



- Train Line
- Caledonian Way
- Bike Packing Route
- A Road
- Single Track Road
- Waterfall
- Mountain Bike
- Walking Trail
- Garden / Garden Centre
- Golf Course
- Viewpoint
- Hotel / Restaurant
- Shop
- Cafe
- Station

LOCH AWE

BE IN AWE

Nestled in the heart of mainland Argyll is Loch Awe - Scotland's longest freshwater loch spanning 41km of unspoilt, rugged and magical beauty.



Loch Awe was once regarded as a Victorian hot-spot for travellers. The Loch Awe Hotel on the north shore was, in fact, built as a railway hotel to accommodate the tourist boom of that time, with the West Highland railway line bringing many visitors to the area from the late 1900s. Saloon steamers sailed on the Loch visiting piers at every village, and the Loch Awe Hotel welcomed many famous and titled guests over the years.

Today, Loch Awe is going through a renaissance providing more and more reasons to visit and take time to get off the beaten track to explore by foot or with your own bike, canoe or paddleboard. The UK's first active travel carriage - ScotRail's 'Highland Explorer' is now in operation twice daily on the Oban line from Glasgow. This experience reinvigorates the area's rich railway heritage and offers scope to reduce your carbon footprint by leaving your car at home. Each of the stations along the top of Loch Awe provide access to adventures in the Great Outdoors and all but Falls of Cruachan have places to eat and stay.

Both the A85 and the West Highland railway line cut along the top of the loch - and give most people their first glimpse of Loch Awe while passing through. But the rest of the Loch is surrounded by winding single track roads providing a leisurely and continuous journey of discovery.

Don't miss Kilchurn, Innes Chonnel, Fincharn and Carnasserie Castles each with their stories to tell. Explore the octagonal Glenorchy Church and unconventional St Conan's Kirk. Make the effort to visit the Duncan Ban MacIntyre Monument and Deirdre's Shelling. Discover Bonawe Iron Furnace and the Hollow Mountain - both symbols of Loch Awe's industrial past - and seek out artisan makers and artists studios dotted around the shores.

Natural features include the stunning Avich Falls, the trio of waterfalls on the River Orchy and the ancient woodlands of Glen Nant. With a little patience you could spot otters, red squirrels, deer, pine martens and much more.

You can book an amazing experience exploring inside the Hollow Mountain, meeting the highland cows at Cladich or getting up close to Scottish native Birds of Prey at the Kintail Falconry.

You can stay in a train carriage or a railway station, indulge yourself at a luxury country house hotel, chill out at a pub with rooms, feel good in an eco-pod, or simply relax in a forest cabin or traditional cottage.

Eat out at one of our traditional hotels and characterful inns or meet the locals in our community run cafés and tearooms. Treat yourself to some 'Cakes in the Callbox', a Black Rock curry or pick up some smoked and gourmet delights at Inverawe Farm Shop!

CULTURE & HERITAGE

The Loch Awe area is steeped in history with some exceptional buildings and ruins to discover and a majestic landscape which continues to provide inspiration for artists, performers, producers and makers through to the present day.

Kirks and Castles
Kilchurn Castle, one of Scotland's most photographed castles, dates back to the mid-15th century when it was constructed as the base for the Campbells of Glenorchy. Nearby in Lochawe village you'll find the unique St Conan's Kirk, which hosts regular cultural events and was voted by the public as one of Scotland's top 10 buildings of the last 100 years in 2016. On an island just off the south-eastern shores of Loch Awe, you'll spot the ruins of Innes Chonnel Castle which was one of the earliest strongholds of the Campbells.

Monuments
Two monuments to explore are Deirdre's Shelling and the Duncan Ban MacIntyre Monument each with a good walk or gravel bike ride to gain access and both telling an important local story whilst offering stunning views of the surrounding mountains and glens. A cairn commemorating Neil Munro is just south of Cladich on the A819.

Industrial Heritage
Not to be missed is the lush Glen Nant National Nature Reserve and the nearby Bonawe Iron Furnace visitor attraction near Taynuilt. The Furnace dates back to 1753 and oak trees were sustainably coppiced in nearby Glen Nant to provide charcoal to power the furnace. This historic coppicing has created an amazing habitat and today Glen Nant is teaming with wildlife.

And since the 1960s the Hollow Mountain has housed one of the UK's four pump storage hydro schemes.

Glorious Gardens
Loch Awe is surrounded by a number of stunning gardens, some of which are open all year, others seasonally and some open occasionally under the Scottish Gardens Scheme. In the immediate area is Angus Garden at Barguilean Farm. Further afield to the West is Arduaine, An Cala and Ardmaddy, to the north is Ardchattan Priory and to the east Inveraray Castle Gardens, Ardkinglas and Crarae.

Arts, Culture and Events
There are a number of photographers, artists and makers working around Loch Awe inspired by the local landscape and offering workshops, studio visits, galleries and experiences. St Conan's Kirk hosts recitals and performances and regular events take place in the local village halls.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Loch Awe is an adventure seekers paradise - on or off road and in the water. Getting off the beaten track is easy and is ideally suited to anyone who has their own kit and a sensible head on their shoulders.

