

# Walkers Directory

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## PRACTICALITIES

- Pick up a copy of *tgo* magazine – ‘by hillwalkers for hillwalkers’ – for news, walk ideas, gear and book reviews; its Scottish coverage is usually better than the otherwise recommendable *Trail* and *Country Walking* magazines.
- Buy or watch videos on the PAL system.
- Plug into a square three-pin adaptor (different from the Australian three-pin) before connecting to the electricity supply (240V, 50Hz AC)
- Scotland uses the metric system for weights and measures, except for road distances (in miles) and beer (in pints).

## ACCOMMODATION

Visitors are spoilt for choice of accommodation in Scotland. You can camp in the wild or stay at bothies for free. Budget travellers (spending £5 to £20 per person per night) have the choice of camping grounds, hostels and, increasingly rarely, inexpensive B&Bs. Midrange travellers (£20 to £45 per person per night) will find a plethora of

comfortable B&Bs, guesthouses and small hotels. At the top end are luxury B&Bs, guesthouses and, of course, hotels. B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels (and the odd hostel) usually serve breakfast; the more you pay, the greater the choice.

Prices are higher during the busy season (June to September), peaking in July and August when some establishments will not take single-night bookings. At other times, special deals are often available at guesthouses and hotels. Many smaller establishments close between November and March, particularly in remote areas.

**VisitScotland's** ([www.visitscotland.com](http://www.visitscotland.com)) tourist information centres (TICs) and website provide an accommodation booking service (£3 per reservation, local and national). Alternatively, you can use the site to obtain contact details and make the bookings yourself, possibly saving quite a few pounds.

## Bothies

These are privately owned, simple shelters in remote areas. They're not locked, they're free and you can't book a space. You'll need your own cooking equipment, sleeping bag and mat, map, lighting and food. They are not meant for extended stays – two nights at the most. Many are maintained by the **Mountain Bothies Association** ([www.mountainbothies.org.uk](http://www.mountainbothies.org.uk)). For details about staying in bothies, see p21.

## Camping & Caravan Parks

There are plenty of camping and caravan parks in most parts of the country, though they're rather scarce in the Northern and Western Isles. For many, caravans and campervans are the main business, and tents are allocated only limited space. However, around major walking areas you will find sites with (usually) well-grassed spaces for tents. Tariffs vary from £10 to £16 for two people occupying an unpowered site; you'll pay an extra few pounds for an electrical hook-up. Hot showers are free in some places, others charge a modest fee. Camper kitchens, where you can cook and wash up under cover, are fairly rare; most parks do have laundries, where a wash and

spin-dry costs around £3. On-site shops and cafés are quite common, especially at sites well away from a town or village. Many sites participate in VisitScotland's grading scheme and are listed in its *Caravan and Camping Parks Map*, published annually.

## WILD CAMPING

The scope for wild camping – in the hills, glens and along the coast – is almost infinite. However, keeping in mind the changeable climate and the favourite haunts of midges (see the boxed text, p313), you will need to choose your site carefully. See also p21 for some camping tips.

## Guesthouses & B&Bs

B&Bs are a Scottish institution and their hosts' hospitality is almost legendary. At the very least you'll have a bedroom in a private house, a shared bathroom and breakfast, either cooked or continental. Pay a little more and you'll enjoy an en suite room with TV and tea- and coffee-making facilities and a wider choice for breakfast. The best have a separate sitting (lounge) room for guests, where you can relax and enjoy a cup of tea in comfort. In popular walking areas some establishments have a drying room, and the hosts will provide a pick-up and drop-off service and a packed lunch; look for the 'Walkers Welcome' symbol in accommodation guides. Expect to pay as little as £22 and as much as £40 per person per night for a B&B. Many of those in more remote locations offer a two-, three- or even four-course evening meal, usually excellent value, ranging from around £12 to £25.

Guesthouses are larger than B&Bs, and perhaps a little more formal, but not necessarily any more luxurious. Pubs may also offer relatively inexpensive B&B accommodation, which can be convenient, with room and meals under one roof, but they may not be as peaceful as a private home. Rates start at about £26 per person per night.

