



JIM MANTHORPE updated this ninth edition. He's a wildlife cameraman and writer and has written and updated dozens of Trailblazer guidebooks over the years, from Ladakh to Canada. He is the author of *South Downs Way*, *Great Glen Way*, *Pembrokeshire Coast Path*, *Tour du Mont Blanc*, *Scottish Highlands Hillwalking* and *Iceland Hiking*. Based in the Scottish Highlands, he has a particular love for wild places and wildlife and has filmed eagles, otters and orcas for various BBC shows including *Springwatch*. He posts regularly on YouTube: @Jim_Manthorpe-outdoors.



CHARLIE LORAM has never found being indoors easy. After he'd broken in his boots on the fells and crags of Snowdonia the Scottish Highlands, his nomadic tendencies took him to the Himalaya. For five years he wandered the high trails as guidebook writer (author of *Trekking in Ladakh*, wilderness guide and modern-day pilgrim. Insights gained there helped create Trailblazer's British walking guide series which he worked on as author and first series editor. At home on Dartmoor he continues his passion for walking and wilderness, guiding people to a

deeper connection with nature and themselves. For more see www.theoldway.info or follow him on @the_old_way_ and also @charlie_loram.

West Highland Way

First edition: 2003; this ninth edition 2026

Publisher: Trailblazer Publications (✉ trailblazer-guides.com)
The Old Manse, Tower Rd, Hindhead, Surrey, GU26 6SU, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-912716-51-7

© **Trailblazer** 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, 2026: Text and maps

Editing and proof-reading: Bryn Thomas and Jane Thomas

Cartography: Jane Thomas and Nick Hill **Index:** Jane Thomas

Illustrations: © Nick Hill (pp75-7) **Photos:** © Bryn Thomas unless otherwise indicated
EU & Germany GPSR Pflichtinformationen: ✉ orders@geocenter.de

All rights reserved. Other than brief extracts for the purposes of review no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written consent of the publisher and copyright owner.

The maps in this guide were prepared from out-of-Crown-copyright Ordnance Survey maps amended and updated by Trailblazer.

Acknowledgements

From Jim As always I would like to thank Claire, Oren and Zara for tolerating my absences when away hiking and writing. Thank you, too, to the friendly faces along the way who kept my spirits high and offered suggestions for the book. Particular thanks to the good folk at the Ben Lomond Bunkhouse who made me feel so welcome when I was the only one staying.

Thanks also to all those readers who've written in with comments and suggestions, in particular, Geert Ariaans, Sherry B, David Beamish, Heather Bell, Carly Bishop, Les Bunce, Roger Coe, Mark Faust, Matt Gardiner, Mary Hartman, Tony Hufton, Zsuzsa Koger, Peter Marshall, Moira and Michael Noble, Frank Norris, Simon Quinn, Lisa Radel, Paul Scott, Stephen Thomas, Bill Thornton, Dave & Angie Walsh and Barbara Winzberg. Finally thank you to everyone at Trailblazer, truly the loveliest people you could wish to work with: Jane Thomas and Nick Hill for the cartography, Bryn Thomas and Jane Thomas for the editing and proofreading and, of course, Bryn Thomas who continues to allow me out in the wild to write and update these wonderful guides.

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). 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 (pp13-16) 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

PHOTOS – Front cover and this page: Approaching Beinn Dorain on the Way.

Previous page: By Loch Lomond, near Doune Bothy. **Overleaf:** It's downhill all the way to Kinlochleven from the pass above the Devil's Staircase.

Printed in Malaysia; print production by D'Print (☎ +65-6581 3832), Singapore

INTRODUCTION

West Highland Way

History 9 – How difficult is it? 10

How long do you need? 12 – When to go 13

PART 1: PLANNING YOUR WALK

Practical information for the walker

Route finding 17 – Accommodation 18 – Food and drink 22

Money 25 – Other services 26 – 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 46

PART 2: MINIMUM IMPACT WALKING & OUTDOOR SAFETY

Minimum impact walking

Economic impact 50 – Environmental impact 52 – 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 65 – 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 80

Festivals & events 81 – Where to stay 81

Where to eat and drink 87 – What to see and do 91

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 and What3words Waypoints 195

C: Taking a dog along the Way 198

D: Distance chart 200

E: Map keys 202

INDEX 203

OVERVIEW MAPS & PROFILES 211



Loch Lomond and Rowardennan Lodge Youth Hostel (see p124)

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.

- Where to stay – from wild camping and campsites, bunkhouses and hostels to B&Bs and hotels
- Walking companies if you'd prefer an organised holiday and luggage transfer services if you just want your luggage carried
- Itineraries for all levels of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when is the best time to walk, how challenging is it, what to pack and the approximate cost of the whole walking holiday
- Walking times in both directions, distances, GPS waypoints and what3words references
- Availability and opening times of cafés, pubs, tea-shops, restaurants, and shops/supermarkets along the route
- Rail, bus and taxi information for the towns and villages on or near the Way
- Street maps of the main towns and villages
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

❏ 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)

Why is walking in wild and solitary places so satisfying? Partly it is the sheer physical pleasure: sometimes pitting one's strength against the elements and the lie of the land. The beauty and wonder of the natural world and the fresh air restore our sense of proportion and the stresses and strains of everyday life slip away. Whatever the character of the countryside, walking in it benefits us mentally and physically, inducing a sense of well-being, an enrichment of life and an enhanced awareness of what lies around us.

All this the countryside gives us and the least we can do is to safeguard it by supporting rural economies, local businesses, and low-impact methods of farming and land-management, and by using environmentally sensitive forms of transport – walking being pre-eminent.

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. 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.

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



Lowland walking: Dumgoyach and the Way to Drymen.



© JIM MANTHORPE

Above: The view from Conic Hill down to Loch Lomond and Balmaha.

Below: Climbing Ben Nevis (below, right, see pp180-5) via the Carn Mor Dearg Arête Route (left and foreground, © Jim Manthorpe) is the perfect way to end your walk.

the length of Loch Lomond's celebrated wooded shore, lowland subtly transforms into Highlands and rugged mountain grandeur begins to dominate the scene. Ancient tracks previously used by soldiers and drovers lead you north along wide valley bottoms past historical staging posts which still offer sustenance to today's Highland traveller.

The character of the Way becomes more serious as it climbs



North of Tyndrum the terrain becomes a little more challenging. With fewer settlements it can even feel quite remote. The trail crosses some high, desolate country: Rannoch Moor (445m/1460ft), the Devil's Staircase (548m/1797ft) and the Lairigmor (330m/1082ft), all of which can be exposed in bad weather. Crossing these magnificent sections gives you a true taste of Highland Scotland and you will



© SUSANNE HARTEL

Above: The 18th-century Bridge of Orchy which gives its name to the tiny village.

Below: Heading west from Kingshouse past Buachaille Etive Mor, the 'Great Herdsman of Etive', standing guard at the entrance to Glen Coe (see p166).



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 kind. If this sort of wandering is more your style a fortnight should be generous enough.

Walkers with less time on their hands could conceivably catch a bus or train over the less interesting sections of the Way.

For instance, missing out the rather tedious section from Inverarnan to Tyndrum, or even to Bridge of Orchy, would not upset the essential character of the walk and would shorten your time by one or even two days.

There are also some superb **day** and **weekend** walks along the best parts of the Way for those who want to sample the walk in bite-sized chunks; see p34.



Above: On the trail between Kinlochleven and Glen Nevis.

See pp32-3 for some suggested itineraries covering different walking speeds

When to go

SEASONS

The **main walking season** in Scotland is from the Easter holiday (March/April) through to October. Balancing all the variables such as weather, number of other walkers, midges and available accommodation, the best months to walk the West Highland Way are June and September.

Spring

April is unpredictable in terms of the weather. It can be warm and sunny, though blustery days with showers are more typical and snow may often still be lying on the hills. On the plus side, the land is just waking up to spring, there won't be many other walkers about and you shouldn't encounter any midges.

May can be a great time for walking in Scotland; the temperature is warm, the weather is as dry and clear as can be expected, wild flowers are out in their full glory and the midges have yet to reach an intolerable level. However, the Way is exceptionally busy at this time of year and it can be a nightmare finding accommodation if you have not booked in advance. Many B&Bs take bookings in January or earlier for people walking in May. This is not the time to go if you like walking in solitude. You'd be far better off going in **June** which has all the

© JIM MANTHORPE



Above: Coire Bà (see p156) in winter, Rannoch Moor.

the Highlands; traffic is nose to tail on the roads and many hostels and B&Bs are fully booked days in advance. Surprisingly, there can also be a fair amount of rain in these months.

Autumn

A slower pace of life returns when the school holidays come to an end. Early **September** is a wonderful and often neglected time for walking, with fewer visitors and the midges' appetites largely sated. Towards the end of the month and into **early October** the vivid autumn colours are at their best in the woods and on the hills but you are starting to run the risk of encountering more rain and stronger winds. The air temperature, however, is still quite mild.

Winter

Late October and **early November** can occasionally be glorious with crisp clear days, but this is also the start of winter; the days are shortening, the temperature has dropped noticeably and many seasonal B&Bs, hostels, campsites and shops have closed.

You need to be pretty hardy to walk between **late November** and **mid March**. True, some days can



© JIM MANTHORPE

Above: Walking in early December, the last views of Loch Lomond from near Ardsleish as the trail rises into the Highlands.

midweek, rather than opting for the usual Saturday start from Milngavie. Note also that many places are closed during the winter.

Camping

There is pleasure in camping in mountains inexplicable to the unbeliever, but will at once be apparent to anyone of imagination.

WH Murray

Even in the crowded British Isles camping can nurture a sense of freedom and simplicity which beautifully complements the act of walking. Your rucksack will of course be heavier, but carrying all the necessary equipment for sleeping out and cooking your own meals lightens the load in other ways: there's no need to book accommodation, you can make and change your plans as you go and it's by far the cheapest option (see p30). However, pitching your tent wherever you like is not allowed along the Way – see p53 for Loch Lomond restrictions. Realising that many backpackers prefer to camp in the wild, several informal free sites with no facilities have been provided where you can pitch for one night as long as you leave no trace of being there and above all never light a fire. More information on how to camp with minimal impact is given on p53. Official sites along the Way range from those with a basic toilet and little else to luxurious establishments with shop, laundrette, restaurant and even swimming pool and sauna.

If you want to camp but not carry your tent, note that the baggage carriers listed on p26 will visit campsites.

