemporary accounts can give us remarkable insights, not only into days gone by, but also into the evolution of modern society. Their 'snapshots' can bring the past to life and help us to see things a little more clearly and comprehensively. For us, whether they meant to be or not, these writers are the very best of companions along the way.

There are many literary guides to choose from, among them:

- Dr. Samuel Johnson, and his friend and biographer James Boswell, who completed their Hebridean tour in 1773;
- Dorothy Wordsworth, who travelled in the southern and western highlands via Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1803. She took the landscape and history of Scotland and created page-turning fiction;
- Robert Louis Stevenson, whose novel *Kidnapped* takes the reader – and us – from 18th century Edinburgh to the Hebrides and back via Glen Coe and Stirling;
- Sir Walter Scott, a Scottish historical novelist, playwright, and poet, popular throughout much of the world during his time;
- Robert Burns, a Scottish poet and lyricist, widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and who is celebrated worldwide - and there are many others.



Culture and heritage

Scotland has been handing down its rich culture, heritage and traditions for close to 1,000 years now, since the earliest days of the clans in the 12th century. These are not just sterile objects, preserved only in museums; but vibrant, living things, constantly growing and evolving and very much worth exploring, whether you are interested in ancestry, whisky, music or the arts.



Scottish people have also greatly contributed to the world past and present. As Winston Churchill said: "Of all the small nations on earth perhaps only the Ancient Greeks surpass the Scots in their contribution to mankind". You can walk in the footsteps of famous Scots such as John Muir and Thomas Telford.

General Interest

A bespoke general interest itinerary can be drawn up for anywhere in Scotland. Alternatively, you could choose an itinerary from our holiday programme; selecting dates that are suitable for your party. They will all give you the opportunity to enjoy the history, wildlife and geology of Scotland, the solitude of secret places, and the pure pleasure of walking.

Other themes are also possible, and if you have suggestions that you would like to put to us, please get in touch.





Walking or hiking?

The word 'hiking' isn't used as much in the UK as it is in North America. In the UK we tend to use 'walking' to cover such a wide range of activities that it can mislead. North American readers should probably think of About Argyll's walks as hikes, but at the gentler end of the range.

Walking tours

Most groups from North America opt for a walking tour. The itinerary combines hiking with visits to places of interest. Daily distances will be 4-6 miles/6-9 km plus varying amounts of ascent, and we don't expect to hike for longer than 4 hours (plus stops). Most of the hiking will be on paths, tracks or quiet roads, although the surfaces can be wet and rough. There will be some steep sections along the way, but no climbing greater than 1200 feet (365m), even in total.

People with basic levels of fitness will be able to take part in these tours with confidence.

Hiking holidays

We can also organise itineraries where the focus is mainly on walking/hiking. These are designed for people who are fit and used to walking all day. We will walk up to 11 miles/17.5km (6 hours plus stops) per day with an average 1150ft/350m of ascent. On one day it might be as much as 3000ft/900m but there are also easier days. Our routes sometimes traverse pathless glens, climb mountains or thread remote passes and there may be some scrambling. On most days as much of our time is spent off path as on it. Scotland can be very wild and tough going: 10 miles here is often much harder than 10 miles elsewhere. All that said, we don't want to break any speed records, especially not when going uphill, and you'll have all the rewards of walking in the most beautiful and fascinating parts of the Highlands and Islands.



General information about your bespoke tour with About Argyll Walking Holidays

Knowledgeable and experienced guides

Our guides are from Scotland or have lived most of their life in Scotland. As well as being keen walkers who know almost every corner of the country, they are also thoroughly versed in all aspects of its culture, history and natural history. Several have specialist knowledge in particular subject areas. They will take you to places you would not have found on your own and they will make Scotland come alive for you.

Our guides are also very good travel companions, perfectly at ease with an articulate and intelligent client group. They are flexible and patient and they will do their utmost to ensure that your trip runs smoothly and is an enjoyable experience for the group.

