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### **Acknowledgements**

**From Henry:** It's always fun walking in Scotland and a lot of that fun comes from the people you meet. So whether it's for their helpfulness, kindness, or just for their entertaining company, I would like to thank the following (in no particular order): the staff at Crown Vets in Fort William for treating Daisy's paw; Helen at the West Highland Way Sleeper, for her company (and coffee!); Ivor at the (now closed) Anchorage Cottage for the very welcome drink on a hot day; Melissa and Kevin while waiting for a bus; Adam at Kings House Hotel for helping when Daisy was hurt; Mark, the exhausted cyclist at Kingshouse; the anonymous bus driver who allowed Daisy to travel on his bus (even though it went against company policy); Johana Prada, Camilo Audila and Alan Munoz for company on part of the walk; and to everyone else on the trail who stopped to spend a few minutes chatting to me. Thanks also to all those readers who've written in with comments and suggestions, in particular, Geert Ariaans, Heather Bell, Carly Bishop, Roger Coe, Matt Gardiner, Mary Hartman, Tony Hufton, Zsuzsa Koger, Peter Marshall, Frank Norris, Simon Quinn, Lisa Radel, Paul Scott, Dave & Angie Walsh and Barbara Winzberg. And, of course, thanks as ever to all at Trailblazer: Nicky Slade, Jane Thomas, Anna Jacomb-Hood, Nick Hill and Bryn Thomas.

**Dedication – From Henry:** For Zoe, for keeping Henry so royally entertained while I enjoyed another jolly with my dog; and for just being lovely, of course.

### **A request**

The author and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless, things change. If you notice any changes or omissions that should be included in the next edition, please contact us at Trailblazer (☒ [info@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com)). A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

### **Warning: hill walking can be dangerous**

Please read the notes on when to go (pp12-16) and outdoor safety (pp56-61). Every effort has been made by the author and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

**Updated information** will be available on: ☒ [trailblazer-guides.com](http://trailblazer-guides.com)

**Photos – This page:** Tackling the long, lonely hike across Rannoch Moor.

**Front cover and overleaf:** Views from the top of the Devil's Staircase (p169), at 548m (1797ft) the highest point on the West Highland Way.

**Previous page:** Looking towards the iconic Kings House Hotel.

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## INTRODUCTION

### West Highland Way

History 9 – How difficult is it? 10

How long do you need? 12 – When to go 12

## PART 1: PLANNING YOUR WALK

### Practical information for the walker

Route finding 17 – Accommodation 18 – Food and drink 22

Money 25 – Other services 25 – Walking companies 26 – Walking with dogs 27 – Information for foreign visitors 28 – Mountain biking 29

### Budgeting 30

### Itineraries

Village and town facilities 31 – Which direction? 32

Suggested itineraries 32 – Hillwalking side trips 34

Day and weekend walks 34

### What to take

Keep your luggage light 35 – How to carry it 36 – Footwear 36

Clothes 37 – Toiletries 38 – First-aid kit 38 – General items 38

Sleeping bag 39 – Camping gear 39 – Money 39 – Sources of further information 40 – Maps 41 – Recommended reading 41

### Getting to and from the West Highland Way

National transport 42 – Getting to Britain 43

Local transport 45 – Public transport map 48

## PART 2: MINIMUM IMPACT WALKING & OUTDOOR SAFETY

### Minimum impact walking

Economic impact 50 – Environmental impact 51 – Access 53

### Outdoor safety

Avoidance of hazards 56 – Weather forecasts 57 – Water 57

Blisters 58 – Bites 58 – Hypothermia 60 – Hyperthermia 60

## PART 3: THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

### Conserving Scotland's nature

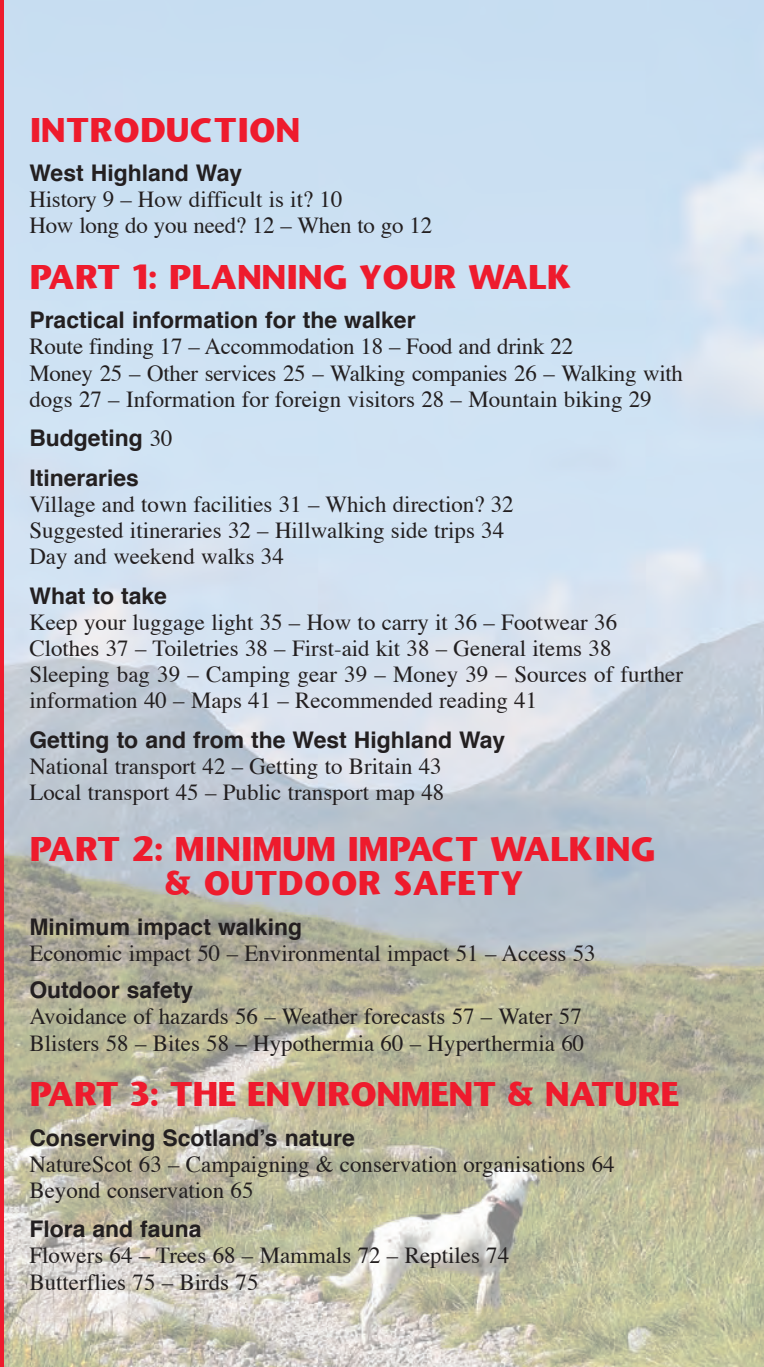
NatureScot 63 – Campaigning & conservation organisations 64

Beyond conservation 65

### Flora and fauna

Flowers 64 – Trees 68 – Mammals 72 – Reptiles 74

Butterflies 75 – Birds 75



## **PART 4: GLASGOW**

### **City guide**

Orientation 79 – Arrival and departure 79

Getting around and to Milngavie 80 – Services 81

Festivals & events 84 – Where to stay 84

Where to eat and drink 87 – What to see and do 90

**Walking from Glasgow to Milngavie 95**

## **PART 5: ROUTE GUIDE AND MAPS**

**Using this guide 99**

**Milngavie 101**

**Milngavie to Drymen 103**

**Drymen to Balmaha 116**

**Balmaha to Rowardennan 121**

**Rowardennan to Inversnaid 128**

**Inversnaid to Inverarnan 134**

**Inverarnan to Crianlarich 139**

**Crianlarich to Tyndrum 143**

**Tyndrum to Bridge of Orchy 149**

**Bridge of Orchy to Kingshouse 155**

**Glen Coe 162**

**Kingshouse to Kinlochleven 170**

**Kinlochleven to Fort William 174**

**Climbing Ben Nevis 180**

**Fort William 188**

## **APPENDICES**

**A: Gaelic 193**

**B: GPS Waypoints 195**

**C: Taking a dog along the Way 198**

**D: Distance chart 200**

**E: Map keys 202**

**INDEX 203**

**OVERVIEW MAPS & PROFILES 211**



## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This guidebook contains all the information you need. The hard work has been done for you so you can plan your trip without having to consult numerous websites and other books and maps. When you're all packed and ready to go, there's comprehensive public transport information to get you to and from the trail and detailed maps (1:20,000) to help you find your way along it.

- All standards of accommodation with reviews of campsites, camping barns, hostels, B&Bs, pubs/inns, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you want an organised tour, and baggage-transfer services if you just want your luggage carried
- Suggested itineraries for all types of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when to go, degree of difficulty, what to pack, and how much the whole walking holiday will cost
- Walking times in both directions and GPS waypoints
- Cafés, pubs, tearooms, takeaways, restaurants, food shops
- Rail, bus & taxi information for all villages and towns on the path
- Street plans of the main towns and villages both on and off the Way
- Historical, cultural and geographical background



## POST COVID NOTE

This edition of the guide was researched at a time when the entire country was just emerging from restrictions imposed following the Covid pandemic. Most of the hotels, cafés, pubs, restaurants and tourist attractions had reopened but some may not survive the further hardships caused by rising fuel prices and inflation. Do forgive us where your experience on the ground contradicts what is written in the book; please email us – [info@trailblazer-guides.com](mailto:info@trailblazer-guides.com) – so we can add your information to our updates page on the website.

### ❑ MINIMUM IMPACT FOR MAXIMUM INSIGHT

*Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you and storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.* **John Muir** (one of the world's earliest and most influential environmentalists, born in 1838)

Walking in wild places is about opening ourselves up to all that is 'green'. Treading lightly and with respect we give ourselves a precious chance to tap into the curative power of the natural world. Physical contact with the land makes us more in tune with it and as a result we feel all the more passionate about protecting it.

By developing a deeper ecological awareness through a better understanding of nature and by supporting rural economies, local businesses, sensitive forms of transport and low-impact methods of farming and land-use we can all do our bit for a brighter future. There can be few activities as 'environmentally friendly' as walking.

# INTRODUCTION

*[Glencoe and Lochaber] had everything: peak, plateau, precipice, the thinnest of ridges, and green valley, all set between the widest of wild moors and a narrow sea-loch.*

**WH Murray** *Undiscovered Scotland*

WH Murray is not alone in thinking the dramatic concluding stages of the West Highland Way (Glencoe and Lochaber) are equal in beauty to anywhere in the world. The Way has become a pilgrimage for mountain lovers keen to travel simply on foot into the heart of the Scottish Highlands. A better introduction to this stunning region could not have been designed and, what is more, you don't have to wait until the end for the highlights.

**Within a week you will have walked through some of the most fabulous scenery in Britain with relative ease, safety and comfort**

Right from the start the Way gives walkers a taste of the magic of Scotland's wild land and within a week you will have walked through some of the most fabulous scenery in Britain with relative ease, safety and comfort.

The Way begins kindly just 20 minutes by train from the centre of Glasgow, gently undulating through woods and farmland, easing you in to the new demands of long-distance walking. As you stroll along



Approaching Beinn Dorain (Maps 31-2, photo © Bryn Thomas).



**Above:** This former hunting lodge by Loch Lomond is now Rowardennan Youth Hostel.

extra effort is amply repaid by breathtaking mountain views. As you approach Fort William, the end of the Way, Ben Nevis comes into view rising above the conifer forests. If you have energy left after this superb 96-mile (154km) walk, an ascent of the highest mountain in Britain makes a fitting climax.

## History

The West Highland Way was the first official long-distance footpath in Scotland. The idea was conceived in the 1960s at the height of enthusiasm brought about by the opening of the Pennine Way in England.

It was a massive task to create such an ambitious right of way, requiring investigation of the best route, endless liaising between the various local authorities and the Countryside Commission for Scotland, negotiations with landowners through whose land the Way might pass and then finally, when all was agreed, the construction of the path itself. This may seem simple, yet a flagship route such as the West Highland Way requires information boards,

**Right:** Brightly painted chalet near Carbeth Loch (Map 2).





Crossing these magnificent sections gives you a true taste of Highland Scotland and you will require basic outdoor competence to do so safely (see pp55-7 for further advice).

## How long do you need?

During the annual West Highland Way race the entire route is run in less than 35 hours. Admirable though this is, you will probably want to take a little longer. The suggested itineraries (see p33) in this book list various schedules of between six and nine days for walking from Milngavie to Fort William, showing that with a rest day you can easily complete the Way in a week to ten days. If you can afford to take longer you will have the time to climb mountains along the route, explore Glasgow, Glen Coe and Glen Nevis, or simply dawdle when the weather is



**Above:** The 18th-century Bridge of Orchy which gives its name to the tiny village (see p149; photo © Susanne Härtel).



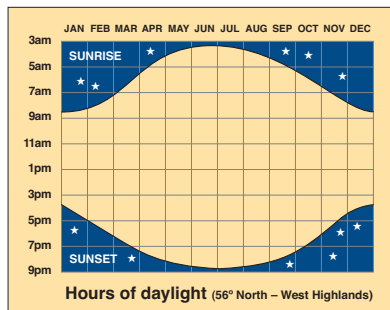
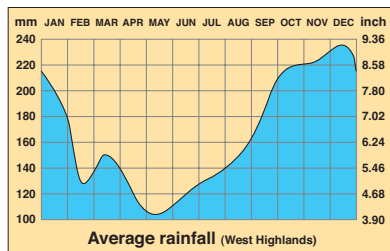
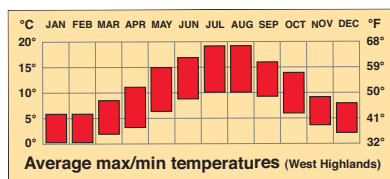
**Above:** Rounding up the sheep near Tyndrum.