Bothies

Bothies are simple unlocked huts with a sleeping platform and fireplace. In terms of comfort, they give shelter somewhere between a tent and a bunkhouse, pro-

THE BOTHY CODE OF RESPECT

For other users

- Leave the bothy clean, tidy and with dry kindling for the next visitors

For the bothy

- Guard against fire risk and don't cause vandalism or graffiti
- Please take out all rubbish which you don't burn
- Avoid burying rubbish: this pollutes the environment
- Please don't leave perishable food: this encourages mice and rats
- Make sure the doors and windows are properly closed when you leave

For the surroundings

- If there is no toilet, human waste must be buried carefully out of sight; please use the spade provided

- For health reasons never use the vicinity of the bothy as a toilet
- Keep well away from the water supply
- Conserve fuel; never cut live wood

For the agreement with the estate

- Observe any restrictions on use of the bothy, eg during stag stalking or at lambing time
- Please remember bothies are available for short stays only

For the restriction on numbers

Because of overcrowding and lack of facilities, large groups (six or more) should not use a bothy nor camp near a bothy without first seeking permission from the owner. Bothies are not available for commercial groups.

❏ SCOTTISH FOOD

For too long Scotland, and most of Britain for that matter, neglected its once fine local food culture but things are starting to change although there is still little regional differentiation on many menus along the Way. As highly subsidised mass-produced food enters Britain from across the globe, local small-scale producers find it hard to compete. Pub grub bows to the economic dictates of freezer and microwave, rather than the sanity of home-grown specialities. At the end of a hard day on the trail your staple diet is more likely to be scampi and chips or lasagne, than cock-a-leekie or crappit heids. This is a shame; one of the great joys of travel is to embrace the spirit of a place and there is no better way of doing this than by sampling food that is grown and produced locally. By doing so you feed the local economy and strengthen regional identity; a direct benefit to the locality that is giving you, the traveller, so much. Now and then you will come across brave places attempting to breathe life back into rural culinary traditions and these should be actively supported. Keep an eye out for **Taste of Scotland** (📄 taste-of-scotland.com) signs indicating places serving good quality, fresh Scottish produce.

Some traditional dishes include:

- **Arbroath smokies** – smoked haddock
- **Bannocks** – oatcakes baked in an oven and served with cheese
- **Bridies** – minced beef pies
- **Cock-a-leekie** – chicken and leek soup with prunes
- **Clapshot/tatties and neeps** – originating from Orkney, this is a combination of mashed potatoes, turnips, chives and butter or dripping; it usually accompanies haggis
- **Crappit heids** – lobster-stuffed haddock heads
- **Cullen skink** – smoked haddock and potato soup
- **Haggis** – minced lamb's or deer's liver and a collection of other meaty offal bits
- **Porridge** – boiled oats, often eaten for breakfast
- **Rumbledethumps** – mashed potato, swede and cabbage oven-baked with a cheesy topping
- **Scotch broth** – a thick soup of lamb, vegetables, barley, lentils and split peas
- **Stovies** – fried potatoes and onion mixed with left-over meat and baked in an oven

plate of bacon, eggs, black pudding and baked beans as well as toast and marmalade; ideal for setting you up for a day on the trail. If you prefer something lighter, continental breakfasts are normally available.

You will need to carry a packed **lunch** with you some days; your accommodation host may well be able to prepare one. However, there are a number of village shops and bakeries en route enabling you to buy your lunch as you pass by. There are also several cafés, pubs, hotels and teahouses on or near the trail, especially on the southern half, but not always where you need them. Use the information in the village and town facilities table (see p31) and in Part 5 to plan ahead.

Evening meals

Stumbling across a good **pub** when you're on a long walk is like manna from heaven. There are some unique and interesting ones along the West Highland Way all used to the idiosyncrasies of walkers and sometimes having a separate 'boots' or 'climbers' bar where you won't be out of place with muddy boots and

❑ 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 villages 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.**

you are bitten by that bug. See some of the walking guidebooks, including Trailblazer's *Scottish Highlands Hillwalking*, 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).

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.

One to consider is:  merlin.allaboutbirds.org. For plants try pl@ntnet. A similar app for identifying trees will be found at  woodlandtrust.org.

Of course there is no information if you have no signal which is why a pocket book or ebook may be more useful on the West Highland Way. *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) or the relevant train companies, particularly **Avanti West Coast** (☎ 0345-528 0253,  www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk) and **Scotrail** (see box p47). Tickets can be bought direct from the train companies, railway stations, or from websites such as  thetrainline.com but they may have additional charges such as a booking fee.

If you plan to take a bus when you arrive consider getting a **plusbus** ( plusbus.info) ticket when you buy your train ticket. If you want to book a taxi **Traintaxi's** website ( traintaxi.co.uk) gives details of the companies operating at railway stations.

distances. Bear in mind, however, the time and expense of travelling to and from the airports and the extra time you need to allow for check-in. Glasgow Airport is nine miles west of the city; **Prestwick Airport** (see box p43), used by some budget airlines, is 29 miles to the west.

Air travel is by far the least environmentally sound option (see ☞ choose climate.org for the true costs of flying).

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Getting to and from most parts of the West Highland Way is relatively simple thanks to a comprehensive public transport network including trains, coaches and bus services. The **public transport maps** (pp48-9) give an overview of routes which are of particular use to walkers. The **public transport table** on pp46-7 gives the approximate frequency of services, the relevant stops, and contacts for detailed timetable information. However, the best way to plan local travel here is by using the **Traveline Scotland** website – ☞ travelinescotland.com – or by phoning traveline ☎ 0141-465 1878.

Because of its proximity to Glasgow the southern section of the Way is well served by buses and trains. As you progress north the most useful services are trains, which run on the West Highland line parallel to the trail until Bridge of Orchy, and Scottish Citylink coaches along the A82 also never far from the Way. Ferries in summer can get you to the less accessible eastern shore of Loch Lomond. The reasonably frequent public transport services in the area open up the potential for linear walks from an hour to several days without the worry of where to park your car and how to get back to it. See p34 for ideas.

☞ TRANSPORT APPS

To help plan local travel to and from the West Highland Way, **Traveline Scotland** is available as an app or via the 'Plan a Journey' tab on the ☞ travelinescotland.com website.

For the same plus travel to and from anywhere in the world **Rome2Rio** is very helpful, with direct links to bus and train company timetables and booking websites.

☞ DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT SERVICE

For places where there are few or no regular bus services – such as Blane, Blane, Croftamie, Easter Drumquhassle & Drymen – there is a **demand responsive transport service** (☞ stirling.gov.uk/drt). This 'bus' service uses taxis with fares based on distance. They tend to cost slightly more than they would be on an actual bus though holders of an Older Persons Bus Pass travel for free. Prior booking is essential – from 30 days in advance and up to two hours before travel if booked online through the website, or 24 hours in advance if booked by phone (Mon-Fri 9am-3pm, ☎ 01786 237800). The service is very popular so book early. The various operators listed on the website can tell you what the fare will be – it must be paid to the driver in cash.

MINIMUM IMPACT & OUTDOOR SAFETY

Minimum impact walking

Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet **Thich Nhat Hanh**

Scotland's large and sparsely populated countryside is the closest you can get to true wilderness anywhere in Britain. Visitors have come in large numbers for over a century to sample the healing balm that comes from walking in these less touched places and as the world gets increasingly faster, more polluted and urbanised there is an even greater need for wild country where you can go for re-creation in the true sense of the word.

Inevitably this too brings its problems. As more and more people enjoy the freedom of the hills so the land comes under increasing pressure and the potential for conflict with other land-users is heightened. Everyone has a right to this natural heritage but with it comes a responsibility to care for it, too.

By following some simple guidelines while walking the West Highland Way you can have a positive impact, not just on your own well-being but also on local communities and the environment, thereby becoming part of the solution.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Support local businesses

Rural businesses and communities in Britain have been hit hard in recent years by a seemingly endless series of crises. The countryside through which the West Highland Way passes is no exception and there is a lot that the walker can do to help. Playing your part today involves much more than simply closing the gate and not dropping litter; there is something else you can do – **buy local** – and with it comes huge social, environmental and psychological benefits.

Look and ask for local produce to buy and eat. Not only does this cut down on the amount of pollution and congestion that the transportation of food creates, so-called 'food miles', but also ensures you are supporting local farmers and producers. It's a fact of life that money spent at local level – perhaps in a market, or at the greengrocer, or in an independent pub – has a far greater impact for good on that community than the equivalent spent in a branch of a national chain



Deer-stalking

Large areas of the Highlands have been actively managed for deer shooting, or stalking as it is known, since the 19th century when it became fashionable for the aristocracy and the newly 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.

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 acci-

Heatstroke is more serious. A high body temperature and an absence of sweating are early indications, followed by symptoms similar to hypothermia (see opposite) such as a lack of coordination, convulsions and coma. Death will follow if treatment is not given instantly. Sponge the victim down, wrap them in wet towels, fan them and get help immediately.

WHAT3WORDS

On the app **What3words** ( what3words.com) the world is divided into three-metre squares and each has its own three-word geocode so it makes it easy to tell people where you are.

See pp195-7 for the **what3words** references for the waypoints in this book.

DEALING WITH AN ACCIDENT

- Use basic first aid to treat any injuries to the best of your ability.
- Work out exactly where you are.
- Try to attract the attention of anybody else who may be in the area. The **emergency signal** is six blasts on a whistle, or six flashes with a torch.
- If possible leave someone with the casualty while others go for help. If there is nobody else, you have a dilemma. If you decide to get help leave all spare clothing and food with the casualty.
- Call ☎ **999** for the police who will alert the mountain rescue team.
- Report the exact position of the casualty and their condition. The app **What3words** ( what3words.com) – see above – can be helpful with this.

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PARKS

Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.

John Muir *Our National Parks*

Right up to the end of the 20th century Scotland was one of only a handful of countries yet to embrace the concept of national parks. This despite the Scotsman John Muir instigating the first national parks in North America over 100 years ago and England and Wales bowing to pressure from walkers by granting ten national parks in the 1950s (the current number is 13). Objectors included both landowners and local planning authorities who view the national park system as unnecessary bureaucracy heaped on top of an already mountainous pile of landscape and wildlife designations. When such places are still threatened, however, it can only be right to grant these outstandingly beautiful areas the highest level of landscape protection available.

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs ( lochlomond-trossachs.org), through which the West Highland Way passes, was the first national park, opened in 2002 and followed by the **Cairngorms** ( cairngorms.co.uk) in 2003. As a result resources are being made available to manage the parks in an integrated way for conservation, quiet recreation and sustainable economic activities.

