



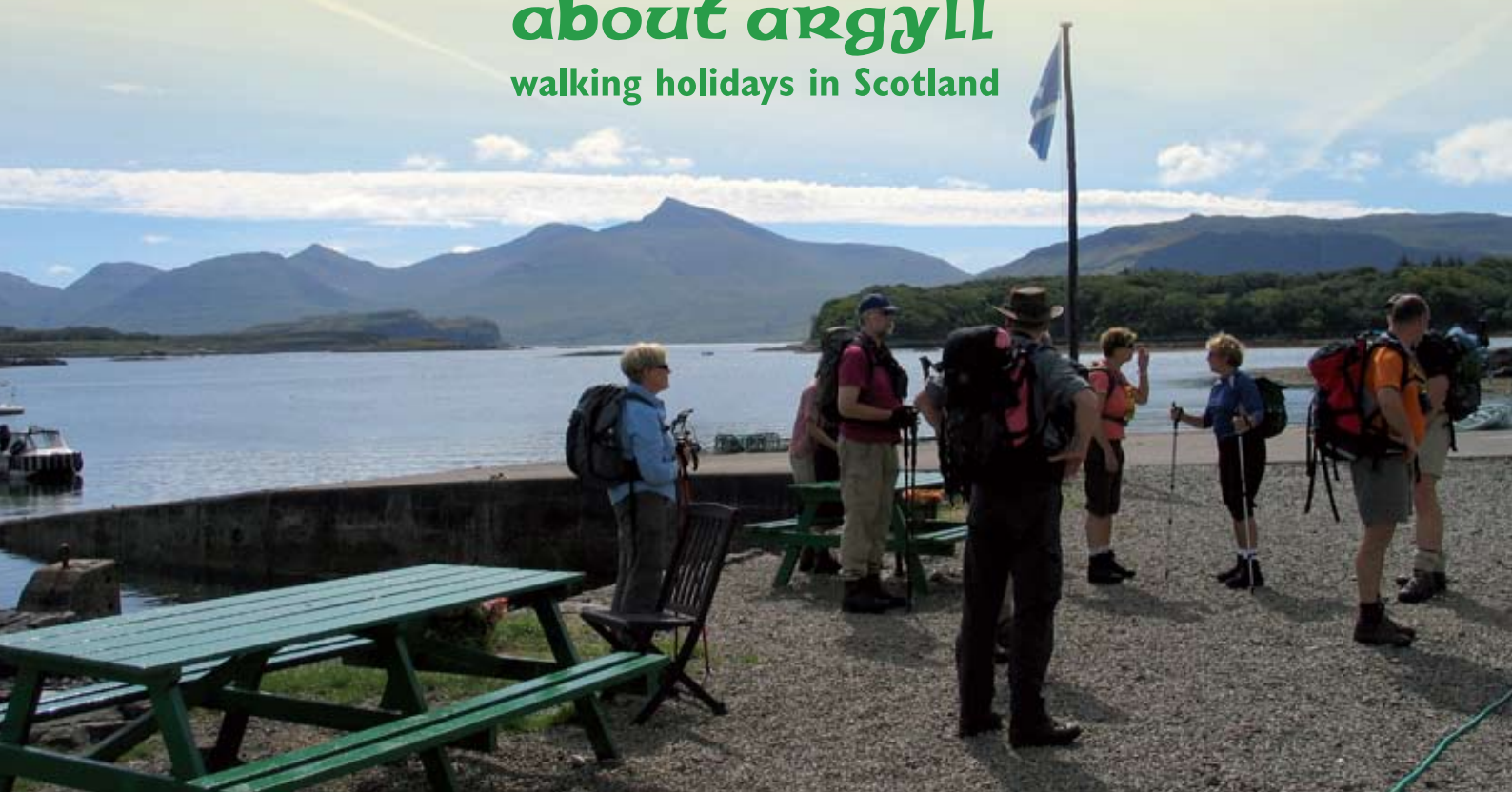
Your specialist for tailor-made hiking tours in the Highlands of Scotland