**Below:** View over Loch Tulla with Black Mount beyond. Inveroran is to the left.





**Above:** Climbing Ben Nevis (see p180) after you've walked the West Highland Way makes a fitting grand finale. (Photo © Joel Newton).



## RAINFALL

The annual rainfall for the West Highlands is about 2000mm (80 inches). As you progress north you are likely to encounter wetter weather. The annual average for Glasgow is 1000mm, while in Glen Nevis it can be as much as 3000mm. The good news is that more than half of this precipitation falls as snow in winter.

## DAYLIGHT HOURS

If walking in autumn, winter and early spring, you must take account of how far you can walk in the available light. It may not be possible to cover as many miles as you would in summer. The table gives the sunrise and sunset times for each month at latitude 56° North. This runs across the southern tip of Loch Lomond, giving an accurate picture of daylight for the West Highland Way. Depending on the weather you will get a further 30-45 minutes of usable light before sunrise and after sunset.



**Above:** By the Way north of Kingshouse.

# PLANNING YOUR WALK

1

## Practical information for the walker

### ROUTE FINDING

The West Highland Way has been way-marked with signposts and wooden posts in appropriate places. Each of these is marked with a white thistle within a hexagon or the



newer WHW logo to confirm the line of the trail. They have an additional yellow arrow when indicating a change in direction. Used in combination with the detailed trail maps and directions in this book you have no excuse for getting lost.

### Using GPS with this book

Whilst modern Wainwrights will scoff, more open-minded walkers will accept that GPS technology can be an inexpensive, well-established if non-essential, navigational aid. In no time at all a GPS receiver, given a clear view of the sky, will establish your position and altitude in a variety of formats to within a few metres. These days, most **smartphones** have a GPS receiver built in and mapping software available to run on them (see p41).

Most of the maps throughout the book include **numbered waypoints** along the route. These correlate to the list on p195 which gives the latitude and longitude and a description. You'll find more waypoints where the path is indistinct or there are several options as to which way to go. You can download the complete list for free as a GPS-readable file (that doesn't include the text descriptions) from the Trailblazer website: [trailblazer-guides.com/gps-waypoints](http://trailblazer-guides.com/gps-waypoints). State-of-the-art digital mapping to import into your GPS unit (see p41) is also available, but it's not the most reliable way of navigating and the small screen on your phone or pocket-sized GPS unit will invariably fail to put places into context or give you the 'big picture'. Traditional OS paper maps (see p40) whilst bulkier, are preferable.

Another way of using a GPS unit is to download a **track log** of the route from the internet. Where waypoints are single points like cairns, a track log is a continuous line-like a path that appears on







Camping cabins at Beinglas Farm Campsite (see p134)





Micro-lodge at Glencoe Mountain Resort (see p156)

not, there is invariably somewhere close by where you can eat.

It is recommended that you take your own sleeping bag and make breakfast where possible, otherwise your trip won't be much cheaper than staying in B&Bs. You may also want to take a stove and pan to give yourself more flexibility when cooking facilities aren't available.

Simplest of all the bunkhouses are the innovative, low-impact wooden 'wigwams' and **camping cabins** or **micro-lodges**. They sleep between two and six people, are insulated and occasionally heated. The other **bunkhouses** are more like hostels with dormitory accommodation or occasionally small rooms sleeping two to four people.

**Independent hostels** ( [hostel-scotland.co.uk](http://hostel-scotland.co.uk)) are privately owned and are as diverse as their owners. They all have full cooking facilities, dormitory accommodation and differ from SYHA hostels in that you don't pay more if you are not a member.

To stay at a SYHA hostel you either need to be a member of the Youth Hostel Association (Hostelling International) of your home country or you can join the **Scottish Youth Hostels Association** (aka Hostelling Scotland;  [hostellingscotland.org.uk](http://hostellingscotland.org.uk)) at any of their hostels; it costs from £20 for a year. Beds can be booked online through the SYHA website or by phone either by calling the central number (☎ 0345-293 7373) or the relevant hostel direct. Despite their name there is no upper age restriction for membership.

### Bed and breakfast (B&B)

B&Bs are a great British institution. For anyone unfamiliar with the concept, you get a bedroom in someone's home along with an enormous cooked breakfast the following morning; in many respects it is like being a guest of the family. Staying in B&Bs is a brilliant way to walk in Scotland as you can travel with a light pack and gain a fascinating insight into the local culture. One night you may be staying in a suburban 'semi', the next on a remote hill farm.

**What to expect** For the long-distance walker tourist-board recommendations and star-rating systems have little meaning. At the end of a long day you will simply be glad of the closest place with hot water and a smiling face to welcome you. If they have somewhere to hang your wet and muddy clothes so much the better. It is these criteria that have been used for places mentioned in this guide, rather than whether a room has a shaver point or TV. B&B owners are often proud to boast that all rooms are **en suite**. This enthusiasm has led some to

### ❑ WALKING FROM GLASGOW TO MILNGAVIE

Highly recommended is to add an extra (short) day to your itinerary and walk from the centre of Glasgow to Milngavie and the official start of the West Highland Way. Far from trudging along pavements beside busy streets, as you might imagine a walk out of a city might entail, you follow two rivers, the Kelvin and the Allander, through parks and then beside fields. Two official footpaths, the **Kelvin Walkway** and the **Allander Walkway**, follow the rivers and if you stay overnight near Kelvingrove Park, you can join the route right there.

From Kelvingrove Park to Milngavie is approximately 10 miles (16km) and this easy day's walk is a great way to start; see pp94-8.

The **overview map** and **stage maps** (see end of the book) and **table of village and town facilities** (p31) summarise the essential information.

Alternatively, to make it even easier, have a look at the **suggested itineraries** (see opposite) and simply choose your preferred type of accommodation and speed of walking.

There are also suggestions on p34 for those who want to experience the best of the trail over a day or a weekend. The **public transport map and table** on pp46-9 may also be useful at this stage.

Having made a rough plan, turn to **Part 5**, where you will find summaries of the route; full descriptions of accommodation, places to eat and other services in each village and town; as well as detailed trail maps.

### WHICH DIRECTION?

Most walkers find the lure of the Highlands, and Ben Nevis in particular, more appealing than the suburbs of Glasgow so walk the Way south to north. This traditional northern direction of travel has been followed in the layout of this book. There are other practical reasons for heading north rather than south; the prevailing wind and rain (south-westerly) is behind you, as is the sun, and the gentler walking is at the start giving you time to warm up before tackling the steeper climbs of the last few days.

That said, there is no reason why you shouldn't walk in the other direction, especially if just tackling a part of the Way. The maps in Part 5 give timings for both directions and, as route-finding instructions are on the maps rather than in blocks of text, it is straightforward using this guide back to front.

### SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

These itineraries (opposite) are suggestions only; adapt them to your needs. They have been divided into different accommodation types and each table has different itineraries to encompass different walking paces. **Don't forget to add your travelling time before and after the walk.**

### ❏ MUNROS

In 1891 Sir Hugh Munro, soldier, diplomat and founder member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC), published a list of all Scottish mountains over the magical height of 3000ft (or the rather clumsy metric equivalent of 914m). He had been aware that many peaks had gone unrecognised and his new tables came up with 538 'tops' over 3000ft, 283 of which, because of certain distinguishing features, merited the status of 'separate mountains'. Unwittingly he had given birth to the mountaineering equivalent of train-spotting; ticking off as many 'Munros' as possible by climbing to their summit. The craze caught on quickly. By 1901 Reverend Robertson was the first to climb them all and since then over 6000 hill walkers have followed his lead.

'Munro-bagging' has encouraged many walkers to explore some of the finest country in Scotland, luring them away from the popular honey-pot areas to reach a specific hill. Yet when it becomes an obsession, as it frequently does, there is a danger that other equally wonderful areas of wild land are ignored and the true esoteric reasons for walking are lost. Much to the dismay of purists the goalposts occasionally shift as the tables are revised following the latest surveying data. The number of Munros currently stands at 282. Interestingly Sir Hugh never completed his own round, failing repeatedly to climb the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Skye before he died at the age of 63.

you are bitten by that bug. See some of the walking guidebooks, including Trailblazer's *Scottish Highlands Hillwalking Guide*, on p42 for more information.

Although not particularly high when compared with other mountains round the world, the Scottish mountains can be dangerous for the unprepared at any time of year. Read 'Mountain Safety' on p57, and also 'Access' on pp53-5 to make sure your planned walk doesn't interfere with other users of the hills.

## What to take

How much you take with you is a very personal decision which takes experience to get right. For those new to long-distance walking the suggestions below will help you strike a sensible balance between comfort, safety and minimal weight.

### KEEP YOUR LUGGAGE LIGHT

In these days of huge material wealth it can be a liberating experience to travel **as light as possible** to learn how few possessions we really need to be safe and comfortable. It is all too easy to take things along 'just in case' and these little items can soon mount up. If you are in any doubt about anything on your packing list, be ruthless and leave it at home.

To liberate themselves entirely from their luggage, many people now make use of **baggage-carrying companies** (see p26).



### Walking guidebooks

*Scottish Highlands Hillwalking Guide* by Jim Manthorpe (Trailblazer) has detailed route descriptions and maps for the ascents of some of Scotland's best-known, and some less well-known, mountains.

The Pathfinder guides, such as the one to *Loch Lomond, the Trossachs & Stirling* are useful area guidebooks with a selection of low- and high-level day walks, each illustrated with OS map excerpts.

If the West Highland Way has fired your enthusiasm for walking long-distance trails check out the other titles in this Trailblazer series: see p208. These include the *Great Glen Way* which continues from where the West Highland Way ends at Fort William north along Loch Ness to Inverness.

### Flora and fauna field guides

*Scottish Birds* by Valerie Thom (Collins) and *Scottish Wild Flowers* by Michael Scott (Birlinn Ltd)) are ideal pocket-sized field guides to take with you. The RSPB also publish their own *Handbook of Scottish Birds*, by Peter Holden and Stuart Housden.

## Getting to and from the West Highland Way

Travelling to the start of the West Highland Way by public transport makes sense. There's no need to worry about the safety of your temporarily abandoned vehicle while walking, there are no logistical headaches about how to return to your car after the walk and it's obviously one of the biggest steps you can take towards minimising your ecological footprint. Quite apart from that, you'll simply feel your holiday has begun the moment you step out of your front door, rather than having to wait until you've slammed the car door behind you.

### NATIONAL TRANSPORT

Glasgow, only 20 minutes from the official start of the West Highland Way at Milngavie, is easily reached by rail, road, or air from the rest of Britain. For information on getting from Glasgow to Milngavie see p80.

#### By rail

**Glasgow** (Glasgow Central) is on the West Coast rail line (operated by Avanti West Coast at the time of writing) and the Cross Country line from Leeds via Edinburgh and the Trans Pennine Express line from both Manchester and Liverpool, so it is served by frequent trains making it easy to get to the start of the West Highland Way letting the train take the strain.

**Fort William** is on the stunning West Highland Line from where you can either go north to Mallaig or south to Glasgow.

Timetable and fare information can be obtained from **National Rail Enquiries** (☎ 03457-484950; 24hrs; 🌐 [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)) or the relevant train


## PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES















### Bus services

**Notes:** The details below were correct at the time of writing but services and operators change so it is essential to check before travelling.

Many of the services listed operate year-round; however, they may operate less frequently in the winter months (generally November to March/April).

Services operate with the same frequency in the opposite direction.

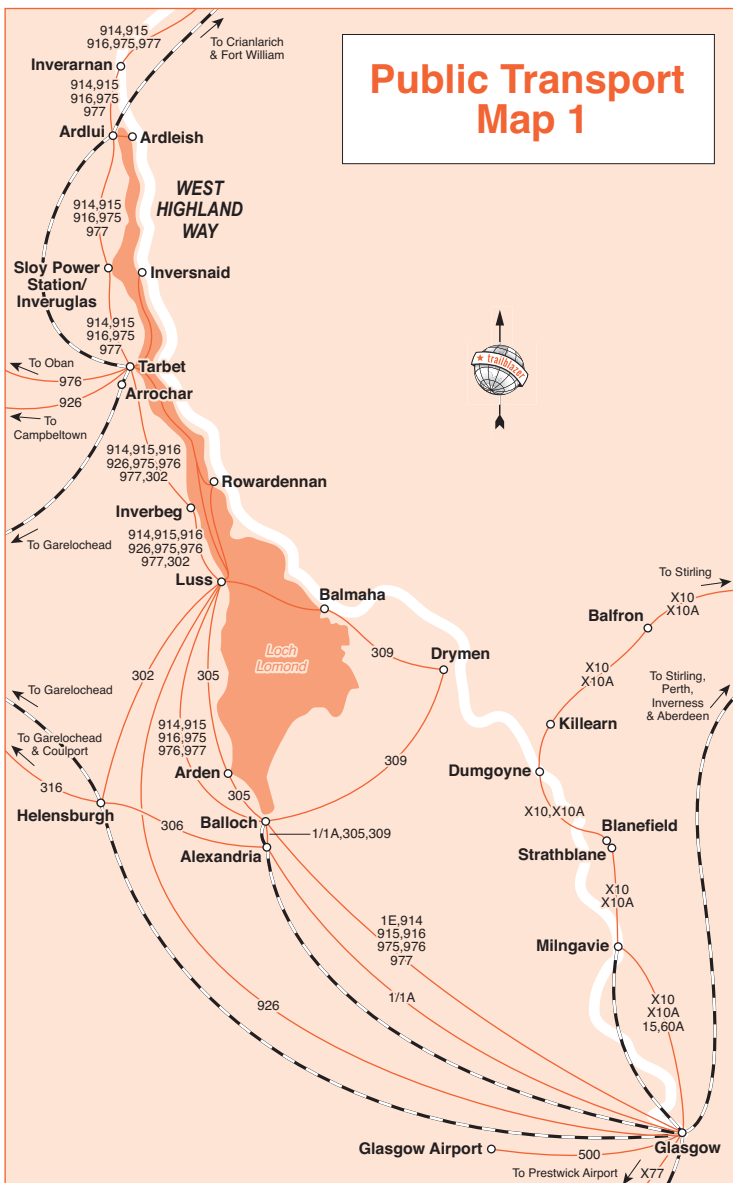
Bus Times ( [bustimes.org](http://bustimes.org)) is a very useful website for finding bus stops.