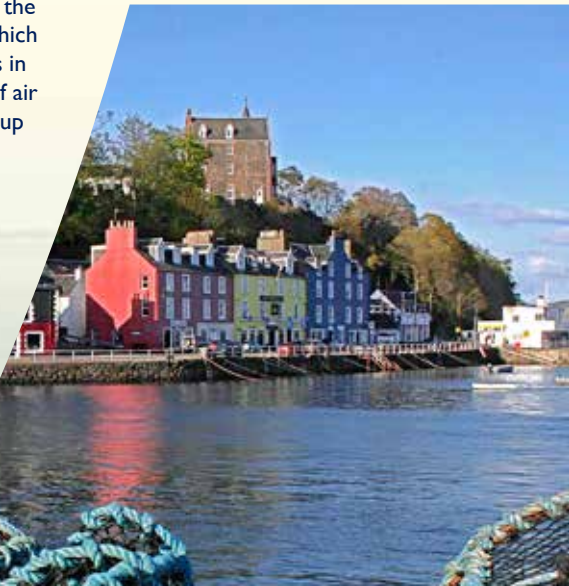
All our guides are qualified mountain leaders and have emergency outdoor first aid certificates. We have English, German and French speaking guides.


Transport

Transport by minibus/car, ferry and (charter)boat will be provided from an agreed rendezvous at the very start of the tour, to the agreed point at which your tour is to end, and as required at all times in between. All road transport will be by means of air conditioned minibuses, each of which can take up to 8 participants plus their luggage.

Accommodation in small hotels or guest houses

Your group will stay in small locally owned hotels, guest houses or B&Bs that are both individual in character and comfortable, selected by us because they meet our (and your) high






expectations. These hotels and guest houses offer a friendly welcome and personal service.

Evening meals will be taken in the hotel, but if desired, on some days the guides can take your group out for a meal in carefully selected restaurants and pubs to widen the experience of good Scottish food. If your group stays in a guest house or B&B, the guides will take you out for the evening meal and always somewhere good.

Group size



We can take up to 18 people on any given tour. Depending on the group size, there will be up to three guides/driver/tour managers and up to three nine-seater minibuses, allowing maximum flexibility. We can split a larger party if the interest or desired level of hiking of its members varies significantly, offering an easier as well as a more strenuous option.


Non-smoking

Smoking is not allowed in public places in Scotland, so guest houses, hotels, restaurants, bars and our minibuses are non-smoking.

What the participants need

Participants will need boots with a good tread and adequate ankle support, warm clothing, waterproofs (top and over-trousers) and a day rucksack big enough for a set of spare clothes, a packed lunch and whatever else they like to have with them during the day.

Information before departure



You will receive information about meeting place, your accommodation, clothing and equipment and further details about the trip, at least four weeks before the start of your holiday.

Insurance

We carry Public Liability insurance. In addition, we very strongly advise that you take out your own travel insurance to cover personal accident, cancellation etc.

Protecting your payments

Payments for our holidays and private tours will be lodged in the 'In-Trust About Argyll Walking Holidays' account, where, in accordance with EC regulations (Statutory Instrument 1992 No.3288 governing package holidays), they are protected by independent trustees until after your trip is completed.

About us



About Argyll Walking Holidays is based in the south-west Highlands of Scotland and we have been operating since 1995. Our aim is to run high-quality, small-scale, responsible and essentially personal walking tours and hiking vacations all over Scotland. We view our clients as friends who are entitled to a professional service. Many of them have returned for a second, third or even fourth and fifth time. Deliberately small scale, we organise our walking holidays with freshness and enthusiasm so that you can get the most out of visiting this beautiful country.

Sustainable holidays

We are dedicated to preserving and promoting the value of Scotland's wild areas by reducing the environmental impact of our walking holidays and ensuring the long-term sustainability of tourism in the area. Our good environmental practice has been recognised by the Green Tourism Business Scheme with a Gold Award, the highest award possible.



Guided Walking Tours

*Guided Walking/
Hiking holidays*

*Tailor-made Private
Guided Itineraries*



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Walking Holidays in Scotland

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