Many people would like to see the designation extended over a wider area. Surely if Loch Lomond is worthy on the grounds of landscape quality most of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland should also qualify? Perhaps one day this vision of such an extensive national park will become a reality.

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



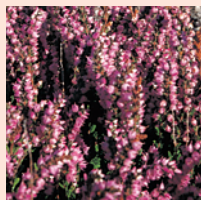
Early Purple Orchid
Orchis mascula



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

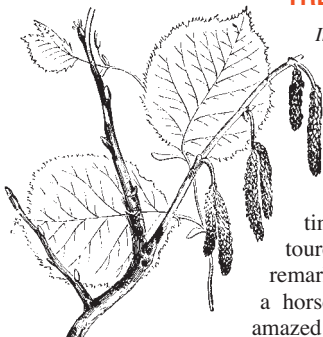


Water Avens
Geum rivale



Red Campion
Silene dioica

TREES



Hazel (with flowers) lands with Scots, or Caledonian, pine in the Highlands. This is still Scotland's natural pattern of

woodland and it has existed for 7000 years, since the end of the last Ice Age. However, today less than 1% of the original woods remain.

Before the Romans tree cover had already been much reduced by Neolithic peoples. As the population expanded over the following centuries so the forests continued to shrink as land was converted to agriculture. In more recent times large areas of timber were felled for industry and warfare. However, from the 18th century onwards it was the more subtle processes of sheep grazing and the management of land for field sports that ensured that once the trees were gone they would never return. Overgrazing the land with sheep and deer (which eat young trees) and the burning of heather to maintain the grouse moors have meant that new trees never get established.



❑ OAK LEAVES WITH GALLS

Oak trees support more kinds of insects than any other tree in Britain and some affect the oak in unusual ways. The eggs of gall-flies cause growths known as galls on the leaves. Each of these contains a single insect. Other kinds of gall-flies lay eggs in stalks or flowers, leading to flower galls, growths the size of currants.

In the past 500 years we have destroyed over 99 per cent of our equivalent of the rainforests.

David Minns *The Nature of Scotland*

The woods of Caledon

When the Romans arrived in Scotland almost 2000 years ago they named it Caledonia or 'wooded heights'. By the time Samuel Johnson and James Boswell toured the country in 1773 it was possible to remark, 'A tree might be a show in Scotland as a horse in Venice'. The tree cover which so amazed the Romans consisted of oak in the low-

Indigenous trees on the Way

There are some glorious examples of **oak woodland** on the southern half of the Way, in particular along Loch Lomond. The two native species of oak, the common or pedunculate (*Quercus robur*) and the sessile (*Q. petraea*), grow here along with many hybrids. These woods can't strictly be described as natural as most were planted in the early 19th century but they provide a wonderful home for a wide range of species and offer beautiful walking. Some of the islands in the Loch support semi-natural oak woods with a more random planting pattern, wider age range of trees and conse-

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 award-winning **Burrell Collection**; 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; 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.

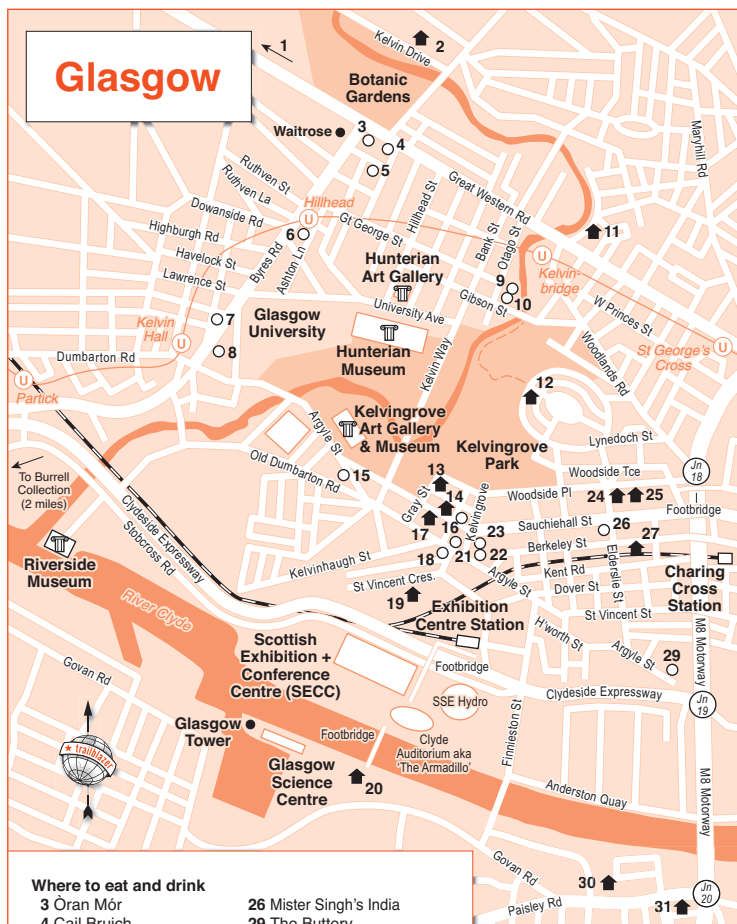
ORIENTATION

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) is nine miles west of the city. The Airport Express bus service (✈ firstbus.co.uk/greater-glasgow) No 500 leaves (daily approx 5am-11pm; 2-4/hr; 15-25 mins; £11/17 sgl/rtn) from outside the main terminal building for the city centre and railway/bus stations. A taxi will cost from around £45.





Where to eat and drink

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 Óran Mór | 26 Mister Singh's India | 52 The Horse Shoe |
| 4 Cail Bruich | 29 The Buttery | 53 Willow Tea Room |
| 5 Crabshakk Botanics | 32 Mini Grill Glasgow Steakhouse | 54 Droughty's |
| 6 The Ubiquitous Chip | 34 Green Gates (Sauchiehall) | 58 Ichiban |
| 7 University Café | 36 The Bunker Bar | 62 Momo Hub Mother Nepal |
| 8 Number 16 | 37 King Tut's Wah Wah Hut | 64 Madras Café |
| 9 Tiffney's Steakhouse | 38 The Mackintosh Tearooms | 65 Kinara |
| 10 Stravaigin | 43 Laz Turkish Tapas | 66 Türkiye Efes |
| 15 Mother India's Café | 46 The Pot Still | 67 Green Gates (MC) |
| 16 Ox and Finch | 47 Café Wander | 68 Café Gandolfi |
| 18 The Ben Nevis | 48 Halloumi | 69 Obsession of India |
| 21 Crabshakk Finnieston | 49 Gamba | |
| 22 Fanny Trollope's | 50 Thai Orchid | |
| 23 Mother India | 51 Café Fame | |

citizenM (online booking only: ☑ citizenm.com, 60 Renfrew St; 198D; £64-242 per room) claims to be the trendiest hotel in Glasgow and probably is. The rooms have large comfortable beds, mood lighting, rain showers and free movies on demand. Stylish **Malmaison** (☎ 0141-572 1000, ☑ malmaison.com/locations/glasgow, 278 West George St; 10T/62D; ☞; 🐾; £89-424 per room) is housed in a former Episcopal church. At times they have special offers so it is worth checking with them.

Five-star **Hotel du Vin Glasgow** (☎ 0141-378 0385, ☑ hotelduvin.com/locations/glasgow; 8D or T/32D/9D or F; ☞; 🐾; £150-472 per room), at 1 Devonshire Gardens, occupies five townhouses.

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK

Scottish cuisine

You'll find haggis, tatties and neeps on almost every menu but modern Scottish cuisine goes far beyond that.

Stravaigin (☎ 0141-334 2665, ☑ stravaigin.co.uk, **fb**; 28 Gibson St; gastro-pub food served daily noon-10pm, restaurant Wed-Sat noon-11pm, Sun noon-7pm) produces top-notch fare that's probably best described as Scottish fusion food and the T-shirts and signs proclaim 'Think global, eat local'. Stravaigin's own haggis, neeps 'n' tatties (£18) is, of course, an option, as is vegetarian haggis (£17).

Number 16 (☎ 0141-339 2544, ☑ number16.co.uk, **fb**; 16 Byres Rd; Mon-Sat noon-2.30pm & 5.30-9pm, Sun 1-2.30pm & 5.30-8.30pm) is a small restaurant with a large reputation including Michelin recommendation. They offer a 2/3-course menu (lunch £27/33, dinner £32/38; Mon-Sat) and à la carte options (main dishes around £30).

The Ubiquitous Chip (☎ 0141-334 5007, ☑ ubiquitouschip.co.uk, **fb**; 12 Ashton Lane; brasserie, roof terrace and bars open daily with food noon-midnight; restaurant closed Mon-Tue), just off Byres Rd, has been a Glasgow institution since 1971. You can eat in the restaurant, the brasserie (each has its own menu) or on the roof terrace. And if it's just drinks you're after you can choose from one of their three bars, including the Wee Whisky Bar, which they reckon serves 'more whiskies per square foot than any other bar in Scotland'.

Tiffney's Steakhouse (☎ 0141-328 9557, ☑ tiffneys.com, **fb**; 61 Otago St; Wed-Sun from 4pm, last orders 7.30pm Sun, 8pm Wed-Thu and 9pm Fri-Sat) is for serious carnivores (adults only) and serves prime dry-aged Highland beef steaks – from a 300g rib-eye (£38) to a 500g T-bone (£58).

Mini Grill Glasgow Steakhouse (☎ 0141-332 2732, ☑ minigrillglasgow.co.uk; **fb**; 244 Bath St; Sun-Thu noon-10pm, Fri & Sat to 11.30pm) won the award for Best Sunday Roast in 2025, (£24 for beef, chicken or butternut squash, plus £9 for a Bloody Mary to go with it. There's also a range of other dishes including steak or venison from £28.

Fanny Trollope's (☎ 0141-564 6464, ☑ fannytrollopes.co.uk, **fb**; 1066 Argyle St; Tue-Thur 5-9pm, Fri & Sat noon-midnight, Sun 1-9pm) is an upmarket restaurant serving reasonably-priced, imaginatively cooked dishes: eg crispy

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

Glasgow Cathedral

( glasgowcathedral.org.uk; summer Mon-Sat 10am-noon and 1-5pm, Sun 1-5pm; services Sun 11am & 4pm; free but donation appreciated) This is the only medieval cathedral on the Scottish mainland to have survived the Reformation and it's an excellent example of the Gothic style. Much of the current building dates from the 13th century; the original cathedral was built in about 1125 as a shrine to Mungo, the 6th-century priest who later became the city's patron saint. His remains still lie here; in the Middle Ages they were the focus of thousands of pilgrims each year. When money became available in the 1990s for renovations the bishop sensibly spent it not on sandblasting the smoke-stained exterior but on a new central heating system. The immense blackened mass of the cathedral with the grand memorials of the **Necropolis** rising up on the hill behind only add to the wonderful Gothic effect. The best view of this is from the top floor of nearby St Mungo's Museum.