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

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



about argyll
walking holidays in Scotland



Tailor-made guided hiking

We have run private guided itineraries for many groups from Britain, Europe, the USA and Canada. In 2008, for example, we did a geologically-themed hiking tour in the West of Scotland for a group of alumni from Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota (reference on request). Our expert guides liaised beforehand with the Carleton College geology staff to produce a week of lively exploration and discussion as we followed in the footsteps of some of geology's greatest pioneers such as Hutton ('the Founder of Modern Geology') and Lyell.

We operate tailor-made hiking tours for up to 16 people, customised to your requirements. Tours may be for a weekend or for any longer period of up to two weeks, and can be drawn up for anywhere in Scotland. Although we normally concentrate on Argyll because of its particularly interesting history and geology, our guides have wide experience of working in all parts of the country.

We provide a complete package: guiding, transport, accommodation, meals, special visits and ferries/taxi-boats as required.

When you discuss a prospective tour with us, a detailed itinerary will be drawn up in close consultation with you. This can include non-walking visits to places of interest. The itinerary will have some flexibility built in to take account of weather variations and the fitness and particular interests of the group.

Itineraries can be themed to meet your special interest

Geology

It has taken almost 3000 million years for Scotland to look the way it does now. It has been a desert, a tropical swamp, a volcanic landscape, an ocean floor and has also witnessed several ice ages. The scenery of Scotland is founded on the resulting wonderfully varied mixture of rock types and ages – it is not too much to say that no other country of similar size has anything to compare with it, nor has played

a more important part in the development of the Earth sciences. The work of pioneering geologists in Scotland is reflected in the use of many Scottish names for important rock types and features.



History

Human history in Scotland goes back at least eight thousand years. The early years saw Scotland evolve from a Stone Age hunter-gatherer society to a network of independent kingdoms. The remains of the stone structures they used across the ages for ceremony, burials and defence provide focal points for some of our walks. In Scotland you are never far from the past - but recognising it for what it is can be tricky!

During our hikes we will see many ruins, be they imposing castles, chapels, abbeys or the humble, now-deserted townships of ordinary country folk whose descendants are scattered across the English-speaking world.

A historically-themed hiking tour can cover the history of Scotland from Neolithic times up to the present day, or it may cover a specific era, depending on your interests.



Wildlife

The mild but cool and wet climate of Scotland is a major influence on its ecology. The great variety of altitude, aspect, shelter and soil and rock type results in a great number of habitats.

In the central Highlands, rolling heather moorland and ancient native pinewoods fringe wide arctic-alpine plateaux such as the Cairngorms, while in the west the mountains are more thoroughly dissected and craggy, and oak and birch dominate the woodlands. These woods support internationally important communities of Atlantic mosses, liverworts and lichens.

The high mountains, straths, woodlands and seaboard are a remarkable reservoir for biodiversity, particularly where the acid soils give way to more base-rich ones over botanically-important outcrops of limestone, as at Ben Lawers and Lismore, or over basaltic lavas, as on Mull.

The indigenous mammalian fauna of Scotland includes red and roe deer, red squirrel, wildcat and pine marten on land and seals, porpoises and dolphins along the coast. Otters are at home in our

rivers and lochs as well as along our shores. Birdlife is abundant, with a wide range of species from red grouse, ptarmigan and golden eagle on the moorlands and mountains to white-tailed eagle, waders and large seabird colonies along the coast and on the islands. The rivers and lochs contain salmon, sea trout and brown trout, all of which attract ospreys.



Whatever your group's interests, we are certain to see some fascinating plants and animals but, if you would like to make wildlife a special feature of your itinerary, then we can plan accordingly.

Other themes besides those already mentioned may also be possible, and if you have suggestions that you would like to put to us, please get in touch.

Walking or hiking?