- **FSE First Scotland East** (South East and Central Scotland;  
 [www.firstbus.co.uk/south-east-and-central-scotland](http://www.firstbus.co.uk/south-east-and-central-scotland))
- **FG First Glasgow** (Greater Glasgow;  [firstbus.co.uk/greater-glasgow](http://firstbus.co.uk/greater-glasgow))
- **GC Garelochhead Coaches** ( 01436-810200,  [garelochheadcoaches.co.uk](http://garelochheadcoaches.co.uk))
- **GCB Glasgow Citybus** (operated by West Coast Motors  01586-552319,  
 [westcoastmotors.co.uk/glasgow-citybus](http://westcoastmotors.co.uk/glasgow-citybus))
- **McC McColls** ( 01389-754321,  [mccolls.org.uk](http://mccolls.org.uk))
- **SC Scottish Citylink** ( [citylink.co.uk](http://citylink.co.uk))
- **SB Shiel Buses** ( 01397-700700,  [shielbuses.co.uk](http://shielbuses.co.uk))
- **WCM West Coast Motors** ( 01586-555885,  [westcoastmotors.co.uk](http://westcoastmotors.co.uk))
- **WR Wilson's of Rhu** ( [wilsonsof-rhu.co.uk](http://wilsonsof-rhu.co.uk))

<b>N41</b>	Glen Nevis Youth Hostel to Roy Bridge via Fort William, Mon-Sat 2/day	<b>SB</b>
<b>N42</b>	Fort William to Glen Nevis Lower Falls via Glen Nevis Youth Hostel, early May to early Oct 6/day	<b>SB</b>
<b>N44</b>	Kinlochleven to Fort William via Glencoe Junction, Mon-Sat 6-7/day, Sun 4/day	<b>SB</b>
<b>X10</b>	Glasgow to Stirling via Milngavie, Strathblane, Killearn, Balfron & Kippen, Mon-Fri 6/day, Sat 4/day, Sun Glasgow to Balfron 5/day plus Balfron to Stirling 5/day	<b>FSE</b>
<b>X10A</b>	Glasgow to Stirling via Milngavie, Strathblane, Killearn, Balfron, Gartmore & Thornhill, Mon-Fri 6/day, Sat 4/day <i>X10 &amp; X10A have some additional services between Glasgow and Balfron</i>	<b>FSE</b>
<b>1/1A</b>	Glasgow to Balloch via Alexandria (different stops en route), Mon-Sat 1-4/hr, Sun 1-2/hr	<b>FG</b>
<b>1E</b>	Glasgow to Balloch, Mon-Fri 3/day (4-6pm; morns only to Glasgow)	<b>FG</b>
<b>15</b>	Glasgow to Milngavie, Mon-Sat 1/hr during the day	<b>GCB/WCM</b>
<b>60A</b>	Easterhouse to Castlemains via Glasgow & Milngavie, daily 1-3/hr	<b>FG</b>
<b>302</b>	Helensburgh to Carrick Castle via Luss, Inverbeg, Tarbet & Succoth, Mon-Sat 2/day, Mon-Sat plus 1-2/day to Succoth	<b>GC</b>
<b>305</b>	Alexandria to Luss via Balloch & Arden, Mon-Fri 8/day, Sat 10/day, Sun 9/day	<b>McC</b>
<b>306</b>	Alexandria to Helensburgh, Mon-Fri 7/day, Sat 5/day, Sun 2/day	<b>McC</b>
<b>309</b>	Alexandria to Balmaha via Balloch & Drymen, Mon-Sat 10/day, Sun 9/day	<b>McC</b>
<b>316</b>	Helensburgh to Coulport via Garelochhead, Mon-Sat 1/hr plus 1/hr to Garelochhead, Sun 6-7/day plus 2/day to Garelochhead	<b>GC/WR</b>
<b>500</b>	Glasgow to Glasgow Airport, daily 3-4/hr	<b>FG</b>

# Public Transport Map 1

PLANNING YOUR WALK



rich industrialists to partake in all forms of field sports. Little has changed today except that the wealthy now come from all over the world and contribute £30 million to the Highland economy every year providing much-needed income for many estates.

Stalking is partly responsible for the deer population spiralling out of control, doubling in number since the early 1960s, which has ironically enabled stalkers to play a more legitimate role in culling the deer. As red deer have no natural predators other than man this is a necessary activity. In addition, no matter what one's ethical stance on the sport may be, while our laws and methods of land ownership remain as they are, alternative means for estates to generate an income, such as conifer plantations, ski developments and the like, would be far worse for both walkers and the environment. Deer stalking is also an important conservation measure; it maintains a healthier herd of deer and aids vegetation recovery and habitat improvement.

Access restrictions during the deer-culling seasons should therefore be respected when walking on land owned by sporting estates and you should try to cause the minimum of disturbance. Stags are culled between July 1st and October 20th, hinds are culled between October 21st and February 15th. Details of access restrictions are usually posted on signs in the vicinity of stalking activities and on the internet at  [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/heading-scottish-hills](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/heading-scottish-hills).

## Outdoor safety

The West Highland Way is not a particularly difficult or dangerous walk and with common sense, some planning and basic preparation most hazards and hassles can easily be avoided. The information given here is just as valid for walkers out on a day walk as for those walking the entire Way.

### AVOIDANCE OF HAZARDS

Always make sure you have suitable **clothes** (see pp37-8) to keep you warm and dry, whatever the conditions, and a spare change of inner clothes. A **compass, whistle, torch** and **first-aid kit** should also be carried. Take plenty of **food** and **water** (see opposite) with you for the day. You will eat far more walking than you do normally so make sure you have enough, as well as some high-energy snacks, such as chocolate, dried fruit or biscuits, in the bottom of your pack for an emergency. Stay alert and know exactly where you are throughout the day. The easiest way to do this is to **regularly check your position** on the map. If visibility suddenly decreases with mist and cloud, or there is an accident, you will be able to make a sensible decision about what action to take based on your location.



# 3

## THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

*Nature is our medicine.* **Henry D Thoreau**

The West Highland Way encompasses the Lowlands and Highlands, passing from wooded glen to high mountain and all manner of habitats in between. This abundance of countryside (97% of Scotland has not been built on) with few people living in it (about eight people per square kilometre in the Highlands) has resulted in a rich variety of wildlife. For the walker interested in the natural environment it is a feast for the senses.

It would take a book several times the size of this to list the thousands of species which you could come across on your walk. A brief description of the more common animals and plants you may encounter as well as some of the more special species for which Scotland is well known is given on pp65-78. If you want to know more refer to the field guides listed on p42.

Conservation issues are also explored on the premise that to really learn about a place you need to know more than the names of all the plants and animals in it. It is just as important to understand the interactions going on between them and man's relationship with this ecological balance.

### Conserving Scotland's nature

*[Since 1945] the normal landscape dynamics of human adaptation and natural alteration had been replaced by simple destruction. The commonest cause was destruction by modern agriculture; the second, destruction by modern forestry.*

**Oliver Rackham** *The Illustrated History of the Countryside*

The statistics of how the Scottish land has been treated over the last 70 years do not make comfortable reading. More than half of the hedgerows which existed at the end of the Second World War have been pulled up; a quarter of the broadleaved woods have disappeared; a third of heather moorland has been destroyed; half the lowland peat mires have been lost. These are all important habitats for a diverse range of wildlife species. When they are replaced by monocultural conifer plantations or sheep grassland the rich web of plant and animal life also disappears leaving behind a poor substitute for nature's bounty. The stark results of this destruction are highlighted by the



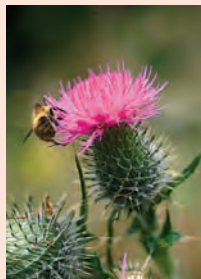




Common Butterwort  
*Pinguicula vulgaris*



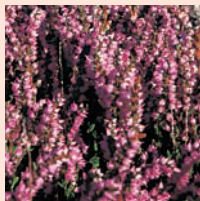
Early Purple Orchid  
*Orchis mascula*



Spear Thistle  
*Cirsium vulgare*



Bell Heather  
*Erica cinerea*



Heather (Ling)  
*Calluna vulgaris*



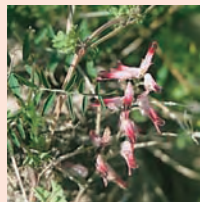
Wood Sorrel  
*Oxalis acetosella*



Rosebay Willowherb  
*Epilobium angustifolium*



Common Vetch  
*Vicia sativa*



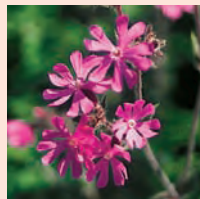
Common Fumitory  
*Fumaria officinalis*



Meadow Cranesbill  
*Geranium pratense*



Water Avens  
*Geum rivale*



Red Campion  
*Silene dioica*

## City guide

Everyone walking the West Highland Way really should take a few days at the beginning or end of their walk to spend some time in this the best of all Scottish cities, once known as the ‘Second City of the Empire’. The economic downturn in the latter half of the 20th century was tough for Glasgow and its people but there’s been a dramatic transformation since then, despite the recessions.

Glasgow’s a fascinating and lively place, populated by some of the friendliest people in the country. You’ll find some of the top museums and art galleries in Britain including the inspiring **Riverside Museum**, designed by Zaha Hadid; numerous shrines to the world-famous architect and designer, **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**; interesting museums such as **The Tenement House**, an early 20th-century time capsule, and the award-winning **St Mungo’s Museum of Religious Life & Art**; the gothic **Glasgow Cathedral**; top-class **restaurants**, vibrant **nightlife** and one of the liveliest **arts scenes** in Europe.

En route to or from the West Highland Way you’ll be coming through the city anyway but ideally you should plan your holiday so that you have time both to spend a few days here and to do the half-day walk from Glasgow to Milngavie, rather than simply take the train (or a bus) to the start of the West Highland Way.

### ORIENTATION

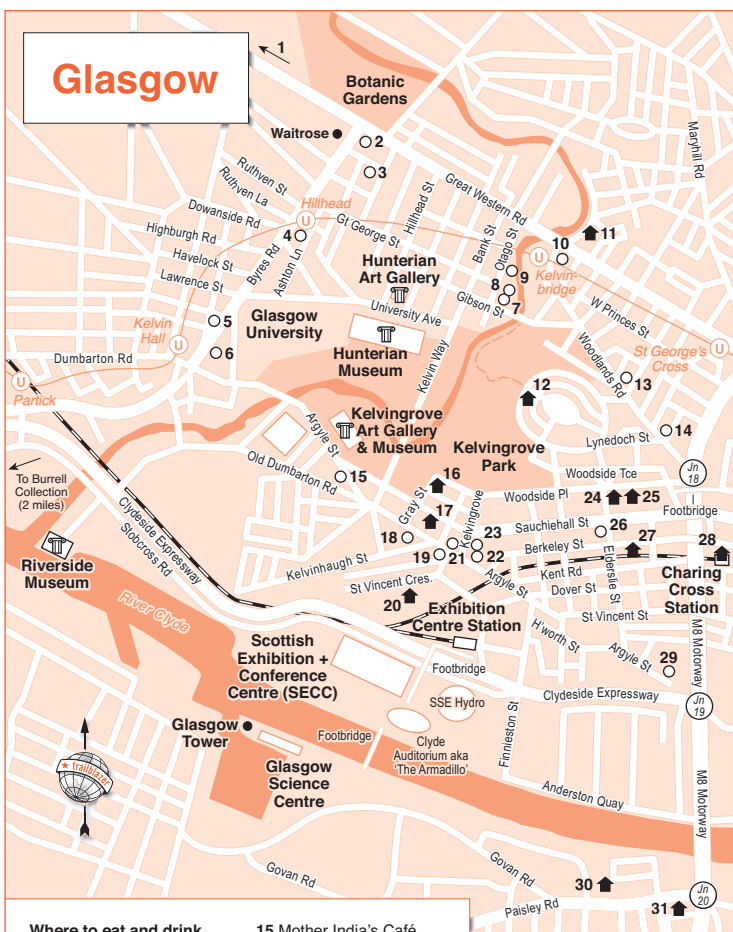
The centre of the city is on the north side of the River Clyde, with the M8 motorway sweeping across the north and through the west. The two main railway stations and bus station are in the centre. The two main accommodation areas we’ve given details about are just north of the main shopping street, Sauchiehall, and west of the M8 in the Kelvingrove area. The main commercial area is Merchant City and around George Square. Milngavie (see p101) and the start of the West Highland Way are 10 miles north-west of the centre.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

**Glasgow Airport** (✈ [glasgowairport.com](http://glasgowairport.com)) is nine miles west of the city. The Airport Express bus service (🚌 [firstbus.co.uk/greater-glas](http://firstbus.co.uk/greater-glas))





**Where to eat and drink**

- 2 Óran Mór
- 3 Crabshakk Botanics
- 4 The Ubiquitous Chip
- 5 University Café
- 6 Number 16
- 7 Stravaigin
- 8 Tiffney's Steakhouse
- 9 Tchai-Ovna House of Tea & Vegetarian Restaurant
- 10 Byblos Café
- 13 Chillies Westend
- 14 Balti Club

- 15 Mother India's Café
- 18 Thai Siam
- 19 Ben Nevis Bar
- 21 Crabshakk Finnieston
- 22 Fanny Trollope's
- 23 Mother India
- 26 Mister Singh's
- 29 Two Fat Ladies at the Buttery
- 34 Nice 'n' Sleazy
- 35 Mini Grill Glasgow
- 38 King Tut's Wah Wah Hut
- 39 The Bunker Bar
- 40 Two Fat Ladies City Centre

- 41 Mackintosh at the Willow
- 46 The Pot Still
- 47 Café Wander
- 48 Halloumi
- 49 Gamba
- 53 Thai Orchid
- 54 Café Fame
- 55 The Horse Shoe
- 56 Willow Tea Rooms
- 58 Ichiban City Centre
- 62 Cossachok

### ❏ PRICES AND ROOM TYPES

The number and type of rooms are given after the address of each entry: S = single room, T = twin room (two beds), D = double room (one double bed), F = family room (sleeps at least three people). Rates quoted are either per person (pp) or per room. Rooms have bathrooms attached (en suite) unless shared facilities are mentioned.