Sharmanka

(☎ 0141-552 7080,  sharmanka.com, Trongate 103; two different 45-minute shows; tickets £18.33; see website for times and to book) This unforgettable performance of Russian mechanical carved figures (*kinemats*) is, quite simply, unique. It was created by Eduard Bersudsky and Tatyana Jakovskaya who moved to Glasgow from St Petersburg in 1996. The themes are very Russian: 'the human spirit struggling against the relentless circles of life and death' and there are literary influences such as Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. A magical 45 minutes of jingly-jangly Russian madness that must be booked in advance – sometimes far in advance.



Nikodym (the Co-operation of the Genders), in a performance of kinemats at Sharmanka.

Mackintoshiana

The Art Nouveau designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh are almost a cliché but he is Scotland's most famous architect and designer and many of the buildings he designed are in Glasgow – and well worth seeing.

Born in 1868 he studied at Glasgow School of Art and later won a competition to design its new building, a building that is regarded as his greatest achievement. In 2014 a disastrous fire destroyed a major part of the building, including the jewel in the crown, the exquisite library. Restoration was nearly complete when in June 2018 catastrophe struck again and a second, larger fire rampaged through the building, which was still closed to visitors at the time of research. See **Glasgow School of Art** ( www.gsa.ac.uk, 167 Renfrew St) for an update on the current visitor situation.

The **Hunterian Art Gallery** ( gla.ac.uk/hunterian; Tue-Sun 10am-5pm; gallery admission free, Mackintosh House £10) has an extensive collection of Mackintosh's work as well as reconstructed rooms from Mackintosh's own

house. Follow your visit to the art gallery with sustenance at one of the branches of the **Willow Tea Rooms** (see box p89), which were reconstructed using Mackintosh designs.

GLASGOW LIFE MUSEUMS

Glasgow Life is a charity that delivers cultural, sporting and learning activities on behalf of Glasgow City Council. Under the Glasgow Life umbrella, Glasgow Museums is the largest museum service in the UK outside London, and operates 10 venues across the city, with a collection totalling over one million objects.

For further details of all 10 museums and galleries, including the latest opening times and ticket booking requirements, see glasgowlife.org.uk/museums. Here is a summary of the most popular ones – but see opposite for the **Burrell Collection** – all of which have **free admission** and operate the same **opening hours** (Mon–Thur & Sat 10am–5pm, Fri & Sun 11am–5pm).

St Mungo Museum of Religious Life & Art (☎ 0141-276 1625, 2 Castle St) Right opposite the cathedral, this interesting museum was opened in the early 1990s. In addition to the galleries devoted to Religious Life and Religious Art (covering the world's main religions), there is one outlining the history of religion in Scotland, as well as a Zen garden. From the top floor, there's a great view of Glasgow Cathedral and the Necropolis behind.

Provand's Lordship is Glasgow's oldest house, built in 1471 and conveniently located opposite St Mungo's Museum. Most rooms are sparsely furnished and it's not large but it's an interesting old building well worth the half hour or so it takes to visit.



Riverside Museum

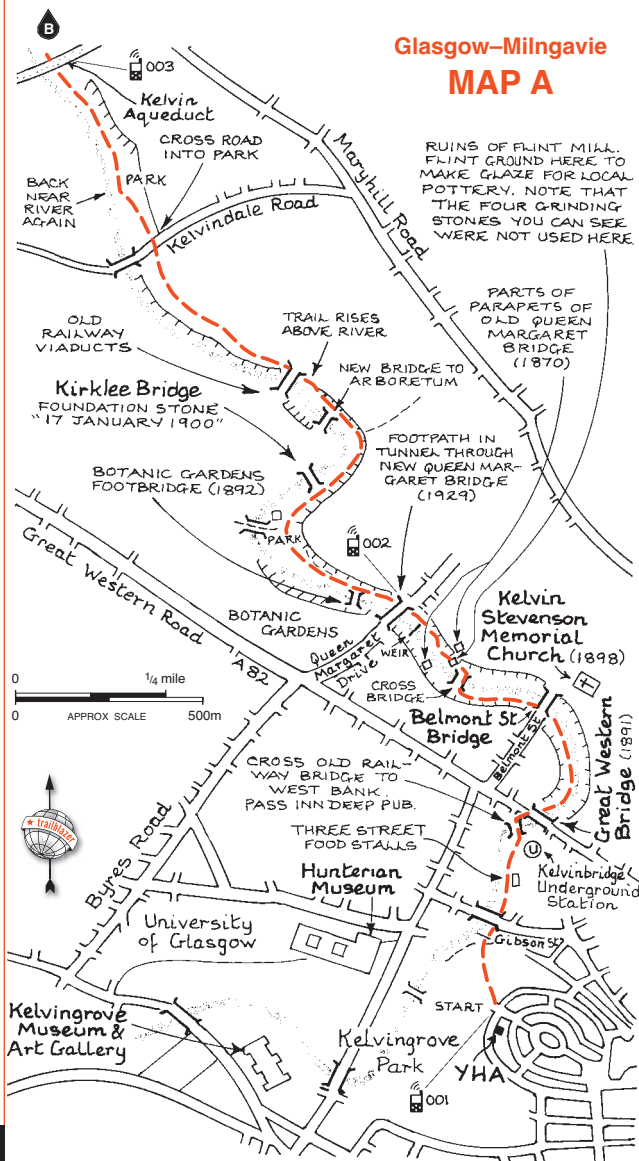
Riverside Museum (☎ 0141-287 2720; Clydeside Expressway) This wonderful modern building was designed by Zaha Hadid and opened in 2011. The fact that it is a museum of transport should not put you off if cars and trains aren't your thing, as the exhibits are cleverly displayed and the building itself is spectacular. Glasgow has a long and distinguished history of building ships and trains and a rather less distinguished history of building cars (the Albion and the Hillman Imp, for example).

People's Palace & Winter Gardens Now closed for total refurbishment, this museum told the story of Glasgow and its impact on the world as the 'Second City of the Empire'. Beside it, tropical plants of the Winter Gardens are housed in a vast Victorian glasshouse that poses a considerable challenge for the restorers and will probably take years to complete.

Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) (☎ 0141-287 3050; Royal Exchange Sq) Housed in a beautiful former library, it is well worth a visit with pieces from Turner nominees and changing exhibitions.

Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum (☎ 0141-276 9599; Argyle St) This is one of the most popular free tourist attractions in the country, bringing in over 1.3 million people a year. The art gallery is strong on 19th- and 20th-century works, particularly those by Scottish artists. Free organ recitals Mon–Sat at 1pm and at 3pm on Sundays.

Glasgow-Milngavie MAP A



GLAS

1.8 MILES 35 - 45 MINS FROM MARYHILL RD (MAP B)

KIRKLEE BRIDGE

1.4 MILES 30 - 40 MINS

KELVINGROVE PARK

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; 878 Bocclair Rd; 🍷; Mon-Sat noon-10.30pm, Sun noon-9.30pm) has lunch options such as steak sandwich/falafel flatbread with fries for £13.75/10.75, as well as steaks, burgers and pizza. Beside it is Dobbies Garden Centre (🌐 dobbies.com/milngavie) which has a *café* (daily 9am-5.30pm; hot meals until 3pm), 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**.

ROUTE GUIDE & MAPS

5

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; 3¹/₈ 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 few hours 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 at about three miles per hour**. 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.



DIRECTION INDICATORS ON MAP SIDE BARS

Walking north
from **Glasgow**
to Fort William



9 Route to
Fort William
continues on Map 9

GLAS Walking south
from
Fort William
to Glasgow

Route to **Glasgow**
continues on Map 8



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.

Waypoints

The numbered waypoints refer to the list on pp195-7 which gives GPS and what3words references.

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.

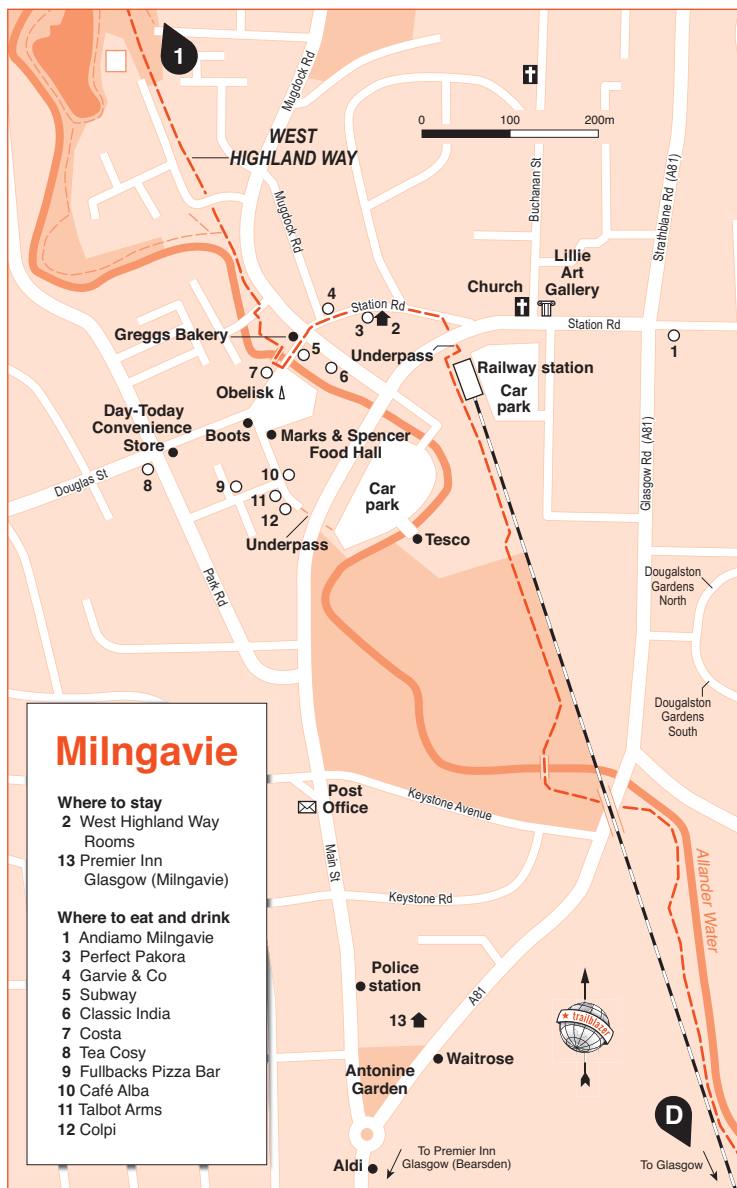
ACCOMMODATION

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** or **F** = Quad or Family room. 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; if **packed lunches (L)** 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. Nowadays almost all places to stay or eat, including many campsites, have **wi-fi** which is free unless otherwise stated.



