



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 country at its best, finding hidden treasures undiscovered by most visitors.



Much of the beauty and tranquillity of the highlands and islands of Scotland is best seen on foot, allowing for a more in depth experience in understanding the country. With the help of our knowledgeable guides, you will experience it in a unique way not accessible to regular tour groups.

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. 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 and the sheer pleasure and exhilaration of being outside in the clean air.



Tailor-made guided hiking

We offer tailor-made walking tours for one 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 we can design a general interest trip, all 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, taking into account 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 hiking trips for many individuals and groups from the USA, Canada, Australia, 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 trip a success, and we have the references to prove it.





Itineraries can be themed to meet special interests

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. Scotland has six UNESCO World Heritage sites, including the Heart of Neolithic Orkney.

Wherever the archaeology and history themed walking tour will take us, the participants will also learn about the geology, natural history and culture of the areas they visit while enjoying hiking in spectacular scenery.

Examples of 10-day historical hiking tours:

Inner and Outer Hebrides

Island hopping tour along the west coast visiting archaeological and historical sites on the islands of the Inner and Outer Hebrides, while hiking through beautiful land and seascapes.

North Highlands & Isle of Lewis

From the flow country of Caithness to the spectacular mountains of Assynt and the island of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. You can't wish for a more varied scenery. Everywhere we go, there will be an abundance of archaeological and historical sites and excellent hiking.

Orkney and Shetland

Orkney and Shetland have more than 18,000 known archaeological sites, with new discoveries being made every year. Nowhere else in north-west Europe is the evidence any clearer or more comprehensive, nor can it be seen in any more glorious setting.



Geology

Colliding continents, erupting volcanoes and moving ice sheets are some of the ways in which the diversity of Scotland's natural landscape was created. In the distant geological past, Scotland travelled towards the South Pole, before drifting to its present northern latitude. In this process it passed through all the Earth's climatic zones. 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.

Scotland has two UNESCO Global Geoparks: North West Highlands and Shetland.

Wherever the geology themed walking tour takes us, the participants will also learn about the archaeology, history, culture and natural history of the areas they visit while enjoying hiking in wonderful scenery.

Examples of 10-day geological hiking tours:

Orkney and Shetland

The Northern islands' origins are as old as the oldest rocks that you can touch on Earth. Other rocks were added over immense time to this 'basement'. Oceans opened, closed and opened again. Shetland's rocks tell the whole story, while Orkney is made up largely of sedimentary rocks battered by the Atlantic this guarantees great cliff walks..

North-west Highlands & Isle of Skye

The north-west Highlands are one of the most varied and complex geological areas in Scotland. The geological make up of the north-west Highlands ranges from some of the oldest, most altered rocks in Britain to the eroded roots of the Skye volcano, a mere 60 million years old. The North West Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark also boasts some of the finest scenery for hiking in Scotland.

From the Isle of Mull to the Western Isles

Scotland's west coast has a unique seascape, wild and exposed. The rocks are getting older and older as you travel north from the Isle of Mull to the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, sometimes along the mainland coast, but more often across beautiful and fascinating islands where it is good hiking. En route, we find the volcanic traces of the creation of the North Atlantic and the rigid gneisses of Lewis and Harris.





General interest

A bespoke general interest walking tour will give your group the opportunity to enjoy the archaeology, history, geology, wildlife, culture and heritage of Scotland, the solitude of secret places, and the pure pleasure of walking. Wherever we go there is a lot to explore. On top of the archaeology, history and geology there are::

Natural history

The wide variety of altitude, aspect, shelter, soil and rock type results in a great number of habitats, each with its own wildlife and wild flowers. Mammals indigenous to Scotland include red and roe deer, red squirrel, wildcat and pine marten on land, and otters, seals, porpoises, dolphins and whales along the coast. Scotland is a major seabird breeding and feeding area. More than a million birds breed in very large colonies along the coast and on the islands. 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.

Culture

Scotland has been handing down its rich culture, heritage and traditions since the earliest days of the clans in the 12th century. These are not 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.

Literature

Scotland has raised great writers of its own and has also attracted the attention of many literary outsiders. Their contemporary accounts give us remarkable insights, not only into days gone by, but also into the evolution of modern society. They are the very best of companions along the way.

Holiday programme

Alternatively, you could choose an itinerary from our holiday programme; selecting dates that are suitable for your party.



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 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 with confidence in these tours.

Hiking holidays

We also offer 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/17.5 km per day (6 hours plus stops) with an average 1150 feet (350m) of ascent. On one day it might be as much as 3000 feet (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.





What to expect from 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, train, 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 air conditioned minibuses, each of which can take up to 8 participants plus their luggage.

Accommodation

Your group will stay in small locally owned hotels or guest houses 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, 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 one, two or three guides/drivers/tour managers and one, two or three 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 and a more strenuous option.

Detailed planning

Every detail of your tour will be carefully planned to maximize your time and to make sure each day runs smoothly. The hikes will be chosen to be interesting and to allow people of different fitness levels experience all the places.