The text also indicates whether the premises have **wi-fi** (WI-FI); if a **bath** (♫) is available in at least one room; and whether **dogs** (🐕) are welcome.

High up on Park Terrace overlooking the leafy expanse of Kelvingrove Park is the spacious and traditional **Glasgow Youth Hostel** (☎ 0141-332 3004, 🌐 [hostellingscotland.org.uk/hostels/glasgow](http://hostellingscotland.org.uk/hostels/glasgow), 8 Park Terrace; 108 beds in rooms sleeping 1-8 people; £15-25pp, sgl rooms from £25-40; 🐕). The hostel is licensed and breakfast is available. If you're staying here consider taking the train to Partick station (on the line to Milngavie) since it is marginally closer to the Youth Hostel than Central station. If you're planning to walk the whole way from Glasgow to Fort William, the route to Milngavie described on pp94-8 begins from Kelvingrove Park – right outside your door if you're staying here.

### Budget chain hotels

The quality of cheaper guesthouses and B&Bs can be very variable making the budget hotel chains a reliable option if you book online far enough in advance to get one of their special deals.

From £24.50 for a room **Premier Inn** (central reservations ☎ 0871-527 9222, 🌐 [premierinn.com](http://premierinn.com)) is particularly recommended for its comfortable beds and good rooms. They have four central hotels: **Charing Cross** (10 Elmbank Gardens; ♫), **George Square** (187 George St; ♫), **Argyle Street** (377 Argyle St; ♫) and **Buchanan Galleries** (St Andrew House, 141 West Nile St; ♫). A full cooked breakfast costs £9.50 (from £6.99 for a continental breakfast). Remember that, unlike their closest rivals Travelodge, they do not allow dogs.

Offering equally attractive online deals (from £29 for a room), **Travelodge** (🌐 [travelodge.co.uk](http://travelodge.co.uk) – reserve online rather than phoning the expensive numbers) has three hotels in central Glasgow: **Glasgow Central** (☎ 0871-984 6141, 5 Hill St; 95D or F; ♫; 🐕), **Glasgow Queen Street** (☎ 0871-559 1872, 78 Queen St) and **Glasgow Paisley Road** (☎ 0871-984 6142, 251 Paisley Rd; 75D or F; ♫; WI-FI; 🐕) is just south of the river, half a mile from Central railway station. Travelodge 'unlimited' breakfast starts from £8.75pp. They provide 30 minutes of free wi-fi but after that it's £3 for 24 hours.

Another budget chain operator offering well-located accommodation is easyHotel. Their **easyHotel Glasgow** (online reservations only: 🌐 [easyhotel.com](http://easyhotel.com), 1 Hill St; 83D/35T) has functional rooms from £22.50. As with easyJet, it's those extras that add up – a TV is £5, WI-FI costs from £3 (though it's free if you join their free clubBedzzzz) and if you check out after 10am they may bill you for another night. If you want a room with a window that's extra too.

Vinicombe St; see website for opening hours). Choices include shellfish chowder (£9.95), fish & chips (£14.95) and whole brown crab (£19.95). Oysters are £2.35 each and a whole or half a lobster costs what the market dictates!

For a celebratory dinner it would be hard to beat **Two Fat Ladies at the Buttery** (☎ 0141-221 8188, 🌐 twofatladiesrestaurant.com, fb; 652 Argyle St; Tue-Sun noon-10pm), though you might not think it from the location near the M8. Two/three courses cost £25/32 at lunch and pre/post theatre; main dishes in the evening are £19-34. **Two Fat Ladies City Centre** (118A Blythswood St) was temporarily closed at the time of research – check the website for details of reopening.

**Gamba** (☎ 0141-572 0899, 🌐 gamba.co.uk, fb; 225A West George St; Wed-Fri 5-10.30pm, Sat noon-10.30pm) is another top-class fish restaurant. Main dishes cost from £25 for the whole blackened sea bream, rising to £49 for the surf-n-turf.

### World cuisines

**Fanny Trollope's** (☎ 0141-564 6464, 🌐 fannytrollopes.co.uk, fb; 1066 Argyle St; Tue-Thur 5-9pm, Fri & Sat noon-midnight, Sun 1-8.30pm) is a popular bistro serving seasonal food imaginatively cooked. Monkfish cheeks, king prawn, spinach satay with crispy onions & coconut rice is £16.50.

**Ichiban City Centre** (☎ 0141-204 4200, 🌐 ichiban.co.uk, fb; Mon-Thur noon-9pm, Fri-Sun to 10pm) is in the heart of the city at 50 Queen St. The menu is excellent value (approx £9-10 per meal). There's a range of noodles (soba, udon or ramen) as well as tempura and sushi. Takeaway is available.

**Tiffney's Steakhouse** (☎ 0141-328 9557, 🌐 tiffneys.com, fb; 61 Otago St; Mon & Wed-Thur 4-9.30pm, Fri-Sat 4-10pm, Sun 4-9pm) serves prime dry-aged Highland beef steaks – from a 300g rib-eye (£34) to a 500g T-bone (£42). For something a little cheaper but still very good, there's **Mini Grill Glasgow** (☎ 0141-332 2732, 🌐 minigrillglasgow.co.uk; fb; 244 Bath St; Mon-Thur noon-10pm, Fri & Sat to 11.30pm, Sun to 9pm) where there's steak or venison from £22.

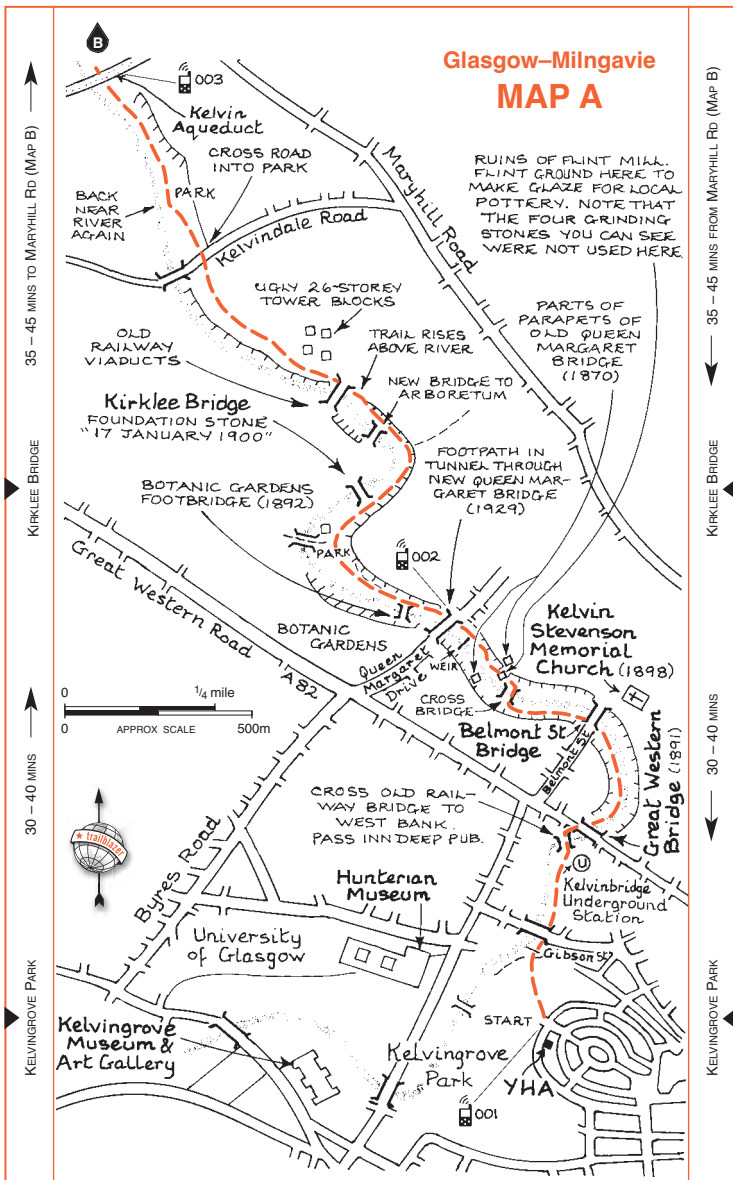
There's excellent borscht (£3.50) at **Cossachok** (☎ 0141-553 0733, 🌐 cafe cossachok.com; 10 King St; Wed-Sun noon-11pm), the Russian café-gallery near Sharmanka (see p92), and you can follow this with blinis, an Uzbek lamb pilaf or beef Stroganoff. The Moscow Blintzes (thin pancakes, £11.95) are recommended. Main dishes are £8.45-14.95 and there's a tempting range of vodkas.

For good Thai food, **Thai Siam** (☎ 0141-229 1191, 🌐 thaissiam glasgow.com, 1191 Argyle St; Tue-Sat noon-2.30pm & 5-9.30pm, Sun 5.30pm-9.30) is popular. Nearer the station end of Argyle St is another good place, **Thai Orchid** (☎ 0141-847 0315, 🌐 thai-orchid.net, fb; 346 Argyle St; Tue-Thur 4-10pm, Fri noon-2pm & 5.30-10pm, Sat 1-10pm).

For Greek food, **Halloumi** (☎ 0141-204 1616, 🌐 www.halloumiglasgow.co.uk, fb; Sun-Thur noon-10pm, Fri & Sat to 10.30pm) at 161 Hope St is a smart but relaxed mezze restaurant with dishes from £5.90 to £7.90 (they rec-

# Glasgow-Milngavie MAP A

GLASGOW TO MILNGAVIE





## Walking from Glasgow to Milngavie

Walking from Glasgow to Milngavie is highly recommended for two reasons. First, being only 10 miles (16km) in length and easy walking on the flat – it takes **3¼-4hrs** (walking time only; see box p99) – it's a good way to warm up for the longer days ahead. Second, it's a great walk in its own right: not tramping along busy streets as you might expect but following the River Kelvin through parks before emerging into fields beyond the city. Two miles before Milngavie the Kelvin is joined by another river, Allander Water, which you follow to reach the official start of the West Highland Way. The route is well sign-posted following two official footpaths, the Kelvin Walkway and the Allander Walkway.

With nowhere right on the route for food and drink you have three options:

- Take a packed lunch;
- Leave the trail on the Kelvingrove Park to Maryhill section and climb up to one of the many bridges you pass beneath to get back into the city, although this would rather detract from the serenity of the walk;
- Set off early and stop at around the 8-mile point where there are two places to eat not far off the trail. Two miles from Milngavie, the ***Tickled Trout*** pub (Map C, p97; ☎ 01360-621968, 🌐 [vintageinn.co.uk](http://vintageinn.co.uk); 878 Bocclair Rd; 🐾; Mon-Sat noon-10.30pm, Sun noon-9.30pm) has lunch options such as hot beef brisket sandwich with fries for £7.95, as well as steaks, burgers and pizza. Beside it is Dobbies Garden Centre (🌐 [dobbies.com/milngavie](http://dobbies.com/milngavie)) which has a **café** (daily 9am-5.30pm), food hall and deli.

### ROUTE OVERVIEW

The best place to start is in Kelvingrove Park: the Kelvin Walkway runs right through it. Some of the places to stay in Glasgow are within walking distance of the park; alternatively take the subway to Kelvinbridge Station.

#### **Kelvingrove Park to Maryhill** [Map A, opposite, Map B, p96]

This section is just under 3½ miles (5.5km, 1¼-1½hrs) and an easy walk all along the River Kelvin as it winds through the city. For most of the time, however, you won't be aware of the fact that you're in an urban landscape as the city is often high above the river and you're insulated from it by thick tree cover.

In **Kelvingrove Park**, follow the path along the east bank of the river and you'll go under a bridge (Gibson St) as you leave the park. You then reach the site of the former Kelvinbridge Railway Station with the current **Kelvinbridge underground station** nearby. The route now crosses to the west bank of the river for the next half-mile and a very peaceful wooded stretch of walking beside the slow-flowing river with the bustling city 50ft above you. It then returns to the east bank and the ruins of a **flint mill**.

## Using this guide

The trail guide and maps have not been divided into rigid daily stages since people walk at different speeds and have different interests. The **route summaries** describe the trail between significant places and are written as if walking the Way from south to north.

To enable you to plan your own itinerary, **practical information** is presented clearly on the trail maps. This includes walking times for both directions, waypoints (see pp195-8 for full list), all places to stay, camp and eat, as well as shops where you can buy supplies. Further service **details** are given in the text under the entry for each place. For **map profiles** see the colour pages at the end of the book. For an overview of this information see 'Itineraries' p33 and the village facilities table on p31. The cumulative **distance chart** is on p200.

### TRAIL MAPS [see key map inside cover; symbols key p202]

#### Scale and walking times

The trail maps are to a scale of 1:20,000 (1cm = 200m; 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches = one mile). Walking times are given along the side of each map and the arrow shows the direction to which the time refers. Black triangles indicate the points between which the times have been taken. **See important note below on walking times.**

The time-bars are a tool and are not there to judge your walking ability; there are so many variables that affect walking speed, from the weather conditions to how many beers you drank the previous evening. After the first hour or two of walking you will be able to see how your speed relates to the timings on the maps.

#### Up or down?

On the trail maps in this book, the walking trail is shown as a **dashed red line**. An arrow across the trail indicates the slope; two arrows

#### ❏ IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

Unless otherwise specified, **all times in this book refer only to the time spent walking**. You will need to add 20-30% to allow for rests, photography, checking the map, drinking water etc, not to mention time to simply stand and stare. When planning the day's hike count on 5-7 hours' actual walking.



show that it is steep. Note that the arrow points towards the higher part of the trail. If, for example, you are walking from A (at 80m) to B (at 200m) and the trail between the two is short and steep it would be shown thus: A — — — >> — — — B. Reversed arrow heads indicate a downward gradient.

### GPS waypoints

The numbered GPS waypoints refer to the list on pp195-8.