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. For a sit-down Indian meal head down the ramp by the river to **Classic India** (☎ 0141-956 6360, daily 4.30-10pm; curries) which has the usual extensive array of dishes (£9-11). 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.

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 (£10.35). Not far away, **Tea Cosy** (☎ 0141-9550121, ☒, Mon-Sat 9.30am-4pm), 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, ☒) 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, ☒, Sun-Thur 10am-11pm, Fri & Sat to midnight) is a bistro-style restaurant, bar and bakery on Station Rd. Their steaks (from £24.95) are good and there are burgers from £17.

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

If you like to watch sport on the telly while eating then head for **Fullbacks Pizza Bar** (☎ 0141-956 1325) which does burgers (£11) as well as pizzas (£10-13).

For fast food lunch you'll find **Subway** (Mon-Sat 8am-7pm, Sun 9am-5pm) just off the town square.

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, 1¾-2¼hrs) 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

☐ 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 Mon-Fri 10.30am-5pm, Sat-Sun 10am-5pm and **Charlie's Coffee Bar**, Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, Sat & Sun to 5pm; there are also several shops.

ROWARDENNAN TO INVERRNAID

MAPS 15-19

Once upon a time, not so long ago, walkers were confronted by a choice of routes on this **7-mile (11.5km, 2¾-3¼hrs) stage**. The easier, high route, stayed on the undulating forestry track as it passes several waterfalls, yielding occasional surprise views through the trees. The alternative trail, on the other hand, was a different kettle of Loch Lomond salmon altogether – a tortuous route (as it was described in the previous edition of this book) that clung as close to the shore as it could, where hikers were forced to clamber over fallen trees, scramble over shifting rockfalls and struggle up some steep climbs if they wanted to continue on the trail.

Surprisingly, the authorities have clearly decided that everyone should now tackle this ‘tortuous route’, and have made it the official path, having removed the signs that pointed to the higher route; though to be fair, the alternative trail has been smartened up and the addition of wooden steps and bridges have done much to reduce the difficulty of this stretch. So while it may still be more arduous than the old official route, the reward of being immersed in glorious oak woods, away from both traffic and tourists, and with wonderful lochside views permanently on your left, is a more than ample pay-off.

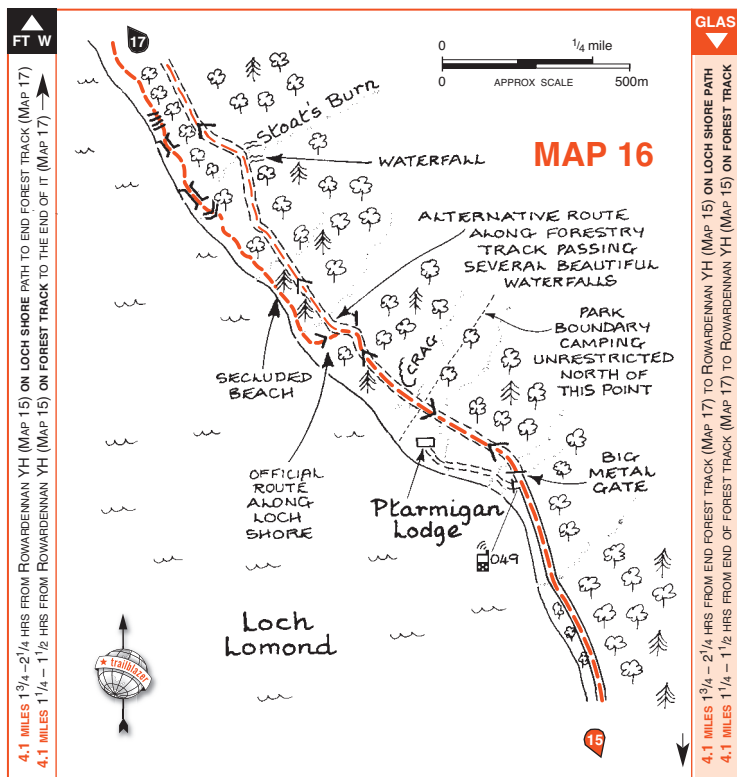
The new route rejoins the old just beyond **Rowchoish Bothy** (see Map 17), a simple shelter with sleeping platform and an open fire. The Way continues on a well-made path along the shore through further stretches of old oak woodland.

*What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*
Gerard Manley Hopkins *Inversnaid*

BEN LOMOND NATIONAL MEMORIAL PARK

This park runs along 8 miles (13km) of the loch’s eastern shore, from Milarrochy to Rowardennan, right up to the summit of Ben Lomond. It was officially opened in 1997 as a reminder of those who have fought for their country and it is held in trust for the public in perpetuity.

The park is jointly managed and owned by the National Trust for Scotland and Forestry and Land Scotland (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland) and is an excellent example of how the priorities of these organisations are changing for the better. Until a few years ago this land was covered in uniform conifer plantation, the purpose of which was purely economic. Now the conifers are being grubbed up and the woodland is slowly being brought back to the native birch and oak which have traditionally covered the banks of Loch Lomond. In the process the number of plants, animals and insects that these woods can support will increase; just compare ground beneath a conifer plantation with the floor of a native woodland. The project will span over 40 years. Pioneer species such as rowan, birch and alder must first get established to naturally prepare the ground for the oak which will then follow. Deer can quickly destroy the young saplings so a high fence has had to be erected until the trees can fend for themselves.



INVERNAID

Map 19, p133

Inversnaid Bunkhouse (☎ 01877-386249, inversnaid.com; Mar-Oct open, Nov-Feb group bookings only), housed in what was once a church (some of the stained-glass windows are still in situ), is a remote and cosy place which offers a range of accommodation. A free pick-up service from the Way is available, which is useful, considering its location 800m uphill from the Way (just follow the road up from the hotel). A bed/bunk bed in the **bunkhouse** (27 beds; 2T/4Tr/1x 5-bed dorm; 🐾; 🚻) costs £30pp. They have a **log cabin** (2D; shared facilities; £70 per cabin). The rate for **campers** starts at £15pp (wi-fi; 🐾; 🚻) including use of the self-catering kitchen

(8-9am & 6-8pm). However, food is served at the **Top Bunk Bistro**, a licensed restaurant (Mar-Oct daily 7.45-9.15am & 6-9pm; booking recommended for non-residents). A buffet continental breakfast costs £6.95 and an evening meal around £16. They have a hot tub (£2.50 per 15 mins) and a laundry service (wash & dry £5 per load).

Continuing along the road for half a mile past the bunkhouse brings you to Garrison Farm and **Garrison of Inversnaid** (☎ 07920-422919, garrisonofinversnaid.co.uk; 🚻). There are two self-contained apartments available to Way walkers (D, Tr or Qd; from £80pp) which have their own kitchenettes. Transfers (£2 each way) to and

INVERRNAID TO INVERARNAN

MAPS 19-22

These **6½ miles (10.5km, 2½-3hrs)** continue in much the same vein as the previous stage (assuming, of course, that you took the 'new', harder official route on the previous section and not the relatively simple forest track). Which means that, for the first 3 miles (5km) at least, you'll be confronted by plenty more tiring climbs and falls as you tackle the rocky path that winds through woodland across steep craggy slopes leading down to Loch Lomond. It is wild scenery marred only by the noise from the busy road on the western shore, now much closer as the loch narrows. Just north of Inversnaid is the **RSPB Inversnaid Nature Reserve** ( www.rspb.org.uk then search 'Inversnaid'), a beautiful ancient oakwood, home to redstarts, pied flycatchers and wood warblers. There is a short nature trail that starts and finishes by the Way. Another mile north from here is **Rob Roy's Cave** (see box p132) which lies a hop and a skip from the main trail amongst a craggy mess of rocks.

Near **Doune Byre Bothy** (see Map 21), which provides very basic free shelter and a fireplace), the woodland opens out giving far-reaching southerly views. The trail then climbs away from Loch Lomond to a wide pass before descending into **Glen Falloch** (Map 22). Soft scenery dominated by water and woodland give way to the rocky fells and mountain views of the Highlands.

ARDLUI

Map 21, p136

Ardlui is on the opposite side of Loch Lomond to the trail and provides a useful start or finish for a walk along part of the Way. There are regular **buses** (Scottish Citylink Nos 914, 915 & 916) and **trains** to/from Glasgow and Fort William (for details see p47). The 975 & 977 services also call here en route between Glasgow and Oban. If you are simply looking for somewhere for the night you would be better off continuing to Inverarnan.

The **ferry** (Apr-Sep 9am-7pm, Oct to 6pm, 1/hr to **Ardleish**, run by Ardlui Hotel) costs £6 per person and is summoned by raising the ball on the signal mast during hours of operation and it will come at the scheduled time. In winter you must arrange

a ferry by phone via the hotel.

The attractive **Ardlui Hotel** ( 01301-704243,  ardlui.com; 1S/1T/6D/1Tr/2Qd; ; ; ; from £86.50, sgl £87, sgl occ full room rate), at the head of the loch, has gardens running down to a small anchorage and marina. There is a restaurant and bar with **food** (Easter to Oct Mon-Fri 8am-3pm & 6-9.15pm, Sat & Sun 8am-9.15pm, Nov to Easter Mon-Fri 8am-2pm & 6-8pm, Sat & Sun 8am-9pm). Be aware that some of the rooms are above the bar. There are three **camping pods** (walkers' bothy sleeping 3 or 5 people; ; £40-80 phone for prices); you'll need your own sleeping bag, or hire one (7.50).