Single rooms are scarce and some hosts are reluctant to let a twin room to one person, even in the off-season, without charging a supplement of as much as £10.

## Hostels

Scotland's many hostels offer inexpensive accommodation and are great places for meeting fellow travellers and walkers. The

## WALKING CLUBS

If you're a sociable type, joining a walking club can make all the difference to your enjoyment of exploring Scotland on foot. There are scores of clubs across the country (though they are mainly in the more populous central regions) which run regular programs of walks and, usually, social events throughout the year. Some may also offer instruction in navigation (maps, compass, GPS). Walks are always organised and led by competent and experienced members, and are graded in much the same way as the walks in this book.

The **Ramblers Association** ([www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)) has more than 50 groups around Scotland, while the **Scottish Mountaineering Council** ([www.smc.org.uk](http://www.smc.org.uk)) website has links to many other clubs.

standard of facilities is generally very good; it's fast becoming the norm for hostels to have small dorms with en suite. Kitchens are provided for self-catering and many hostels provide internet access.

From May to September, and on public holidays, hostels can be booked solid, sometimes by large groups, so book well ahead.

The **Scottish Youth Hostel Association** (SYHA; [www.syha.org.uk](http://www.syha.org.uk); 0870 155 3255; 7 Glebe Cres, Stirling FK8 2JA) operates a wide variety of reasonably priced hostels from one end of the country to the other. They range from the brand new Edinburgh Central palace (opened in 2006), to a magnificent mansion beside Loch Lomond, to small, homely hostels at Inverry in the Cairngorms and Broadford on the Southern Upland Way. The average tariff during summer is around £14; an online booking service is available. A booklet listing the hostels is widely available from the hostels themselves and from TICs.

Many of the numerous independent hostels belong to **Scottish Independent Hostels** (SIH; [www.hostel-scotland.co.uk](http://www.hostel-scotland.co.uk); PO Box 7024, Fort William, PH33 6RE), an association that represents only hostels that have been approved by SIH's independent assessor. Most are privately owned and the majority are family run. The greatest concentration is across the Highlands; they're very scarce south of Glasgow and Edinburgh, and in the far north. SIH's

*Blue Hostel Guide*, a free brochure with full details of more than 120 hostels, is available from TICs or direct from the association.

In Shetland, you'll find *bòds* (camping barns). All are in historic buildings and, usually, remote locations. They offer rather spartan accommodation – a roof over your head, running water and lighting. You'll need a sleeping bag, mat, cooking equipment and food. Contact **Shetland Amenity Trust** (☎ 01595 694688; www.camping-bods.co.uk) for more information

## Hotels

Generally at the more expensive end of the accommodation scale, hotels range from rather impersonal international-style hotels in the cities and near airports, to magnificent mansions in spectacular locations, to homely, small inns, usually also in great, and quite often remote, settings.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Approximate standard opening hours are as follows:

**Cafés** 9am to 5pm; in large towns and cities some open for breakfast from about 7am. If licensed they may also stay open for dinner.

**Pubs & Bars** 11am to 11pm (some to midnight or 1am) Monday to Saturday, 12.30pm to 11pm Sunday; lunch is served noon to 2.30pm, dinner 6pm to 9pm daily.

**Restaurants** Noon to 3pm for lunch, 6pm to 9pm or 10pm for dinner.

**Shops** At least 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday; many also open Sunday, typically 11am to 5pm. Supermarkets stay open to 8pm and a few city and large-town supermarkets open 24 hours.

## CHILDREN

It's true that walking with your kids is very different from walking as you knew (and loved) it before they came along. If you can adjust happily to living with children, you'll probably enjoy walking with them.

'Kids, they slow you down,' you'll often hear, and that is never more true than when you're walking. There is an age, however, when children can match your pace exactly: when you're carrying them all the way. A good quality specialist child carrier is worth its weight in chocolate (or beer, depending on your tastes). All carriers on the market have to meet strict safety criteria, and are designed to carry a maximum load of 20kg. Inevitably, children's increasing weight,

and a growing determination to get down and do everything for themselves, spells the end of that transitional phase. Once your first child is too big or too independent for the carrier, usually around the age of four years, you simply have to scale down your expectations of distance and rate of progress.