### Other features

Features are marked on the map when pertinent to navigation. In order to avoid cluttering the maps and making them unusable not all features have been marked each time they occur.

## ACCOMMODATION

Apart from in large towns where some selection of places has been necessary, everywhere to stay that is within easy reach of the trail is marked. Where accommodation is scarce, however, some of the places listed are a little further away. If that is the case, many B&B proprietors will offer to collect walkers from the nearest point on the trail and deliver them back again the next morning, if requested in advance. Details of each place are given in the accompanying text.

The number of **rooms** of each type is stated, ie: **S** = Single, **T** = Twin room, **D** = Double room, **Tr** = Triple room and **Qd** = Quad. Note that most of the triple/quad rooms have a double bed and one/two single beds (or bunk beds); thus for a group of three or four, two people would have to share the double bed but it also means the room can be used as a double or twin. See also p21.

**Rates** quoted are **per person (pp) based on two people sharing a room** for a one-night stay; rates are usually discounted for longer stays. Where a **single room (sgl)** is available the rate for that is quoted if different from the rate per person. The rate for **single occupancy (sgl occ)** of a double/twin may be higher, and the per person rate for three/four sharing a triple/quad may be lower. Unless specified, rates are for bed and breakfast. At some places the only option is a **room rate**; this will be the same whether one or more people use the room. Rates are for the summer high season.

Unless otherwise specified, rooms have bathrooms attached (en suite) and most of these have only a shower. In the text (♫) signifies that at least one room has a bathroom with a **bath**, or access to a bath, for those who prefer a relaxed soak at the end of the day. The text also mentions whether the premises have **wi-fi** (WI-FI), if **packed lunches** (🍱) are available and whether **dogs** (🐕 – see also pp198-9) are welcome in at least one room. It can be useful to check the **Facebook page (fb)** for small or seasonal businesses, as these tend to be kept more up-to-date with changes to opening times than regular websites.

## Milngavie to Fort William

See pp95-8 for the route guide and maps covering the walking route from **Glasgow to Milngavie**.

### MILNGAVIE **see map p102**

The West Highland Way officially begins in Milngavie (pronounced 'mullguy'). This middle-class commuter suburb on the northern edge of Glasgow has few attractions to entice the walker to linger. It's a nice enough place to stay if you arrive too late to begin your walk, though.

The small pedestrian centre has plenty of shops and if you've got time to spare **Lillie Art Gallery** (☎ 0141-956 5536;  edlc.co.uk/heritage-arts/lillie-art-gallery, Tue-Sat 10am-1pm & 2-5pm, admission free) comprises one of Scotland's best collections of home-grown 20th-century art.

### Services

Walking from the station to the start of the West Highland Way you pass through the main shopping precinct. Stock up with cash while you have the chance; several **banks** here have cash machines.



There's a **post office** (Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm, Sat 9am-5.30pm) inside Day-Today Convenience Store (Mon-Sat 5am-6pm, Sun 6am-2pm); a Greggs **bakery** (daily 7am-5pm), with plenty of pies and pasties to set you up for the day's walk, by the bridge, and a Subway **sandwich shop** (Mon-Sat 8am-7pm, Sun to 5pm) opposite.

The Boots **chemist** (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm, Sat 9am-5.30pm) is on the main square.

There are several **supermarkets**: Marks & Spencer Food Hall (Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 8am-7pm, Sun 9am-6pm) on the main square, Tesco (Mon-Sat 7am-11pm, Sun 8am-10pm) the other side of Woodburn Way and Waitrose (Mon-Fri 8am-9pm, Sat 8am-8pm, Sun 9am-8pm) by the roundabout just south of Milngavie.




### Transport

[See also pp45-9] Scotrail's **train** service between Milngavie Station and Glasgow takes 23-30 minutes with 1-2 trains an hour. For **buses**, First Glasgow's No 60A, Glasgow Citybus 15 and First Scotland East's X10/X10A services run to Glasgow. In the other direction, the X10/X10A operate to Balforn, Strathblane, Killearn & Stirling.

Two local **taxi** firms are Ambassador Taxis (☎ 0141-956 2956,  ambassador-taxis.co.uk) who have an office at 29 Douglas St, just off the main square, and Station Taxis (☎ 0141-942 4555,  station-taxis.co.uk).

### Where to stay

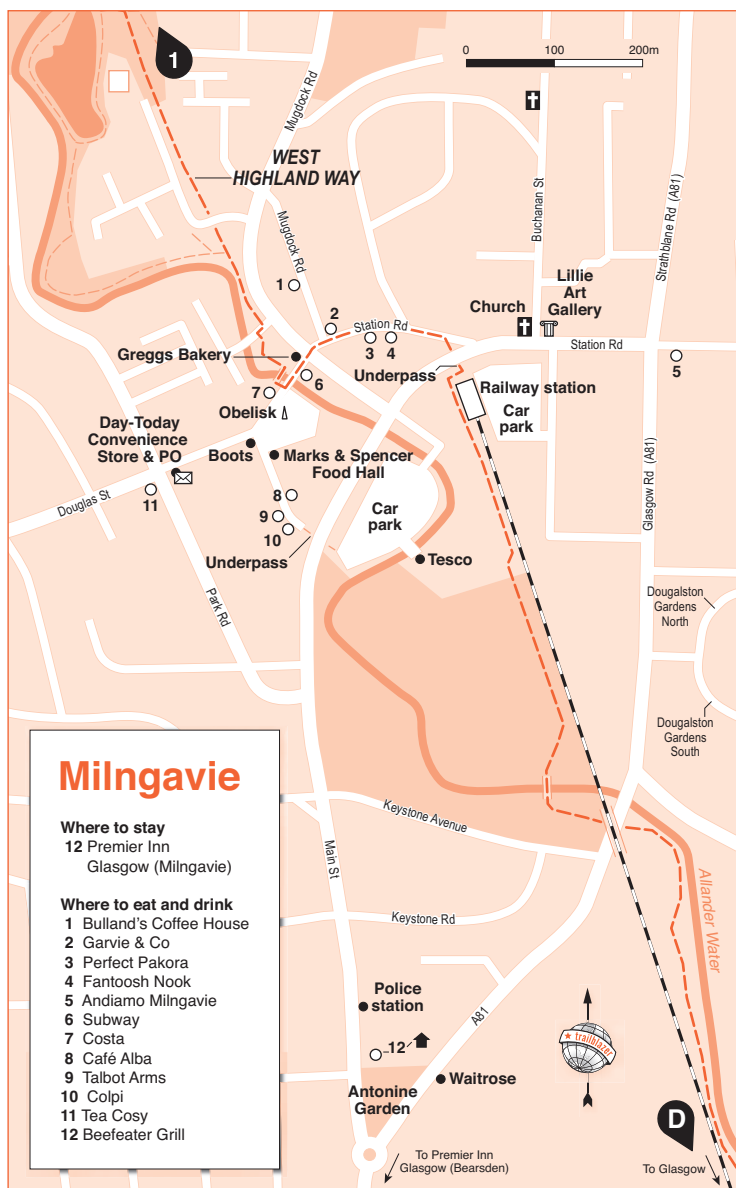
Campers will need to walk the first ten miles of the Way to Easter Drumquhassle (see p110).

There are two **Premier Inns** ( premierinn.com) here and if you book well in advance you can get a room for as little as £40 (room only; breakfast £9.50pp). However, rates vary daily and depend on demand so, unless you book very early, expect to pay around £80 for a room. **Premier Inn Glasgow (Milngavie)** (☎ 0141-611 7944; 61D; ; wi-fi) is at 103 Main St and has a **Beefeater Grill** (☎ 0141-956 7835; Mon-Fri 6.30am-10pm, Sat & Sun 7am-10pm) attached. **Premier Inn Glasgow (Bearsden)** (☎ 0141-931 9100; 61D; ; wi-fi) is at 279 Milngavie Rd.

### Where to eat and drink

For something quick and cheap, there's Indian food for takeaway available from **Perfect Pakora** (☎ 0141-955 1888; Mon-Wed noon-7pm, Thur-Sat to 8pm), the Indian delicatessen on Station Rd. If an ice





cream is all you're after you can't do better than Scots-Italian **Colpi**, (near Talbot Arms) who've been serving them since 1928.

For a coffee, excellent cakes and light lunches, **Bulland's Coffee House** (☎ 0141-956 6255, **fb**; Mon-Thur 10am-5pm, Fri-Sun from 9am) is highly recommended and it's walker and dog-friendly. **Café Alba** (☎ 0141-956 1163, ☐ cafealba.co.uk, Mon-Sat 9am-4pm, Sun 10am-4pm), 19 Main St, produces fresh, local food and has a good reputation. For those seeking calories before disappearing into the wild, the Alba's Big Breakfast is a bargain (£6.50). Not far away, **Tea Cosy** (☎ 0141-9550121, **fb**; Mon-Sat 9.30am-4.30pm), in a lovely old building is a traditional, charming place where you can pick up a filled roll and a hot drink for less than a fiver.

The **Talbot Arms** (☎ 0141-955 0981, **fb**) is a traditional pub and a great place to start the evening. Other than crisps and nuts, though, they don't do food. **Garvie &**

**Co** (☎ 0141-956 4111, ☐ garvieandco.com, **fb**; Sun-Thur 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat to midnight) is a bistro-style restaurant, bar and bakery on Station Rd. Their steaks (from £14) are good and there are burgers from £11.50.

At 46 Station Rd, fish-themed, **Fantoosh Nook** (☎ 0141-956 6060, takeaway 0778 333 2435, ☐ fantooshnook.co.uk; Thur-Sat noon-4pm & 6.30-10.30pm, takeaway Thur-Sat 4-6pm; wi-fi) offers set-course lunch menus (£16.95/19.95 for 2/3 courses) and has received numerous five-star reviews from both locals and visitors alike. The seafood comes from the local fishmonger across the street who owns the restaurant.

Popular for an evening out is the glitzy **Andiamo Milngavie** (☎ 0141-956 7346; ☐ andiamo-restaurants.com, **fb**; daily noon-10.30pm) at 1 Glasgow Rd. Good quality Italian fare is available on the extensive and reasonably-priced menu.

## MILNGAVIE TO DRYMEN

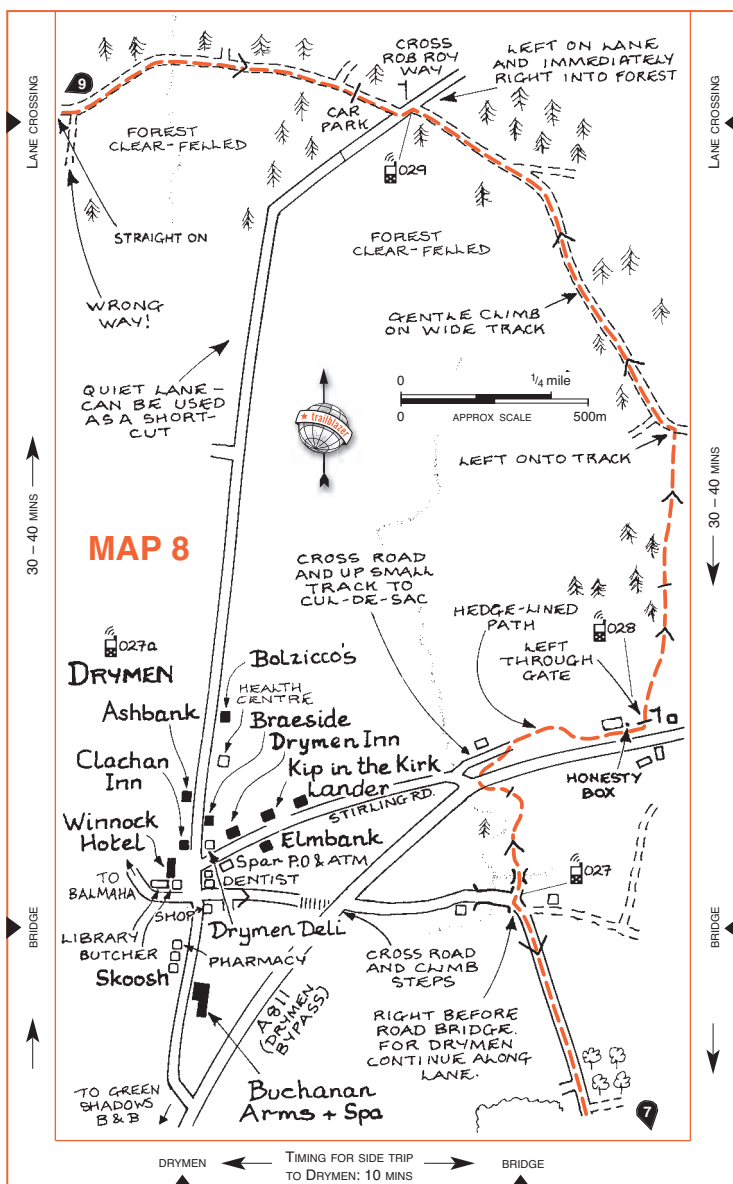
## MAPS 1-8

This beginning stage is **12 miles (19.5km)** and takes **3¼-5hrs** to walk (walking time only). It neatly splits into three distinctly different sections.

The walk starts officially at the obelisk (see Map 1). The first 6 miles (10km, 1¼-2¼hrs) provide easy and interesting walking along gentle paths through amenity parks and woodland leading you quickly out of the suburbs into genuine countryside. You pass **Craigallian Loch** (Map 2) with its surprise views of the rugged Campsie Fells and then, after crossing the B821, you arrive on an indistinct ridge overlooking Blane Valley. From here there are distant views to the Highlands tantalising you with the splendour of the hills that are to come. A superb descent across open grassland drained by tiny streams takes you round the pretty wooded knoll of **Dumgoyach** to the valley bottom. Here the Way follows the bed of a disused railway (see box p108) for 4 miles (6km, 1½-

### ☐ MUGDOCK COUNTRY PARK

A short detour can be made to see the remains of the fortified **Mugdock Castle** dating back to the 14th century and the much newer **Craigend Castle** built as a residence in 1815, now also in ruins. Follow the fingerpost signs in Mugdock Wood (Map 1). These will also lead you to the **Visitor Centre** (☎ 0141-956 6100, ☐ mugdock-country-park.org.uk; daily 9am-5pm). **Stables Tearoom** is open daily 10am-5pm and **Charlie's Coffee Bar**, Tue-Fri 10am-3pm, Sat & Sun to 5pm; there are also several shops.



pass and be properly equipped, conditions can change quickly and with little warning. You'll need one of the following maps: OS Landranger sheet 56 (1:50,000) or OS Explorer OL39 (1:25,000).