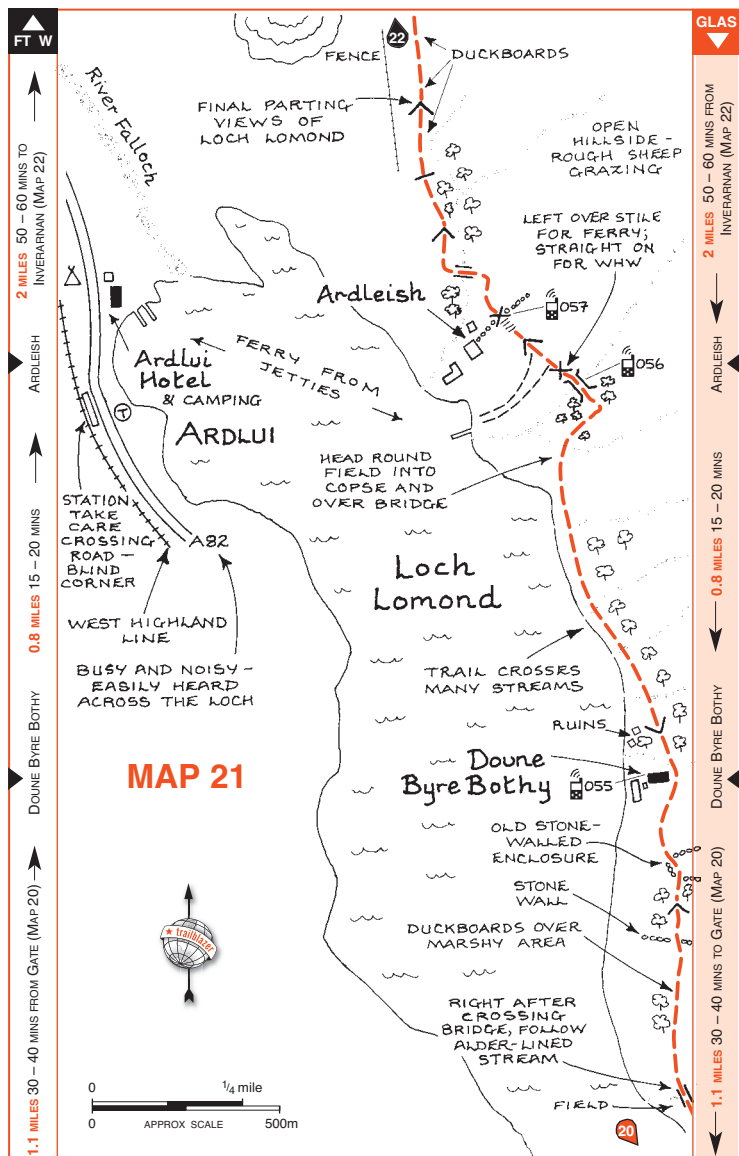
INVERARNAN

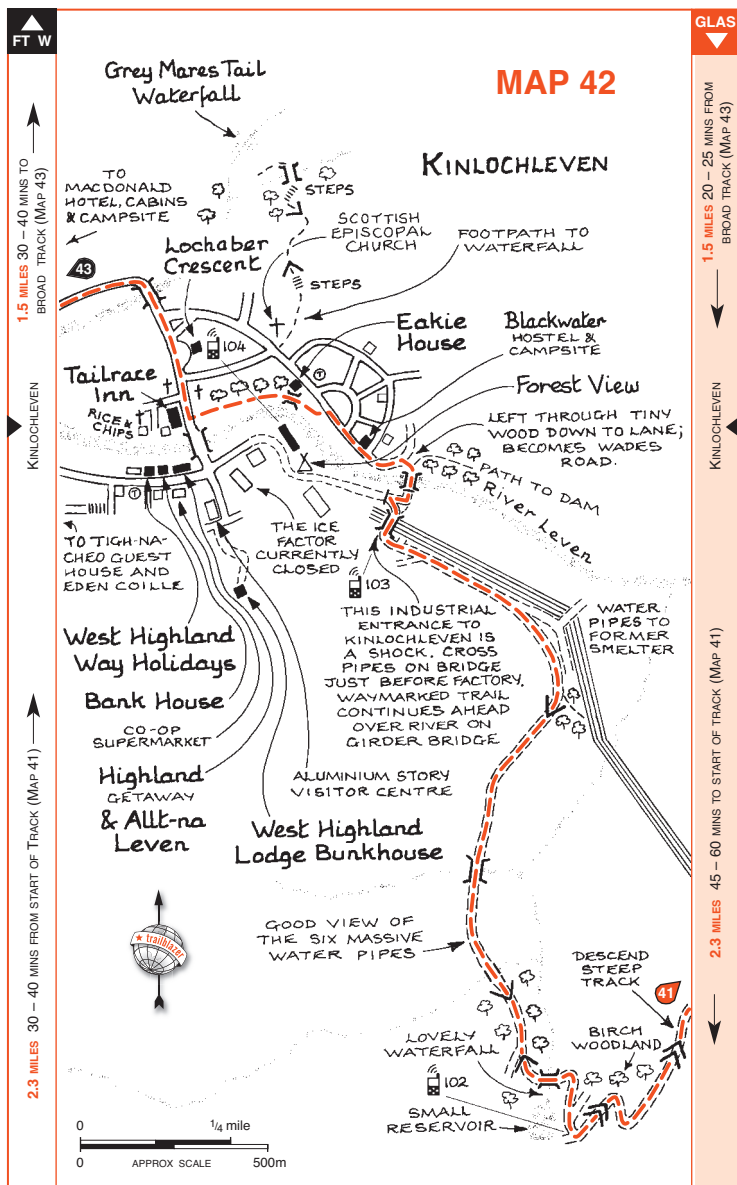
Map 22, p137

The Way goes right past the excellent **Beinglas Farm** ( 07957-626577,  beinglascampsite.co.uk; Easter-Oct) where you can pitch your **tent** (£15pp; well-behaved ). The immaculate showers are free, there's a washing machine and dryer and a sheltered area for cooking. They have six

camping cabins, each sleeping up to four but of varying sizes (small/medium/large cabin £75/90/115 regardless of how many people share the cabin); sleeping bags/bedding can be hired for £12.

B&B (4T/4Tr, all en suite; ; £72.50-90pp, sgl occ full room rate) is





bedding). In the high season there is a **snack van** here (daily 8-10am & 5-10pm), peddling breakfast rolls and burgers.

Just up the glen from here is the popular **Glen Nevis Youth Hostel** (Map 48; ☎ 01397-702336, 📧 hostellingscotland.org.uk/hostels/glen-nevis; 71 beds; 7T, 1Tr, 6x 4-bed & 4x 8-bed rooms, some en suite; Ⓐ; £23-35pp) which is open all year. **Meals** are available, the hostel is licensed and it has laundry facilities (£2 per wash) as well as a drying room.

Glen Nevis Restaurant and Lounge Bar (☎ 01397-705459, 📧 glennevisrestaurant.co.uk); Mar/Apr to end Oct, daily 3-9pm) is a modern building with the air of a motorway service station and is located between the camping park and the youth hostel. The menu features burgers, pies and fish & chips. There are takeaways at the **Campfire Kitchen** outside the restaurant.

Another good place to stay in a beautiful position at the start of the Ben Nevis path is **Ben Nevis Inn** (Map 49; ☎ 01397-701227, 📧 ben-nevis-inn.co.uk), a carefully renovated barn. Its **bunkhouse** has been converted into three separate self-contained en-suite bunk-bed rooms, sleeping six (£250), eight (£320) or ten (£400) people. Each room comes with a kitchenette

(including microwave, toaster and fridge) and a drying cupboard; bedding and towels are provided too. They also have a new turf-roofed building containing four four-bed apartments complete with bathrooms and kitchenettes (£210 per unit per night). Booking is recommended, particularly in the summer months. Excellent **food** is available here (summer daily noon-9pm, winter Thur-Sun only); the menu changes regularly but during the day may include haggis, neeps and tatties (£8) and in the evening ale-battered haddock & chips (£19.50) and chicken & haggis rumbledethumps (see box p23; £19). Light snacks are served till closing time at 11pm. It's the kind of place where you could spend all day, listening to (the occasional) live acoustic music, warming yourself by the woodburner and luxuriating in the glorious views up the glen. It can get very busy, so best to book ahead for dinner.

Next door, **Achintee Farm** (Map 49; ☎ 07497-082820, 📧 achinteefarm.com) has self-catering units (1D/1T, private facilities; from £60pp) and **B&B** (3D en suite; ☞; Ⓐ; from £90pp, sgl occ full room rate) accommodation in the farmhouse. Everyone can use their drying rooms. Two-night bookings during high season.

BEN NEVIS

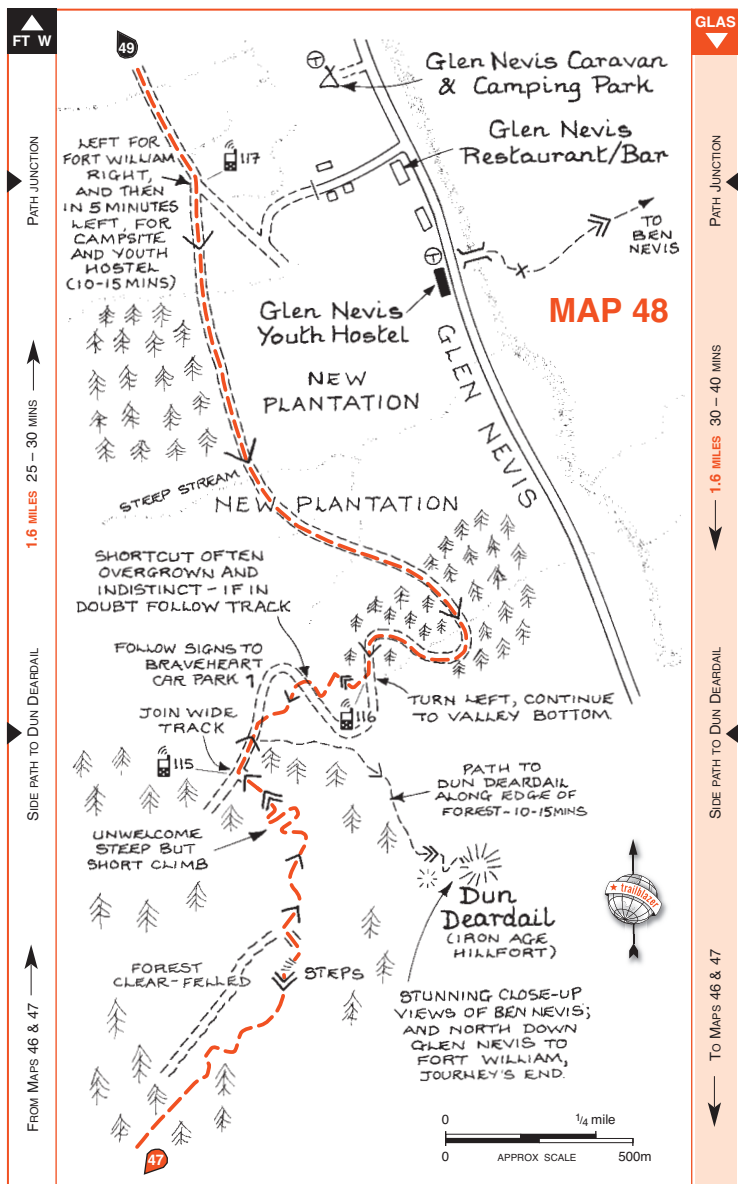
See map p183

You remember your first mountain in much the same way you remember having your first sexual experience, except that climbing doesn't make as much mess and you don't cry for a week if Ben Nevis forgets to phone next morning.