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

Walking tours

Most groups from North America opt for a walking tour. The itinerary is a combination of walking together with visits to places of interest. These visits may be part of the walk or may take place before and/or after it.

Daily hiking distances will be around 6 miles/9.5 km plus varying amounts of ascent. We don't expect to hike for longer than 4 hours on any one day. Most of the hiking will be on paths, tracks and quiet roads, but the group will also get a chance to experience hiking off-track.

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

Hiking holidays

We can also organise itineraries where the focus is mainly on walking/hiking. These are designed for people who are fit and used to hiking all day. Each day we hike up to 11 miles/17.5 km with, on average, 1000ft/305m. of ascent. On one mountain day the ascent might be as much as 3000ft/915m.

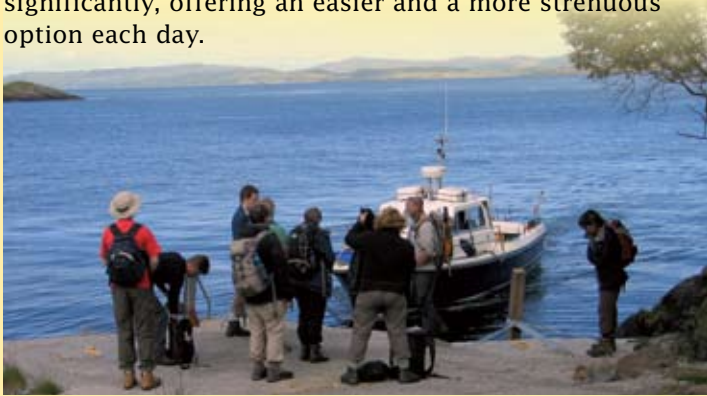
Our routes will traverse pathless glens or thread their way through remote passes. On most days as much of our time will be spent off path as on it. Scotland can be very wild and tough going:

10 miles/16 km here is often much harder than 10 miles/16 km elsewhere. All that said, we don't want to break any speed records, especially not when going uphill and you'll have all the rewards of hiking in extremely beautiful and fascinating parts of the Highlands and Islands.



Group size

We can take up to 16 people on any given tour. For groups larger than 8 there will be 2 guides and 2 minibuses - this means that we can split the party if the interest or desired level of hiking of its members varies significantly, offering an easier and a more strenuous option each day.



Guides

Our fully-qualified guides will take you to places you would not have found on your own and will make Scotland come alive for you. They live in Scotland and, as well as being keen walkers who know almost every corner of the country, they are also thoroughly versed in all aspects of its culture, history and natural history. They put great emphasis on being considerate and helpful.

Transport

All road transport will be by means of our own minibuses, each of which can take 8 clients plus their luggage. Transport will be provided from an agreed rendezvous on day 1 to the agreed point at which your tour is to end, and as required at all times in between.

Accommodation in small hotels or B&B's

Your group will stay in small family run hotels or B&B's that are individual in character and comfortable, selected by us because they meet our (and your) high expectations. These hotels and B&B's offer a friendly welcome and personal service.

Some of the evening meals will be taken in your hotel or B&B, but on other days the guides like to take the group out for a meal in carefully selected restaurants and pubs to widen your experience of good Scottish food.

About us

About Argyll Walking Holidays is based in the south-west Highlands of Scotland and we have been operating since 1995. Our aim is to run high-quality, small-scale, responsible and essentially personal hiking vacations in Scotland. We view our clients as friends who are entitled to a professional service. We organise our walking holidays with freshness and enthusiasm so that you can get the most out of visiting this beautiful part of the world. We have the flexibility, knowledge and experience to make your hiking tour a success, and we have the references to prove it.

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



about argyll
walking holidays in Scotland

Letters Lodge South, Strathlachlan, Argyll PA27 8BZ, Scotland (UK)
Tel. +44 (0)1369 860272, e-mail: info@aboutargyll.co.uk

www.aboutargyll.co.uk