### The Ptarmigan Route

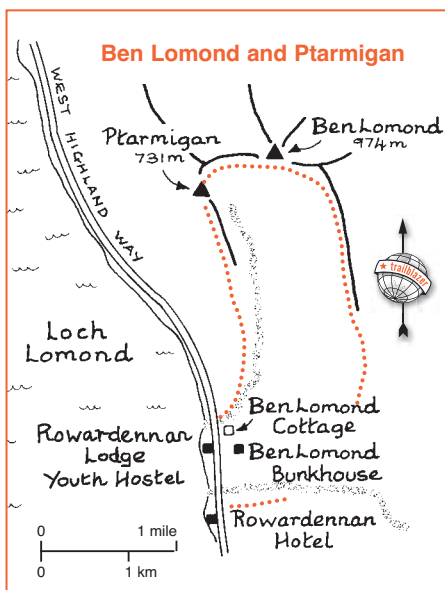
(See also Map 15) The Ptarmigan Route leaves the West Highland Way just after **Ben Lomond Cottage**. Watch for the small trail on the right immediately after crossing the concrete bridge. Take this small trail through the woods passing a **waterfall** on the right and then under the wide branches of an old oak tree. Climb the bracken-covered hillside, go through a **kissing gate** and on up steepening ground keeping a deer-fence on your right; ignore any ladder-stiles over it.

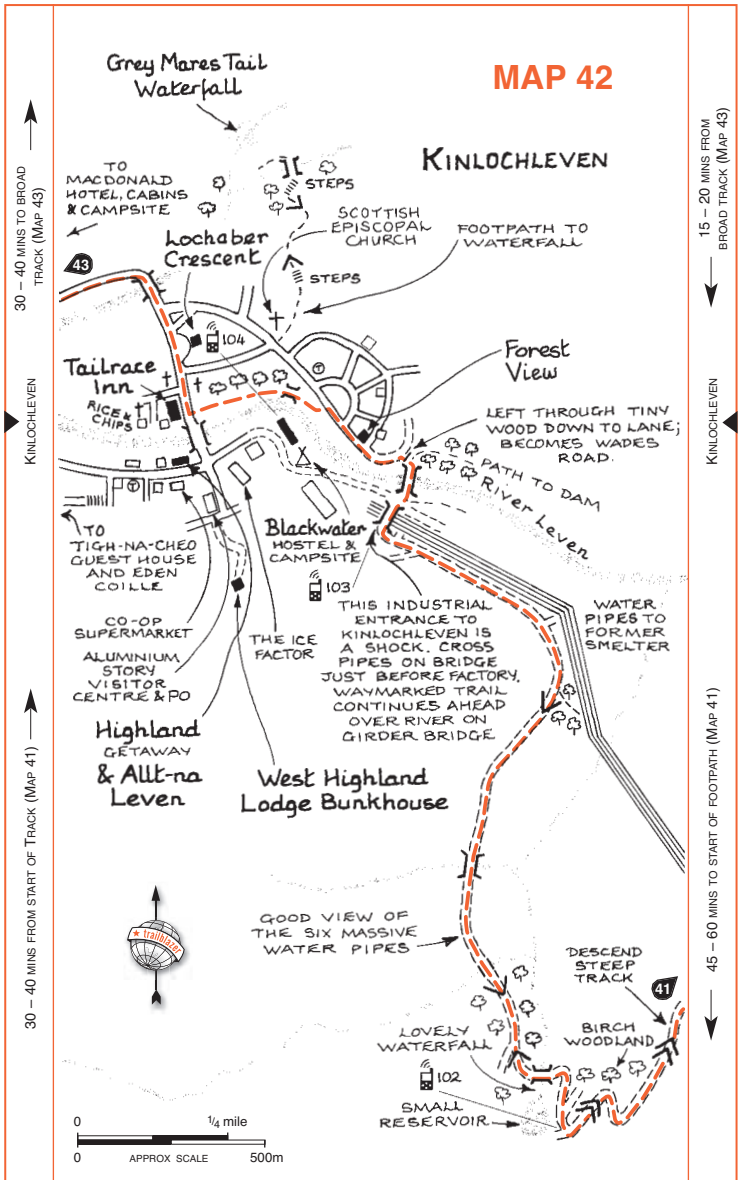
After 15-20 minutes the deer-fence and regenerated woodland veer off to your right; continue along the well-worn trail underneath some small crags with a conifer plantation far below to the left. As you round a small bend the knobbly summit of Ptarmigan appears and the path can be seen zigzagging up to it. In 10-15 minutes go through another kissing gate and continue on the trail along the west side of Ptarmigan's south-reaching ridge.

In five minutes you cross a small burn (fill up with water), then gradually climb onto the south ridge to the zigzags which lead steeply up to **Ptarmigan** (731m/2398ft); 20 minutes. It's then gentle walking round and over rocky hummocks past some small lochans up to the highest hummock marked with a cairn (751m/2463ft); 15 minutes. Descend to the peat-covered **Bealach Buidhe**, crossed on some large stepping stones, and begin the ascent of Ben Lomond's north-west ridge on a good path. Though steep, the path is easy to follow and you'll reach the **summit** in 20-25 minutes. Allowing for short stops you should get to the summit in 2½ to 3 hours from the start.

The wide, easily angled **tourist route** makes a pleasant and quick descent and you can appreciate that it would be a sluggish, uninspiring way up. Fifty minutes to one hour after leaving the summit you pass through a **kissing gate**, descend steeply momentarily, before levelling across the cattle-grazed hillside.

Fifteen minutes later cross the small bridge over the **Ardess Burn** into the coniferous forest. Five minutes further on you descend a rocky step (slippery in the wet) and then continue down some well-made stone steps, over a small





and tatties (£9.95) for dinner.

Nearby, the former chippy has become a Chinese takeaway called **Rice & Chips** (☎ 01855-831349, **fb**; Tue-Sun 4-9pm, also Thur-Sat noon-2pm).

Food is available all day inside The Ice Factor: in the daytime from the **Ice Factor Café** (daily 9am-5pm; eat in or takeaway) including hot breakfast rolls from £3.95; and in the evenings their **Chillers Bar & Grill** (Sun-Thur 5-11pm, Fri & Sat 5pm-1am) has a range of burgers from £7.95 amongst other mains, is licensed and has occasional live music nights.

At the **MacDonald Hotel & Cabins** (see Where to stay) there's a good restaurant and the **Bothy Bar**. It has wonderful views down the length of Loch Leven and very good pub grub (eg The Highlander

home-made burger with haggis and black pudding for £11.50, or cullen skink and a roll for £6-7) is served daily 8am-9pm. Campers' breakfasts (from 7am; booking recommended; £12.50, or £15 for non-residents and those not camping) are served in the restaurant.

Four miles from Kinlochleven, by the loch is one of the best fish restaurants in this part of Scotland: **Lochleven Seafood Café** (off Map 43; ☎ 01855-821048; 📧 lochlevenseafoodcafe.co.uk; Wed-Mon 10am-8.45pm). The local mussels cooked in cider (£7.25/14 for 500g/kilo) are superb and there are are Scottish lobsters (£19.50/39.50, half/full) and whole brown crabs (£12.95) to consider also. You'd have to get a taxi to get here (about £12) but it's well worth it.

## KINLOCHLEVEN TO FORT WILLIAM

## MAPS 42-49

The final tough but rewarding **15 miles (24km, 4¾-6½hrs)** crosses a beautiful high pass and then undulates through repetitive forests to the end of the West Highland Way, now right in the centre of Fort William.

It's a long sustained 250m (820ft) climb out of Kinlochleven on a steep winding trail through birch trees. At the top you continue on a wide track, the old military road, which traverses the mountain side with glorious views over **Loch Leven** to the mountains of Glencoe. From here the trail rises gently through a wide U-shaped valley to a broad pass, the **Lairigmor** (Map 45) at 330m/1082ft. This can be exposed in bad weather. The Way descends and then climbs again through a series of dense conifer plantations with occasional views of **Ben Nevis**, Britain's highest mountain. A final descent on forest tracks takes you into **Glen Nevis** from where it's only a short walk along the road (or one of the better options listed on pp186-7) to **Fort William**.

### GLEN NEVIS

#### Map 48 p181 & Map 49 p187

Pastoral Glen Nevis is surrounded by some of the finest mountains in Britain and as a result has an excited buzz of activity year round. For those who'd prefer to end their walk in the open countryside rather than on the streets of Fort William there's a B&B, youth hostel, a couple of bunkhouses and a large campsite, the only one in the area – all perfectly situated for a Ben Nevis ascent.

### Services

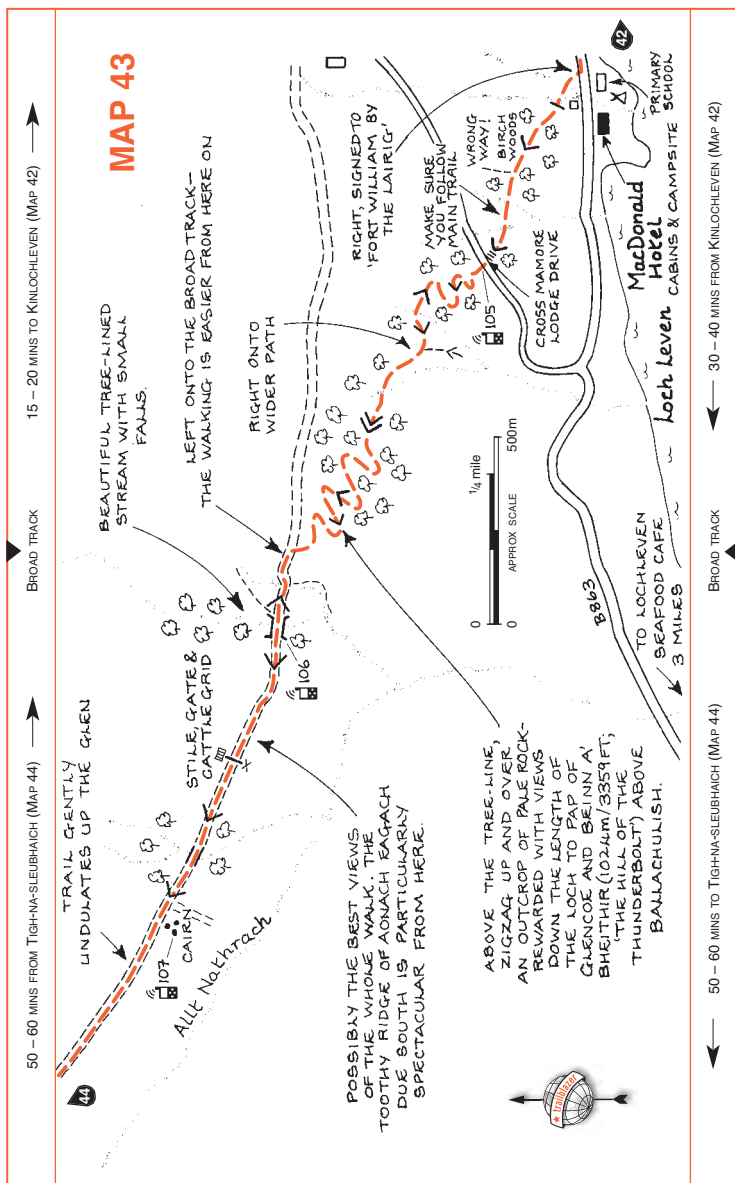
The Ben Nevis **visitor centre** (Map 49;

☎ 01349-781401, 📧 www.hIGHLIFEhighland.com/bennevis/visitor-centre; daily 8.30am to 4pm) is well worth a look in if only to get an accurate **weather forecast**. There is an excellent exhibition on the natural history and environment of the area, a bookshop and they stock outdoor gear; the staff also have a wealth of local knowledge.

Shiel's N41 **bus** service runs up and down the glen and can be flagged down if it is safe to stop. The N42 also calls here in the summer months; see p46 for details.

(cont'd on p179)





## FORT WILLIAM

Spoilt by thoughtless modern development and a busy ring road, few would make a special journey to visit Fort William were it not for the magnificent natural treasures that surround it. Its stunning location near the foot of the highest mountain in Britain, overlooking Loch Linnhe and at the western end of the Great Glen, manages to overpower the concrete and industrial sprawl. The original c1650 fort was demolished in the 19th century to make way for the railway, heralding the start of mass tourism which still plays an important role in the local economy.

The pedestrian-only High St now panders to the eclectic taste of the Highland tourist, from tartan and tweeds to the latest petroleum-derived high fashion for the mountains and plenty of West Highland Way memorabilia. The official route of the West Highland Way leads you past all this – rather like having to walk through the gift shop as you leave any tourist attraction today. There are, however, pubs and restaurants in which to celebrate the completion of your walk, countless B&Bs for resting your weary legs and convenient transport connections to the rest of Scotland for the journey home.

### Services

The **tourist information**, or iCentre (☎ 01397-701801, 📧 [visitscotland.com](mailto:visitscotland.com); daily 9am-5pm) is at 15 High St.

The excellent **Highland Bookshop** (☎ 01397-705931; 📧 [highlandbookshop.com](mailto:highlandbookshop.com); Mon-Sat 9.30am-5pm, Sun 11am-4pm) at 60 High St, has a good outdoors section and a second-hand department upstairs.

If you need a **supermarket**, at the north end of the High St there's a Tesco Metro (Mon-Sat 7am-9pm, Sun 10am-5pm) and over by the station is Morrison's (Mon-Sat 7am-10pm, Sun 8am-8pm).