Muriel Gray *The First Fifty – Munro-bagging without a beard*

It is impossible to say who first climbed the highest mountain in Britain. Locals have been walking these hills since the beginning of time and would have been guides to the visitors who first left a record of their ascents in the 18th century. Although nowhere near the first to ascend the mountain, some credit must go to Clement Wragge who climbed the peak every day without fail for two years to take weather readings. Happy to set out in all conditions, he soon became known as 'Inclement Wragge'. He was no doubt glad when a weather observatory was built on the summit in 1883 and a substantial path made to service it; now the 'tourist route'. The observatory was abandoned in 1904.

Today 75,000 walkers a year attempt to reach the summit so don't think you'll get the place to yourself. Mass tourism has been a part of The Ben's life since the railway reached Fort William in 1894. Thankfully the tacky ideas of



a summit hotel and pony rides to the top were abandoned soon after they were conceived.

Climbing Ben Nevis

Climbing the highest mountain in Britain after walking the entire West Highland Way makes a superb ending to your Highland adventure. However, do not underestimate those 1344 metres (4406ft) to the summit. It

may not sound that high in comparison with the highest peaks in other countries but it has a fearsome reputation for accidents and as with all mountains in the Highlands, you should not contemplate climbing it unless you are suitably equipped and knowledgeable (see pp56-8).

There are several routes to the top. By far the most popular is the badly named **Tourist Route** (significantly harder than its belittling name would suggest) ascending from Glen Nevis along the well-trodden line of the former pony track all the way to the summit. This route (see p184) takes about 5½ to 6½ hours in total. Some find it a relentless slog, particularly on the upper reaches of the mountain and especially when accompanied by scores of other walkers, as you will be on most days in summer. It is, however, the only option for those who would not class themselves experienced hillwalkers.

For the latter category there is a superb route that provides a tough, long, but grand day out, befitting Britain's highest mountain. The **Carn Mor Dearg Arête Route** (see p185) follows the normal route initially and then detours under the spectacular north face to climb Carn Mor Dearg (CMD), a significant mountain in its own right. From here it follows the narrow, rocky, crescent line of the Carn Mor Dearg Arête and then up the Ben's boulder-covered south-eastern slopes to the summit plateau. Descent is down the normal route. The whole trip takes about 8½ to 9½ hours. The CMD route is a significant hill climb and should only be tackled if you have experience on exposed, narrow ridges where some scrambling is necessary.

Safety

The normal route is along a well-graded trail, easy to follow in good visibility, but a mountain path none the less. Expect loose rock and scree underfoot, patches of snow even late in the year and some steep sections. The alternative CMD route is largely on steep, rough ground with a fair bit of exposure in places. It is a long route, requiring stamina with some sections of easy scrambling. Neither route is suitable in snow or ice unless you are an accomplished winter mountaineer.

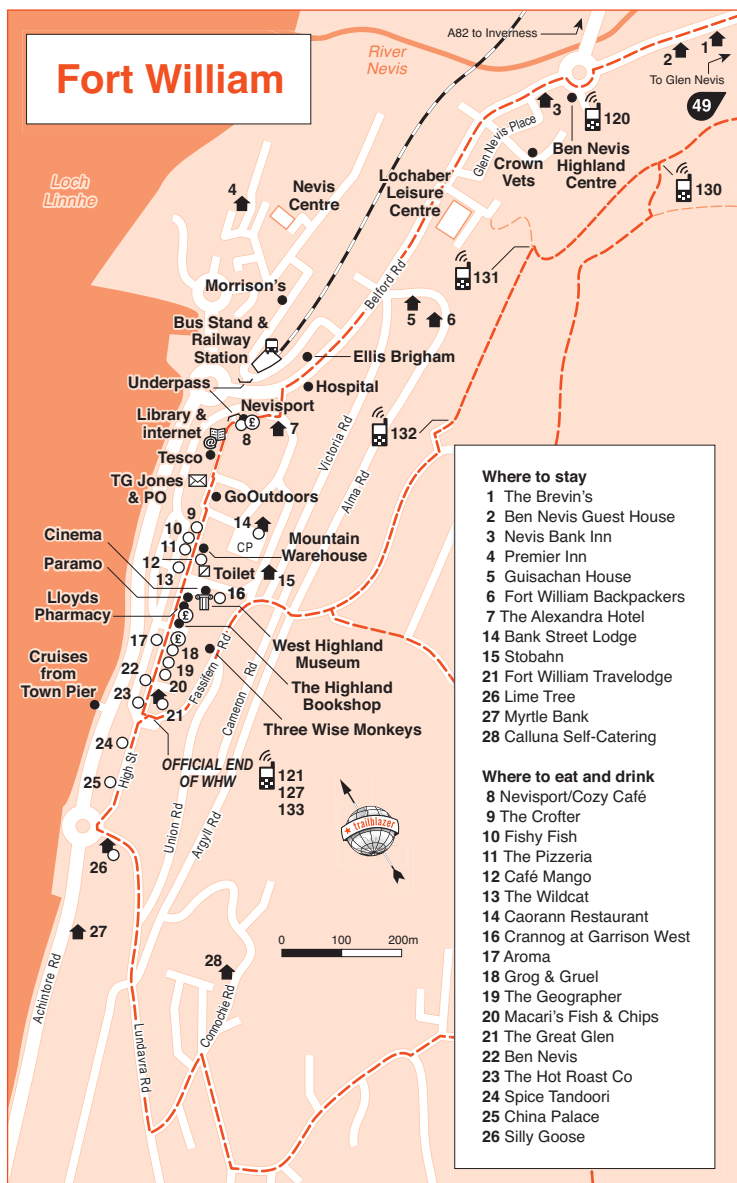


On the Tourist Route to the summit

❑ POOR VISIBILITY NAVIGATION NOTES

To get safely off the summit in severe conditions you must walk from the summit trig point on a **grid** bearing of 231° for 150 metres. Then follow a **grid** bearing of 281° to get off the plateau and onto the Tourist Route. **Remember** to add the number of degrees of magnetic variation to your compass to obtain the magnetic bearing you should follow.

Fort William



10am-4pm; free) is a treasure trove of fascinating artefacts on the Highlands, well worth a visit. There's a secret portrait of Bonnie Prince Charlie, displays about the crofting life and lots of information on Ben Nevis, including the story of Henry Alexander who drove his Model T Ford to the summit in 1911.

There's an indoor swimming pool, sauna, steam room, and gym at **Lochaber Leisure Centre** (☎ 01397-704359; Mon-Thurs 6.30am-9.00pm, Fri to 8pm, Sat-Sun 9am-3pm) and a climbing wall at **Three Wise Monkeys** (☎ 01397-600200, ☐ threewisemonkeysclimbing.com) on Fassifern Rd.

On the opposite side of Cameron Sq from the High St is the swish independent **Highland Cinema** (☐ highlandcinema.co.uk), with its own restaurant and bar (the pizzas are scrumptious) as well as two screens.

Out of town Also available are: 1-2hr **cruises** (☎ 07367-436088, ☐ cruise-lochlinnhe.co.uk; Mar-Oct daily 10am, noon, 2pm and 4pm; £26.50-37.10) on the MV Elsie or MV Dunara with Cruise Loch Linnhe, departing from the town pier; a tour of **Ben Nevis Distillery** (☎ 01397-700200, ☐ bennevisdistillery.com; Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, also Jun- & Aug Sat 10am-6pm, Sun noon-6pm; from £5) with a chance to sip a whisky at the end; or riding *The Jacobite steam train* to Mallaig (☎ 0333-996 6692, ☐ westcoastrailways.co.uk; late April to late Oct daily).

Where to stay

Bunkhouses and hostels On Alma Rd there's the busy **Fort William Backpackers** (☎ 01397-700711, ☐ fortwilliambackpackers.com; 38 beds; dorm £30-33pp, twin room £35pp), a colourful independent hostel. Continental breakfast costs £3. The rate includes bedding and guests can use the kitchen and sitting room during the day. Note that you need photographic ID to check in.

As long as you are happy to stay for a minimum of three nights, **Calluna Self-Catering** (☎ 01397-700451, ☐ fortwilliam

holiday.co.uk; 🐾; mid Dec to Oct) has four apartments sleeping up to 4/6/7/7 people. Bedding is provided and there are full cooking facilities. Apartments are £94-143 per night.

B&Bs The difference in price between the hostels/bunkhouses and some of the less expensive bed and breakfasts is negligible when you take the cost of breakfast into account.

Some of the nicest places are located at the top of the Glen Nevis road. The first one you reach, **The Brevins** (☎ 01397-701412, ☐ thebrevins.co.uk; 1T/6D; Ⓛ; around £60-65pp), is one of the best in Fort William. All the rooms are clean and comfortable.

Just on from here is the smart **Ben Nevis Guest House** (☎ 01397-708817, ☐ bennevisguesthouse.co.uk; 4D/1T/1Tr; 🍷; Ⓛ; £60-85pp, sgl occ full room rate). There's a nice conservatory to sit in and a drying room. Room-only rates available on request.

Fassifern Rd is packed with B&Bs, though most of those we contacted now take bookings solely through AirBnB. One that doesn't is **Stobahn** (☎ 01397-702790, ☐ stobahnguesthouse.co.uk; 1T/2D en suite, 1S/1D/1F with shared facilities; £45-51pp, sgl/sgl occ full room rate) 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 but very expensive **Guisachan House** (☎ 01397-703797, ☐ guisachanguesthouse.co.uk; 2S/5T/6D/2Tr/1Qd; 🍷; Ⓛ; from £102.50pp, sing occ £205).

Below here on Bank St is **Bank Street Lodge** ☎ 01397-700070, ☐ bankstreet-lodge.co.uk; 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 from £69pp, the single is £107 (room only).