What the participants need

Participants will need waterproof 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

Information about meeting place and time, accommodation, clothing, equipment and further details about the trip, will be provided at least four weeks before the start of the holiday.





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 Green Tourism with a Gold Award, the highest award possible.



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.

What our customers say

Colorado College alumni on a geology themed hiking tour:

"I most enjoyed the opportunity to hike everyday but this was significantly enhanced by the descriptions provided by the professor with his extensive knowledge of geology, and the local guides with their specific knowledge of Scotland, explaining the significance of what we were seeing both geologically, historically, and culturally."

St Olaf College alumni religion and general interest hiking trip

"The local tour manager was brilliant in terms of maximizing our time on the Scottish islands we visited. The two guides were amazing and we really left with a wonderful understanding of life in Scotland currently and in the past."

Harvard University alumni general interest hiking trip

"All the arrangements were well done, and when one day of rain threatened our hike, the guides immediately had a back-up plan that allowed us to still accomplish all the hiking, shopping, and museum visiting that the original itinerary promised."

Archaeological Institute of America hiking tour

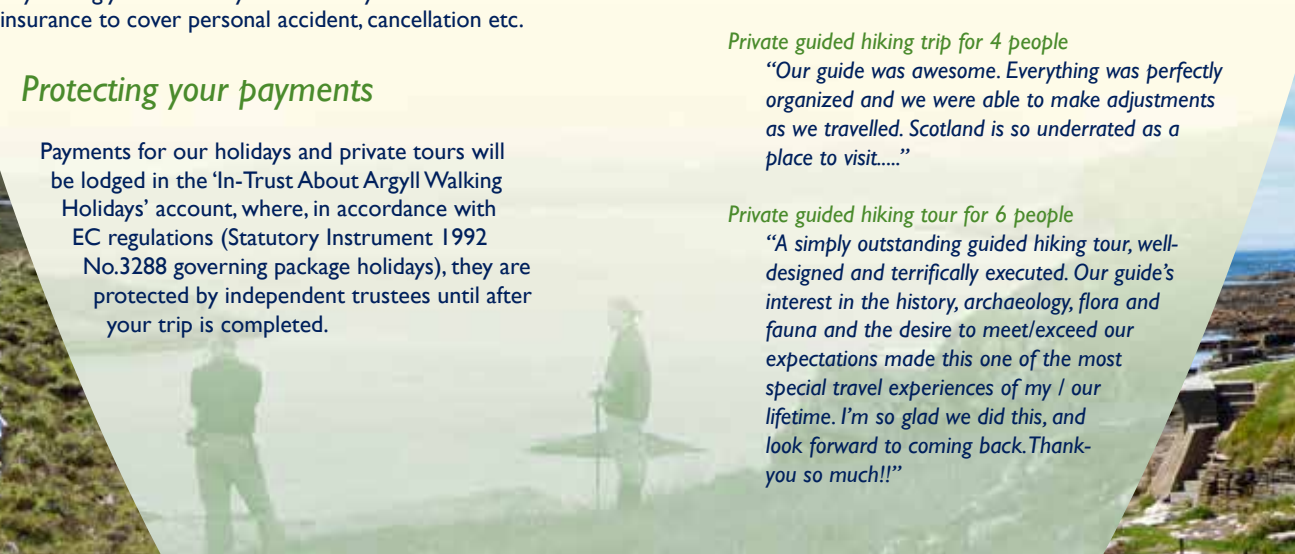
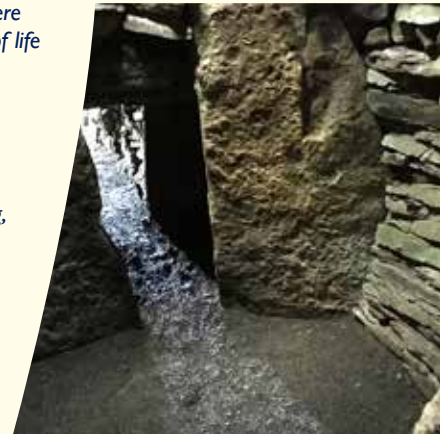
"The wide spaces, the group interactions, the sense of the past, the good coordination, knowledge and attitudes of the local guides and tour manager. It could not have been better."

Private guided hiking trip for 4 people

"Our guide was awesome. Everything was perfectly organized and we were able to make adjustments as we travelled. Scotland is so underrated as a place to visit...."

Private guided hiking tour for 6 people

"A simply outstanding guided hiking tour, well-designed and terrifically executed. Our guide's interest in the history, archaeology, flora and fauna and the desire to meet/exceed our expectations made this one of the most special travel experiences of my / our lifetime. I'm so glad we did this, and look forward to coming back. Thank-you so much!!"



Guided Walking Tours

*Guided Walking/
Hiking holidays*

*Tailor-made Private
Guided Itineraries*



ABOUT ARGYLL
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Letters Lodge South
Strathlachlan
Argyll PA27 8BZ
Scotland (UK)
Tel: +44 (0)1369 860272
info@aboutargyll.uk

<https://aboutargyll.uk>