There are several **banks** along the High St, three **chemists**, a **post office** (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, Sat to 2pm) in WH Smith's and a **library** (Mon & Thur 10am-8pm, Tue & Fri 10am-6pm, Wed & Sat 10am-1pm) – a good place to while away the hours or surf the **internet** on a miserable

day. On Belford Rd there's a **hospital** (☎ 01397-702481) with a casualty department. If your dog needs some attention after all its exertions, the only **vet surgery** for many miles around is Crown Vets (☎ 01397-702727, 📧 [www.crownvetsfortwilliam.co.uk](mailto:www.crownvetsfortwilliam.co.uk); Glen Nevis Pl; Mon-Fri 8.30am-6pm, Sat 9am-noon).

Another popular activity in the rain is gear shopping. Fort William has several large **outdoor equipment shops** all open daily, including Mountain Warehouse, Cotswold, and Regatta on the High St, Nevisport which also has a café and bar (see Where to eat) and Ellis Brigham Mountain Sports near the station. Up-to-date **weather forecasts** are posted at many of them.

Campers, or anyone feeling sweaty after their exertions, can take a shower (£2) at the **Nevis Centre** (☎ 01397-700707; 📧 [neviscentre.co.uk](mailto:neviscentre.co.uk); daily 9am-10pm), behind Morrison's. It also houses a concert hall and a 10-pin bowling alley and plays host to a number of annual events, including Fort William Mountain Festival (see p14) in February. There are also showers at the train station.

### Transport

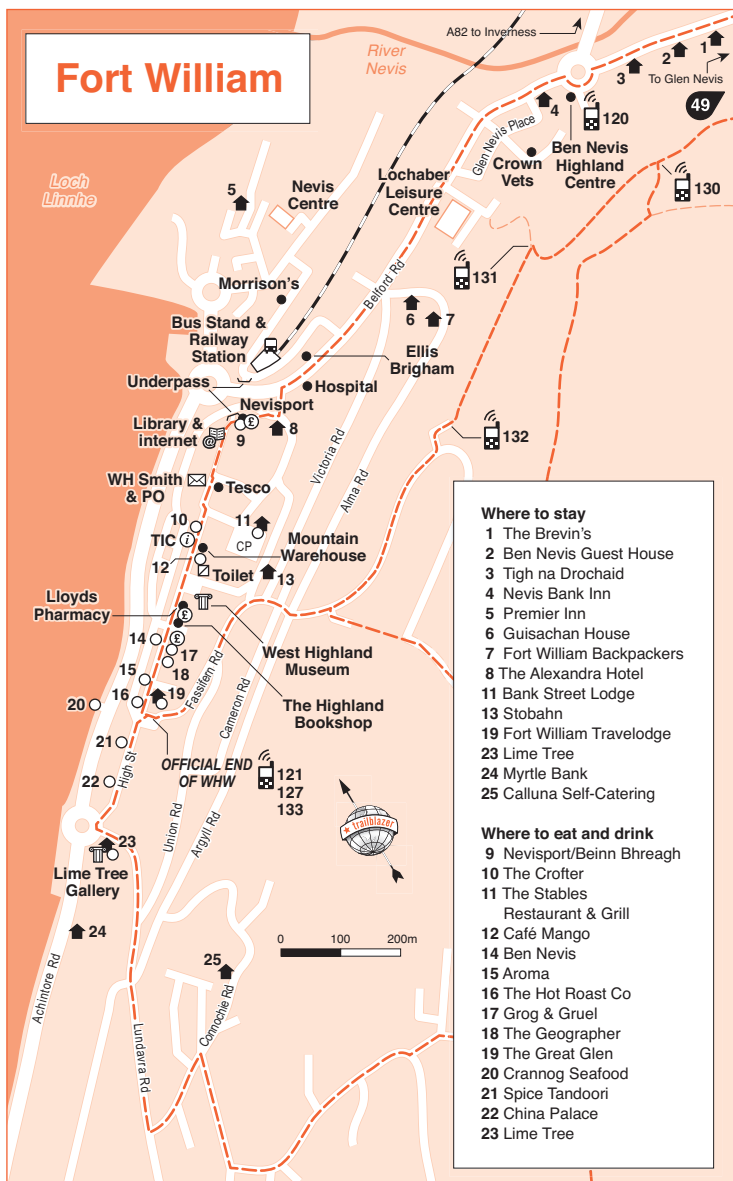
[See also pp45-9] The bus station and railway station are at the northern end of town. Scottish Citylink **coaches** (914, 915, 916 & 919) & West Coast Motors (918) operate to and from Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, the Isle of Skye, Oban & Mallaig.

Scotrail **trains** (West Highland Line; Glasgow-Mallaig) also call here. Note that if you're going back to Glasgow, buses are considerably quicker than trains – but don't allow dogs, of course.

Shiel Buses (N41, N42 & N44) go to Glen Nevis, Kinlochleven & Glencoe.

For a **taxi** there's Greyhound (☎ 01397-705050, 📧 [greyhound-taxis.co.uk](mailto:greyhound-taxis.co.uk)) or Alistair's (☎ 01397 252525, 📧 [alistairs.taxis.co.uk](mailto:alistairs.taxis.co.uk)). Alternatively you could **hire a car** for the day from Easydrive (☎ 01397-701616, 📧 [easydrivescotland.co.uk](mailto:easydrivescotland.co.uk)).

# Fort William



FI; £32.50-47.50pp, sgl/sgl occ £35-40/50-55) with comfortable rooms.

Alma Rd is also a good area for accommodation as it's quiet, centrally located and has views overlooking the town, including smart **Guisachan House** (☎ 01397-703797, ☒ guisachanguuesthouse.co.uk; 2S/5T/6D/2Tr/1Qd; ♀; WI-FI; ♀; £46-49pp, sing occ £82-88).

Below here on Bank St is **Bank Street Lodge** ☎ 01397-700070, ☒ bankstreet-lodge.co.uk; WI-FI; 1S/8D/5T/3Tr/3Qd/1 x 5-bed/1 x 6-bed) with different-sized rooms, all en suite save for two twins with private facilities. Twins/doubles are priced at £54.50pp, the single is £60 (room only).

**Guest houses and hotels** Right beside the official end of the West Highland Way is the **Fort William Travelodge** (Fort William ☎ 0871 984 6419, booking line ☎ 0871 984 8484; ☒ travelodge.co.uk; 30D/32Qd; ♀; WI-FI; 30 mins free, £3/24hrs; ♂ £20 per stay) on the High St. The other large hotel chain, Premier Inn, has a hotel near the railway station: **Premier Inn** (☎ 0333-777 7268; ☒ premierinn.co.uk; 42D/43Tr/18Qd, all en suite; ♀; WI-FI). For both chains, room rates vary hugely depending on demand; if you book early you may get a room for £25 but could pay anything up to £130. The beds are very comfortable in these places.

Further back along the Way, just as it enters the town but by the noisy A82, there's **Nevis Bank Inn** (☎ 01397-705721, ☒ nevisbankinn.co.uk, Belford Rd; 5S/5D/11D or T/4Qd; ♀; WI-FI; ♂; from £59.50pp, sgl £119).

**The Alexandra Hotel** (☎ 01397-702241, ☒ strathmorehotels-thealexandra.com; 93 rms; contact hotel for rates; ♀; WI-FI) is a large old hotel in the centre. They sometimes have special packages, so it's always worth contacting them.

If you're unlucky and everywhere is booked, try looking on Achintore Rd, the A82 south to Glencoe and Glasgow. Here are wall-to-wall guest houses overlooking Loch Linnhe, but it's an unnecessarily long

way to walk if you don't have to. At the start of Achintore Rd, by the roundabout, is **Lime Tree** (☎ 01397-701806, ☒ limetree fortwilliam.co.uk; 2T/7D; ♀; WI-FI; ♂; £57.50-72.50pp, sgl occ full room rate) which has luxurious rooms, a restaurant (see Where to eat) and an art gallery (see opposite). They have a map room (with historical maps) and a mountaineering library but perhaps of more practical use to walkers is their drying room.

A cheaper option is **Myrtle Bank** (☎ 01397-702034, ☒ myrtlebankguesthouse.co.uk; 11D/4T; WI-FI; £47.50pp, sgl occ £75; Mar-Nov).

### Where to eat and drink

All along the High St there is a wide selection of **take-away places** including Indian, fish and chips, and burger bars as well as several **pubs**. There are some **coffee shops**, too, including the big names, or try busy independent **Aroma** (☎ 01397-700182; ♂) on the High St, open daily 10am-9pm.

There are numerous pubs to choose from. **Grog & Gruel** (☎ 01397-705078, ☒ grogandgruel.co.uk), halfway along the High St, is a cosy traditional pub with a good range of local beers. Food is served in the pub (Mon-Sat noon-9pm) and in the restaurant (evenings 5-9pm). Dishes include their popular Grog (hot) dog from £9.95, quesadillas from £12.25 and venison burgers (£13.75). Almost opposite is the **Ben Nevis** (☎ 01397-702295, ☒ bennevis barfortwilliam.com; food daily noon-9.30pm), with good pub grub such as steak and ale pie for £11.99. Also on the High St, **The Crofter** (☒ crofterbar.co.uk) is a popular, excellent-value pub with Sky Sports and special offers such as curry and a pint for £6.99.

Open long hours and conveniently located below the Travelodge is a branch of the family-friendly pub chain, Wetherspoon – **The Great Glen**. They serve food here daily from 8am until 10pm.

**Beinn Bhreagh** (♂; Mon-Sat 9am-4pm, Sun 10am-3pm), the café upstairs at **Nevisport**, is popular, with good value

## APPENDIX B – WAYPOINTS

Each GPS waypoint below was taken on the route at the reference number marked on the map as below. This list of GPS waypoints is also available to download from the Trailblazer website – [trailblazer-guides.com](http://trailblazer-guides.com).

Map	No	GPS Waypoint	Description
A	001	N55° 52.203' W04° 16.866'	Entrance to Kelvingrove Park
A	002	N55° 52.767' W04° 17.119'	Queen Margaret Bridge
A	003	N55° 53.544' W04° 18.047'	Kelvin Aqueduct
B	004	N55° 53.924' W04° 18.359'	Bridge across River Kelvin
B	005	N55° 54.540' W04° 17.877'	Join River Kelvin
C	006	N55° 55.099' W04° 16.464'	Bridge across River Kelvin
C	007	N55° 55.670' W04° 16.890'	Path goes under A879 Balmore Rd
D	008	N55° 55.657' W04° 17.122'	Bridge over Allander Water to north
D	009	N55° 56.474' W04° 18.849'	Milngavie Railway station
1	010	N55° 56.503' W04° 19.069'	Official start of WHW
1	011	N55° 57.125' W04° 19.252'	Path to car park and Milngavie
1	012	N55° 57.630' W04° 20.105'	Second path off east to Mugdock CP
2	013	N55° 57.825' W04° 20.557'	Gate onto road
2	014	N55° 58.381' W04° 20.989'	Boat shed
2	015	N55° 59.090' W04° 20.817'	Path over stream
3	016	N55° 59.245' W04° 21.180'	Turn right off road; go through gate
3	017	N55° 59.719' W04° 21.425'	Stream
4	018	N56° 00.207' W04° 21.483'	Left off path onto route of old Blane Valley Railway; through gate
4	019	N56° 01.239' W04° 22.256'	Gate before Beech Tree Inn
4	020	N56° 01.375' W04° 22.330'	Double gates
5	021	N56° 01.711' W04° 22.806'	Single gate
5	021a	N56° 02.722' W04° 22.315'	Junction in Killearn
5	022	N56° 01.740' W04° 22.853'	Oakwood Garden Centre & Café
6	023	N56° 02.767' W04° 23.974'	Path crosses A81
6	024	N56° 03.118' W04° 24.245'	Gartness
7	025	N56° 02.966' W04° 25.477'	Bridge across stream
7	026	N56° 03.217' W04° 25.945'	Easter Drumquhassle Farm
8	027	N56° 03.922' W04° 26.341'	Turn off road
8	027a	N56° 03.951' W04° 27.155'	Drymen Green
8	028	N56° 04.162' W04° 25.973'	Left through gate; turn away from road
8	029	N56° 05.056' W04° 26.619'	Join road
9	030	N56° 05.369' W04° 28.973'	Gate
10	031	N56° 05.736' W04° 29.477'	Through gate onto open moorland
10	032	N56° 05.970' W04° 30.132'	Bridge
10	033	N56° 05.825' W04° 31.492'	Top of Conic Hill
11	034	N56° 05.406' W04° 31.989'	Kissing gate
11	035	N56° 05.071' W04° 32.650'	Steps off road
11	036	N56° 05.765' W04° 33.352'	Bridge over stream
12	037	N56° 06.003' W04° 33.610'	Path off road
12	038	N56° 06.342' W04° 34.135'	Path crosses track
12	039	N56° 06.634' W04° 34.678'	Path meets road
13	040	N56° 06.766' W04° 34.860'	Bridge over stream
13	041	N56° 07.119' W04° 35.355'	Bridge over Tigh an Laoigh



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## APPENDIX C – TAKING A DOG

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### TAKING A DOG ALONG THE WAY

Many are the rewards that await those prepared to make the extra effort required to bring their best friend along the trail. You shouldn't underestimate the amount of work involved, though. Indeed, just about every decision you make will be influenced by the fact that you've got a dog: how you plan to travel to the start of the trail, where you're going to stay, how far you're going to walk each day, where you're going to rest and where you're going to eat in the evening etc.

If you're also sure your dog can cope with (and, just as importantly, will enjoy) walking 10 miles or more a day for several days in a row, you need to start preparing accordingly. Extra thought also needs to go into your itinerary. The best starting point is to study the village and town facilities table on p31 (and the advice on pp27-8), and plan where to stop and where to buy food.

#### Looking after your dog

To begin with, you need to make sure that your own dog is fully **inoculated** against the usual doggy illnesses, and also up to date with regard to **worm pills** (eg Drontal) and **flea preventatives** such as Frontline – they are, after all, following in the pawprints of many a dog before them, some of whom may well have left fleas or other parasites on the trail that now lie in wait for their next meal to arrive. **Pet insurance** is also a very good idea; if you've already got insurance, do check that it will cover a trip such as this.