Guest houses and hotels Right beside the official end of the West Highland Way is the **Fort William Travelodge** (Fort

APPENDIX B: GPS & WHAT3WORDS WAYPOINTS

Each waypoint below was taken on the route at the reference number marked on the maps in the route guide. **GPS coordinates** and **what3words references** that correspond to these waypoints are listed here and may be particularly useful in an emergency (see p61). Gpx files for waypoints can be downloaded from [trailblazer-guides.com/gps-waypoints](https://www.trailblazer-guides.com/gps-waypoints).

WPT	COORDINATES	DESCRIPTION	WHAT3WORDS REFERENCE
001	N55° 52.203' W04° 16.866'	Entrance to Kelvingrove Park	<i>bound.dash.tanks</i>
002	N55° 52.767' W04° 17.119'	Queen Margaret Bridge	<i>copper.limit.plots</i>
003	N55° 53.544' W04° 18.047'	Kelvin Aqueduct	<i>valley.spin.degree</i>
004	N55° 53.924' W04° 18.359'	Bridge across River Kelvin	<i>stir.sharp.libraries</i>
005	N55° 54.540' W04° 17.877'	Join River Kelvin	<i>rots.round.drag</i>
006	N55° 55.099' W04° 16.464'	Bridge across River Kelvin	<i>draw.edit.sprint</i>
007	N55° 55.670' W04° 16.890'	Path under A879 Balmore Rd	<i>curry.beyond.apron</i>
008	N55° 55.657' W04° 17.122'	Bridge by Allander Water	<i>gives.audio.curve</i>
009	N55° 56.474' W04° 18.849'	Milngavie Railway station	<i>glaze.sings.image</i>
010	N55° 56.503' W04° 19.069'	Official start of WHW	<i>wires.define.void</i>
011	N55° 57.125' W04° 19.252'	Path to car park & Milngavie	<i>gasp.rooms.treat</i>
012	N55° 57.630' W04° 20.105'	Second path off east to Mugdock CP	<i>rags.secret.zinc</i>
013	N55° 57.825' W04° 20.557'	Gate onto road	<i>alien.folks.bulbs</i>
014	N55° 58.381' W04° 20.989'	Boat shed	<i>helpless.compress.shelters</i>
015	N55° 59.090' W04° 20.817'	Path over stream	<i>fists.glider.chase</i>
016	N55° 59.245' W04° 21.180'	Turn right off road; thro' gate	<i>lyricist.situates.directive</i>
017	N55° 59.719' W04° 21.425'	Stream	<i>hems.filer.worms</i>
018	N56° 00.207' W04° 21.483'	Left off path onto route of old Blane Valley Railway; through gate	<i>rewarding.lifetimes remodel</i>
019	N56° 01.239' W04° 22.256'	Gate before Beech Tree Inn	<i>sides.prowl.ticked</i>
020	N56° 01.375' W04° 22.330'	Double gates	<i>spends.writings.blotches</i>
021	N56° 01.711' W04° 22.806'	Single gate	<i>loses.crossings.nuzzled</i>
021a	N56° 02.722' W04° 22.315'	Junction in Killearn	<i>resists.thatched.helpful</i>
022	N56° 01.740' W04° 22.853'	Oakwood Garden Cntr Café	<i>jokes.classic.beginning</i>
023	N56° 02.767' W04° 23.974'	Path crosses A81	<i>target.reduction.shred</i>
024	N56° 03.118' W04° 24.245'	Gartness	<i>goodness.barrel.vital</i>
025	N56° 02.966' W04° 25.477'	Bridge across stream	<i>smart.scatters.aquatics</i>
026	N56° 03.217' W04° 25.945'	Easter Drumquhassle Farm	<i>direct.sensual.expel</i>
027	N56° 03.922' W04° 26.341'	Turn off road	<i>microchip.refrained.taller</i>
027a	N56° 03.951' W04° 27.155'	Drymen Green	<i>otter.stereos.studio</i>
028	N56° 04.162' W04° 25.973'	Left thro' gate; away from road	<i>outsiders.warnings.arise</i>
029	N56° 05.056' W04° 26.619'	Join road	<i>spot.asterisk.enlighten</i>
030	N56° 05.369' W04° 28.973'	Gate	<i>deeply.ruffling.motivate</i>
031	N56° 05.736' W04° 29.477'	Thro' gate to open moorland	<i>grudging.cornering.riskiest</i>
032	N56° 05.970' W04° 30.132'	Bridge	<i>flight.soup.stood</i>
033	N56° 05.825' W04° 31.492'	Top of Conic Hill	<i>sued.tweezers.defender</i>
034	N56° 05.406' W04° 31.989'	Kissing gate	<i>eyelid.weekend.symphonic</i>
035	N56° 05.071' W04° 32.650'	Steps off road	<i>commuted.inserted plug</i>
036	N56° 05.765' W04° 33.352'	Bridge over stream	<i>stole.rationing.silently</i>
037	N56° 06.003' W04° 33.610'	Path off road	<i>toothpick.sweated.radiates</i>
038	N56° 06.342' W04° 34.135'	Path crosses track	<i>princes.gossip.caravans</i>
039	N56° 06.634' W04° 34.678'	Path meets road	<i>results.opts.appoints</i>
040	N56° 06.766' W04° 34.860'	Bridge over stream	<i>commuted.organic.calm</i>

APPENDIX C – TAKING A DOG

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.

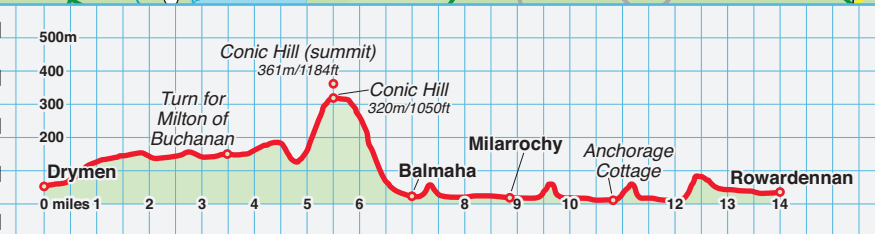
● **When crossing farmland**, particularly in the lambing season (around May) when your dog can scare the sheep, causing them to lose their young. Farmers are allowed by law to shoot at and kill any dogs that they consider are worrying their sheep. During lambing, most farmers would prefer it if you 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.

INDEX

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

- access 53-6
- accidents 61
- accommodation 18-22, 26, 100
 - see also place name*
- Achtriochtan, Loch **163**, 165, **167**
- adders 60, 74-5
- Airbnb 22
- airports/airlines 43, 44-5, 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 25
- Backpackers Club 40
- baggage carriers 26
- Balmaha 116, **119**, 120
- Balmuilty Bridge 97, **97**
- bank holidays 28
- banks 28, 31
- bed and breakfasts 21-2, 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 and apps about 41-2
- 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 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 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, 27, 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, 31, 41
- Crianlarich 139, **141**, 142
- currency 28



Fort William

Rowardennan

Balmaha

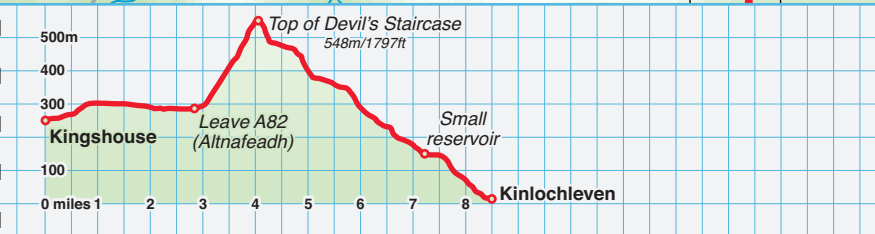
Drymen

Milngavie

Maps 8-15 – Drymen to Balmaha & Rowardennan

14 miles/23km – 5¼-7¾hrs

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

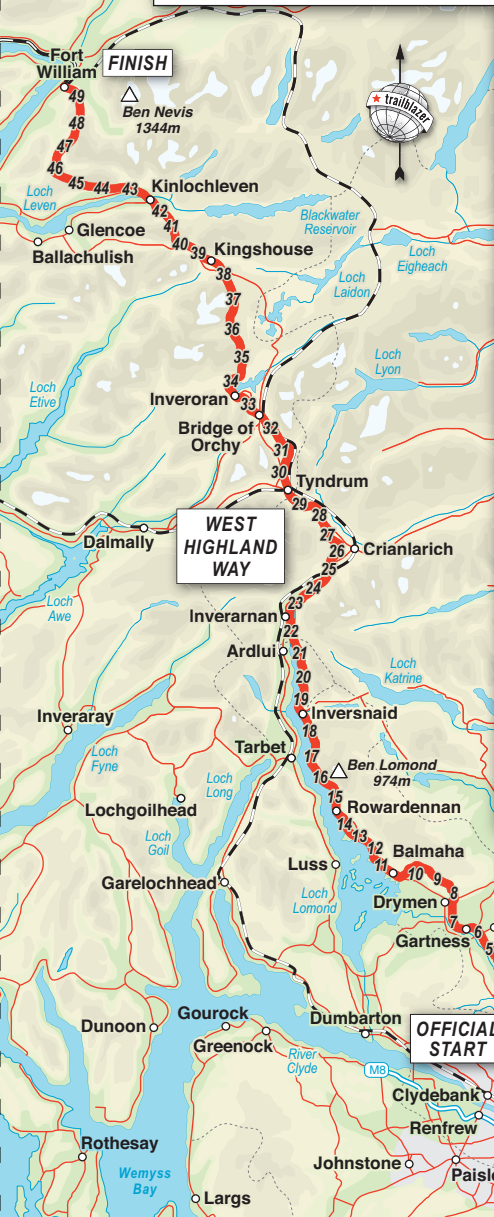


Maps 38-42 Kingshouse to Kinlochleven

8½ miles/14km – 2½-3¼hrs

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 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 Inverarnan

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 Bà Bridge

Map 37 - p160 Top of climb, 445m

Map 38 - p161 Kingshouse

Map 39 - p168 River Couppall

Map 40 - p169 The Devil's Staircase

Map 41 - p171 Allt a'Choirè Odhair-mhoir

Map 42 - p173 Kinlochleven

Map 43 - p175 Loch Leven

Map 44 - p176 Tigh-na-sleubhaich

Map 45 - p177 Lairgimor

Map 46 - p178 Allt na Lairig Moire

Map 47 - p179 Allt Coire a' Mhuilinn

Map 48 - p181 Glen Nevis

Map 49 - p186-7 Fort William