Road Cycling
Novice and experienced cyclists alike can explore Scotland's classic scenic cycling route the Caledonia Way, which runs up the west shore of Loch Awe connecting Kilmartin to Oban. The area also hosts the annual Oban Sportive and Ben Cruachan Inn Hill Climb Challenge - which are routes to follow any time of year.

Gravel Biking and Bikepacking
Loch Awe is surrounded by forestry and woodland with gravel tracks to explore. The Wild About Argyll Bikepacking Trail traverses the south and west of Loch Awe with many great stop off points to enjoy the panoramic views and tranquility. Do keep an eye out for any forestry works underway and follow the guidance provided.

Walking and Munro Bagging
There are many waymarked woodland walks around the Loch at Inverleiver, Dalavich, Glen Nant and Strone Hill. Scale the heights with three Munros - Ben Cruachan, Stob Daimh and Ben Eunaich - and one Corbett - Beinn a'Bhuiridh - accessible from Dalmally and Lochawe village. For the experienced walker, there is a stunning ridge walk surrounding the Cruachan hydro dam and the nearby Munros can be combined in a route known as the Dalmally Horseshoe.

Paddlesports and Wild Swimming
Loch Awe offers a number of informal pebble beaches with parking nearby for launching small boats, kayaks and paddleboards with scope to explore the shoreline, fish with

a permit and visit the small uninhabited islands. Loch Awe is a freshwater loch and is ideally suited to the experienced wild swimmer. The nearby River Orchy that flows into Loch Awe is one of Scotland's best white water kayaking rivers demanding lots of skill and experience. Always be mindful of weather conditions and wear a suitable buoyancy aid.

Angling
Loch Awe is popular for wild brown trout, and coarse fishing and in recent years has welcomed anglers pursuing the famous large predatory ferox trout and sizeable pike. The River Orchy offers trout and salmon fishing and at Inverawe Fishery flyfishing is available on the River Awe and on three lochs. Make sure you have all the necessary permits which are available online.

Nature & Wildlife
Nature lovers - have your camera ready to capture the local wildlife. With a little time and effort there are countless opportunities to spot ospreys, eagles, otters, deer, red squirrels and pine martens throughout the area. The seasons and ever-changing weather provides stunning conditions for the landscape photographer. Or take a trip to Kintail Birds of Prey Centre, where you'll meet the tiny Little Owl and the magnificent Golden Eagle. At Cladich you can get up close to Scotland's iconic Highland Cattle for a tour. At Inverawe there are several nature walks and trails along the River Awe and through the woodlands.

ARGYLL & THE ISLES



HELPFUL HINTS

Respect, Protect, Enjoy
Follow Scotland's Outdoor Access Code at all times when out and about. Respect the interests of other people, care for the environment and take responsibility for your own actions.

There are very few bins provided so please take your litter away and recycle wherever possible.

Think like a local!
Always be considerate of the locals who will be going about their everyday lives as you enjoy this stunning part of Scotland. On single track roads don't park in the clearly marked passing places and whether in a car or on a bike pull in on the left side to allow oncoming traffic to pass you. And if someone is behind you simply pull in on the left at the earliest opportunity to let them past. A friendly wave of thanks is guaranteed!

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Map by Kerry Hyndman, Design by Designline Creative and photography by Kevin McGarry & Shutterstock

wildaboutargyll.co.uk/visit/loch-awe

GETTING AROUND

Loch Awe is half an hour away from Oban and an hour and a half from Glasgow. It is most easily accessed from the north from the A85 and from one of four train stations at Dalmally, Lochawe village, Falls of Cruachan and Taynuilt.

If you are travelling to or from Oban or Glasgow or hopping between villages along north Loch Awe, let the train take the strain and bring your bike. Board the new ScotRail Highland Explorer carriage which carries over 20 bikes and runs twice daily seven days a week between Oban and Glasgow.

A regular bus service runs between Tyndrum and Oban on the A85 and on the A819 to Inveraray. West Coast Motors operate a daily bus service between Oban and Dalavich

(service 415) and an occasional service between Lochgilphead and Ford (service 421).

Exploring Loch Awe away from the A85 and A819 is on single track roads. There are scenic view points and picnic areas to park up and explore and places to stop for refreshments.

The Caledonia Way cycle route runs from Campbeltown in the south, through Kilmartin Glen to Ford and along the west shore of Loch Awe to Oban and then northwards to Fortwilliam and Inverness.

The Wild About Argyll Bike Packing Trail links across from Inveraray and around the South of Loch Awe then up the west shore using some of the forestry tracks before following Glen Lonan into Oban.