On the subject of looking after your dog's health, perhaps the most important implement you can take with you is the **plastic tick remover**, available from vets for a couple of quid. These removers, while fiddly, help you to remove the tick safely (ie without leaving its head behind buried under the dog's skin).

Being in unfamiliar territory also makes it more likely that you and your dog could become separated. For this reason, make sure your dog has a **tag with your contact details on it** (a mobile phone number would be best if you are carrying one with you); you could also consider having it **microchipped** for further security.

#### When to keep your dog on a lead

- **On mountain tops** It's a sad fact that, every year, a few dogs lose their lives falling over the edge of steep slopes.

- **When crossing farmland**, particularly in the lambing season (around May) when your dog can scare the sheep, causing them to lose their young. Farmers are allowed by law to shoot at and kill any dogs that they consider are worrying their sheep. During lambing, most farmers would prefer it if you didn't bring your dog at all. The exception is if your dog is being attacked by cows. A couple of years ago there were three deaths in the UK caused by walkers being trampled as they tried to rescue their dogs from the attentions of cattle. The advice in this instance is to let go of the lead, head speedily to a position of safety (usually the other side of the field gate or stile) and call your dog to you.

- **Around ground-nesting birds** It's important to keep your dog under control when crossing an area where certain species of birds nest on the ground. Most dogs love foraging around in the woods but make sure you have permission to do so; some woods are used as 'nurseries' for game birds and dogs are only allowed through them if they are on a lead.

(including Glasgow to Milngavie walking route)

miles/kilometres (approx)

Invernan	Crianlarich	Strathfillan	Tyndrum	Bridge of Orchy	Inveroran	Kingshouse	Kinlochleven	Glen Nevis
6.5								
10								
10	3.5							
16	6							
12.5	6	2.5						
20	10	4						
19.5	13	9.5	7					
31	21	15	11					
22.5	16	12.5	10	3				
36	26	20	16	5				
32.5	26	22.5	20	13	10			
52	42	36	32	21	16			
41	34.5	31	28.5	21.5	18.5	8.5		
66	56	50	46	35	30	14		
53.5	47	43.5	41	34	31	21	12.5	
86	76	70	66	55	50	34	20	
56.5	50	46.5	44	37	34	24	15.5	3
91	81	75	71	60	55	39	25	5

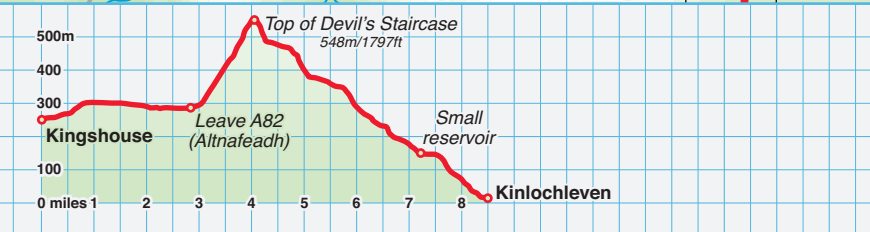
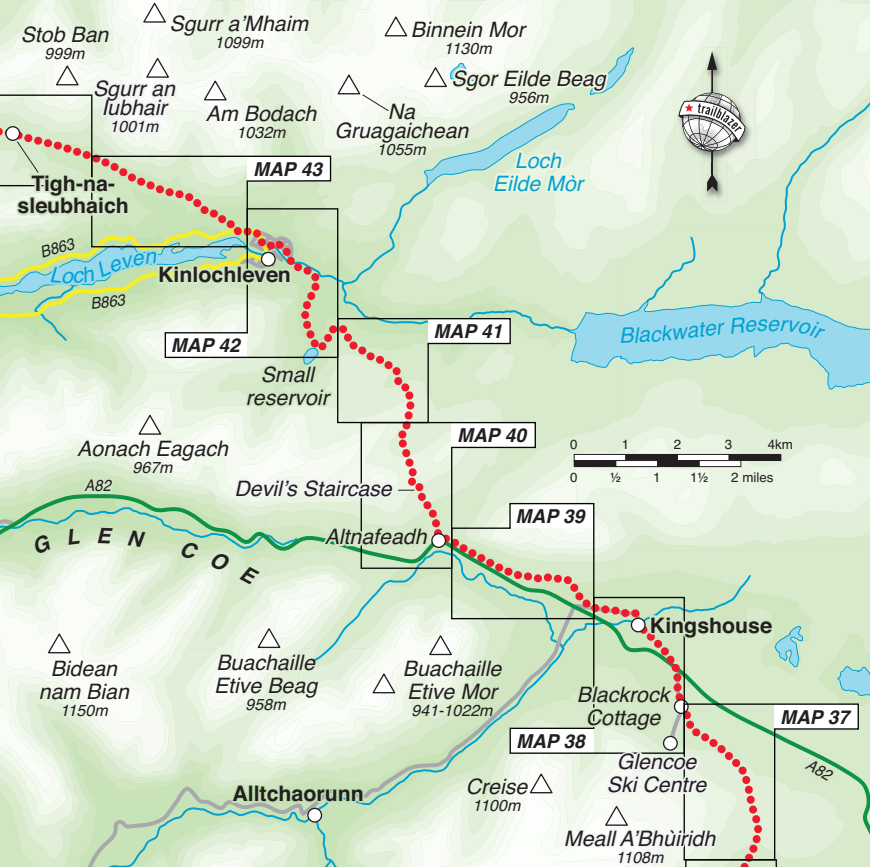
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## INDEX

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Page references in **bold** type refer to maps

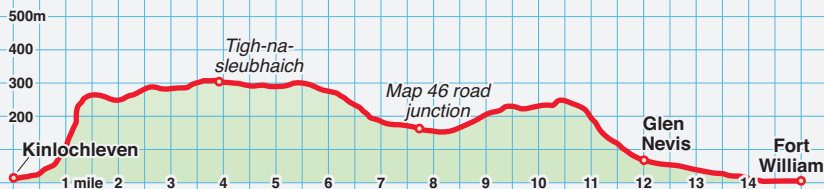
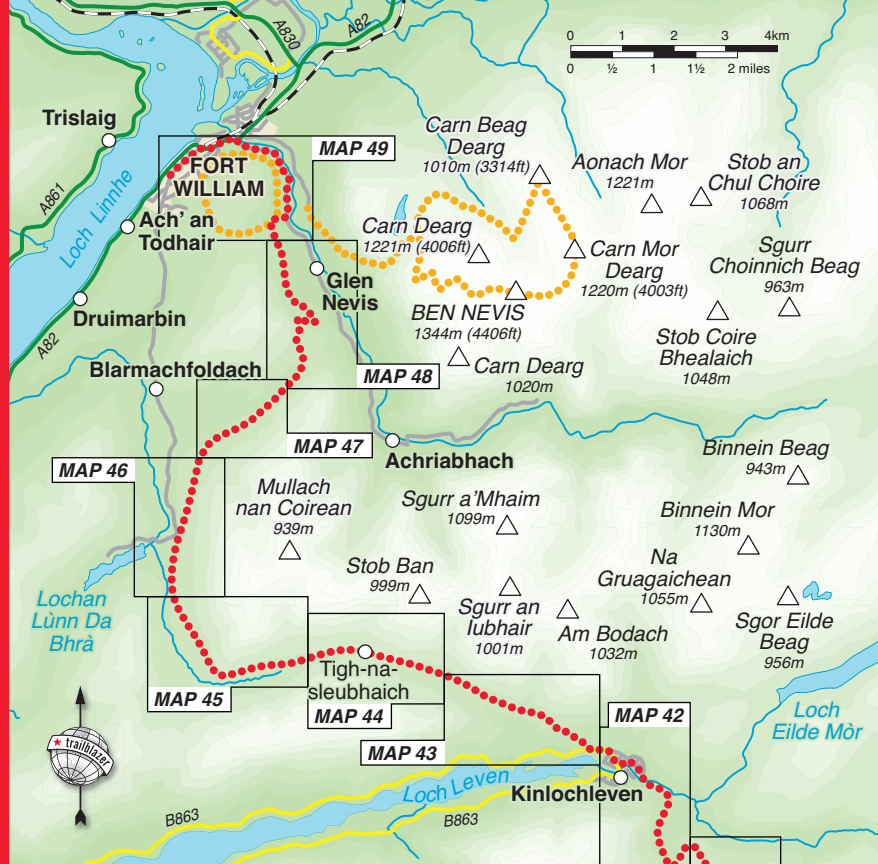
- access 53-5
- accidents 61
- accommodation 18-22, 26, 100
  - see also place name*
- Achtrochtan, Loch **163**, 165, **167**
- adders 60, 74-5
- Airbnb 22
- airports/airlines 43, 45, 79-80
- Allander Walkway 32, 95
- Allander Water 97, **97**, **98**
- Allt Coire Gabhail 165, **167**
- Allt a'Mhuilinn 185
- Altnafeadh 166
- aluminium smelting 170, 171
- annual events 14
- Ardleish 134, **136**
- Ardlui 134, **136**
- Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland 65
- ATMs *see* cash machines
- Backpackers Club 40
- baggage carriers 26
- Balmaha 116, **119**, 120
- Balmuildy Bridge 97, **97**
- bank holidays 28
- banks 28, 31
- bed and breakfasts 20-1, 30, 31, 33
- beer 24-5
- Beinn Dorain 154, **154**
- Beinn an Dothaidh 154, **154**
- Ben Lomond 121, 126-8, **127**
- Ben Lomond National Memorial Park 128
- Ben Nevis 180, 182, **183**, 184-5
- Ben Race 14
- bibliography 41-2
- birds 75-8
  - books about 42
- Black Mount 155, 156, **157**
- Blackwater Reservoir 171
- Blane Valley Railway 108
- Blanefield 106, **107**
- blisters 58
- booking accommodation 18, 26
- boots 36
- bothies 19, 128, **130**, 134, **136**
- Bothy Code 19
- Bridge of Orchy 149, 152, **153**
- British Mountaineering Council 40
- British Summer Time (BST) 29
- Buachaille Etive Beag 166, **167**
- Buachaille Etive Mor 166, **167**
- budgeting 30
- bunkhouses 19-20, 30, 31, 33
- bus services 43, 46-7, **48-9**
  - see also place name*
- business hours 28
- butterflies 75
- Butterfly Conservation Scotland 64
- Caledonian pine forest 68, 69-70, 71
- campaigning organisations 64-5
- camping 18-19, 30, 33, 126
  - see also wild camping*
- camping cabins 20
- camping gear 39
- camping supplies 24
- campsites 31
  - see also place name*
- Carn Dearg Meadhonach 185
- Carn Mor Dearg 182, **183**, 184, 185
- Carn Mor Dearg Arete route 182, **183**, 185
- cash machines 25
- Cashel 121-3, **122**, **123**
- Cashel Forest 71, 122, **122**
- cheques 25
- Clachlet Ridge 156
- clothing 37-8, 56
- coach services 43, 44
- Coe, Glen 155, 162, **163**, 164-6, **167**
- Coire Bà 156
- compasses 38, 56
- Conic Hill 14, 28, 116, **118**
- conservation organisations 64-5
- Counsel Stone 185
- Cow Hill circuit **186-7**, 187
- Craigallian Loch 103, **105**
- Craigallian Fire Memorial **105**, 106
- Craigend Castle 103
- credit cards 25, 41
- Crianlarich 139, **141**, 142
- Croftamie 110
- currency 28



## Maps 38-42 Kingshouse to Kinlochleven

8½ miles/14km – 2½-3¼hrs

**NOTE:** Add 20-30% to these times  
to allow for stops



2 Fort William  
Kinlochleven

0 Milngavie

## Maps 42-49 Kinlochleven to Fort William

15 miles/24km – 4¾-6½hrs

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times  
to allow for stops



**West Highland Way** Map A – p94 Kelvingrove Park  
Map B – p96 Maryhill Park  
Map C – p97 Balmuldy Bridge



- Map A – p94 Kelvingrove Park  
Map B – p96 Maryhill Park  
Map C – p97 Balmuldy Bridge  
Map D – p98 Milngavie
- Map 1 – p104 Milngavie  
Map 2 – p105 Craigallian Loch  
Map 3 – p107 Blanefield  
Map 4 – p109 Dumgoyne  
Map 5 – p111 Killearn  
Map 6 – p112 Gartness  
Map 7 – p113 Easter Drumquhassle Farm  
Map 8 – p115 Drymen  
Map 9 – p117 Milton of Buchanan  
Map 10 – p118 Conic Hill  
Map 11 – p119 Balmaha  
Map 12 – p122 Loch Lomond  
Map 13 – p123 Cashel  
Map 14 – p124 University Field Station  
Map 15 – p125 Rowardennan  
Map 16 – p129 Ptarmigan Lodge  
Map 17 – p130 Rowchoish Bothy  
Map 18 – p131 Cailness  
Map 19 – p133 Inversnaid  
Map 20 – p135 Island I Vow  
Map 21 – p136 Ardlui  
Map 22 – p137 Inveranran  
Map 23 – p138 Falls of Falloch  
Map 24 – p139 Derrydaroch  
Map 25 – p140 River Falloch/A82  
Map 26 – p141 Crianlarich  
Map 27 – p144 Railway arches  
Map 28 – p145 Strathfillan  
Map 29 – p147 Tyndrum  
Map 30 – p150 Auch  
Map 31 – p151 Rail crossing  
Map 32 – p153 Bridge of Orchy  
Map 33 – p155 320m viewpoint  
Map 34 – p157 Inveroran  
Map 35 – p158 Allt Doire nan Each  
Map 36 – p159 B à Bridge  
Map 37 – p160 Top of climb, 445m  
Map 38 – p161 Kingshouse  
Map 39 – p168 River Coupull  
Map 40 – p169 The Devil's Staircase  
Map 41 – p171 Allt a'Choirre Odhair-mhoir  
Map 42 – p173 Knochleiven  
Map 43 – p175 Loch Leven  
Map 44 – p176 Tigh-na-sleubhaich  
Map 45 – p177 Lairgorm  
Map 46 – p178 Allt na Lairige Moire  
Map 47 – p179 Allt Coire a Mhuilinn  
Map 48 – p181 Glen Nevis  
Map 49 – p186-7 Fort William





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