THE HIGHLAND EXPLORER



STATION	THINGS TO DO
Dalmally	Duncan Ban MacIntyre Monument, Glenorchy Parish Church and Graveyard, Beinn a'Chochuill, Ben Eunaich
Lochawe Village	Kilchurn Castle, St Conan's Kirk, Ben Cruachan, Ben Cruachan Hill Climb and Dam, Oban Sportive Long Loop*
Falls of Cruachan	The Hollow Mountain, Ben Cruachan, Oban Sportive Long Loop
Taynuilt	Bonawe Iron Furnace, Stob Dearg, Glen Nant National Nature Reserve, Caledonia Way, Wild About Argyll Bikepacking Trail, Oban Sportive Long and Short Loops

*The Oban Sportive is an annual event starting and finishing in Oban. The route can be followed any day of the year.

FOUR GREAT DAYS OUT

Four themed itineraries, each exploring a different part of Loch Awe that will make a great day out in full or in part. You'll find everything on our map and more details online at wildaboutargyll.co.uk/visit/loch-awe

EAST LOCH AWE "Meet the Locals"

Heartfelt Liz
Meet Liz and Graham at their working textile studio set within the Victorian station buildings at Dalmally. Work by local artists is on display and occasional weaving and spinning demonstrations on the platform.

Cakes in the Call Box
During the summer months Holly serves lovely homemade cakes and jams with an honesty box in a restored red call box near Cladich.

Cladich Estate Farm Tour
Meet the award winning Highland Cows of the Cladich Fold with your very own tour guide. Estate Farm Tours last around 2.5 hours and are by all-weather off-road vehicle giving access to the main barn, the open hillside and many historic points of interest.

Kintail Birds of Prey
Meet some of Scotland's native Birds of Prey at the private Falconry near Eredine on the B840. 25 birds of prey are on display and different experiences are available led by an experienced falconer giving you the opportunity to handle and fly the birds amid magnificent scenery overlooking Loch Awe.

NORTH-WEST LOCH AWE "Industry in the Making"

Cruachan Dam & Reservoir
A steady walk up the access road in Lochawe village brings you to the mighty Ben Cruachan Dam which was opened in 1965 and offers spectacular views across Loch Awe and Argyll. The dam forms part of a pumped storage hydro scheme with capacity to power 90,000 homes.

The Hollow Mountain
The Cruachan Power Station resides 1km deep inside Ben Cruachan with a visitor centre on the banks of Loch Awe. Guided tours take you into the cavern which is high enough to house the Tower of London

Bonawe Iron Furnace
Britain's most complete charcoal fuelled ironworks nestles in an idyllic setting at the head of Loch Etive near Taynuilt and amidst Argyll woodland. It operated in the mid 18th century producing pig iron and employed 600 people at the height of its operation.

Glen Nant
A lush Atlantic Oakwood which is a National Nature Reserve managed by Forest and Land Scotland. Glen Nant has a long history of human influence in the woods with 166 archaeological sites recorded dating back to Norse round timber dwellings and many charcoal hearths from the era of Bonawe Furnace.



NORTH LOCH AWE "The Stones of Time"

St Conan's Kirk
The kirk in the village of Lochawe is exceptional both in style and surroundings, with a strong sense of peace and inherent spirituality. Visitors are welcome inside and out - and a must is to explore the much more elaborate south side that overlooks the Loch.

Kilchurn Castle
One of the most photographed castles in Scotland, Kilchurn Castle was a fortress, a comfortable residence and later a garrison stronghold, and contains the oldest surviving barracks on the British mainland. Today it is a ruin having been abandoned in the late 1700s.

Glenorchy and Innishail Church & Graveyard
26 clan chiefs of the Macgregors lie buried near the entrance of the octagonal white church built in 1810. The church and graveyard sit on top of a knoll and overlooks the River Orchy. Inside there are fine stained glass windows from 1898.

Duncan Ban MacIntyre monument
Designed by the same architect as the Wallace Monument in Stirling, this granite structure on top of Dun Athaich celebrates the life of the Gaelic Bard Duncan Ban MacIntyre 1724-1812.

WEST LOCH AWE "Sights to Behold"

Angus's Garden
A short walk from Barguilean Farm is a stunning nine-acre woodland garden created in 1957 in memory of Betty MacDonald's son Angus. Set around Loch Angus there is an extensive collection of hybrid rhododendrons and azaleas in a natural unspoilt setting with informal paths and magnificent views.

Deirdre's Shelling
A remarkable outdoor space created to tell the tale of Deirdre of the Sorrows and her lover Naoise, a story from the Glenmasan Manuscript which links Ireland with Scotland. A gravel track leads to the Shelling atop Beinn Glas with stunning views across the land where Deirdre and Naoise lived in the 7th Century.

Avich Falls
The River Avich is one of Argyll's shortest rivers with a series of waterfalls cascading for a mile between Loch Avich and Loch Awe. There are forestry walks through peaceful oakwoods that are home to red squirrel, deer and pine marten.

Carnasserie Castle & Kilmartin Glen
A ruined 16th century tower house located 5km to the south of Ford and built by John Carswell who published the first book to be printed in Scottish Gaelic. 2km further south is Kilmartin Glen with the most important concentration of Neolithic and Bronze age remains on mainland Scotland.

#BelnAwe



LOCH AWE MAP & GUIDE