This is when the fun really starts. No longer another item to be carried, or at least not all the time, a walking child must be factored into your planning at the most basic level. Rather than get partway into a walk and ask yourself in desperation, 'Why on earth are we doing this?', make that the first question you ask, at home. While any walking that is driven by adult statistics – miles covered, peaks bagged – isn't likely to work with kids, other important goals take over: fun and a sense of something accomplished together, and joy in the wonders of the natural world.

Easy and small is a good way to start; plan (or hope) that more adventurous, longer walks will come later. Even if you were out every weekend before you had kids, once or twice per month will probably be enough, at least to start with. Too hard and too often, and what should be fun can become an ordeal for all, especially the youngster, who could well be put off completely for life.

Don't overlook time for play. A game of hide and seek during lunch might well be the highlight of your child's day on the walk. A few simple toys or a favourite book stowed in your pack can make a huge difference. Play can also transform the walking itself: a simple stroll in the outdoors becomes a deer/otter/badger hunt in an enchanted wonderland, or a crab chase along the coast. Company can be all-important, however well you get on together; consider inviting a couple of friends or cousins to share the fun. Plan to finish the day with a treat; there are plenty of good tearooms where everyone can enjoy a drink and a sticky cake.

For the sake of sanity and general contentment, and to avoid any resentment of missed opportunities, you may need to plan to do some walks *without* children. This is harder to arrange away from home and the regular, trusted network of family, friends and babysitters. You may be able to take advantage of local child-minding services;

consult your accommodation hosts and/or the local TIC, preferably in advance.

There is another alternative. If you're desperate to stretch your legs and climb a Munro/Corbett/any hill at all that's simply beyond you as a family, split up for a few hours. Find a short but suitably challenging walk – maybe a peak close to a road or on a side trip – and take turns. Consider whether you could take your walking holiday with another young family, to enlarge the pool of both walkers and carers, and to give the kids company of their own age.

These days some outdoor gear shops have a special section decked out with brightly coloured, functional kit for kids, mainly small packs, clothing and footwear. It might seem expensive, but it will help to ensure that they keep warm and dry, all-important in ensuring their enjoyment. It's worth remembering that shoes (trainers) are much more comfortable than boots, especially for younger children.

Following is a selection of walks in this book that we recommend for children:

**Edinburgh & Glasgow** Lothian Bents & Links (p48), Falls of Clyde (p56), Along the Greenock Cut (p53), North Berwick Law (p50), Arthur's Seat (p50), the Whangie (p59).

**The South** Grey Mare's Tail & White Coomb (p73), Eildon Hills (p79), Burnmouth to St Abb's Head (p81), Tweed Valley near Peebles (p84).

**Central Highlands & Islands** Cock of Arran (p101), Heights of North Sannox (p103).

**Lochaber & Glen Coe** Glencoe Lochan (p133), Steall Meadows to Glen Nevis on the Ring of Steall (p128).

**The Cairngorms** Linn of Dee Circuit (p154), Loch Muick (p164), Loch an Eilean (p151).

**Highland Glens** Individual days of Great Glen Way (p168), Aberarder to Lochan a'Choire on the Creag Meagaidh walk (p184), the Other End of the Caledonian Canal (p188).

**Isle of Skye** The Quiraing (p209), Coral Beaches (p210) **Wester Ross** Beinn Eighe Mountain Trail (p225), Coire Mhic Fhearchair (p231).

**Western Isles** Scalpay (p254), Hushinish (p246), Eoligarry (p254), Loch Druidibeg National Nature Reserve (p254), Toe Head (p254), Vatersay (p252), West Side Coast (p239). **Northwest** Sandwood Bay & Cape Wrath (p258), Point of Stoer (p271), Stac Pollaidh (p271), Faraid Head (p269), Falls of Kirkaig (p269).

**Northern Isles** Old May of Hoy from Rackwick (p275), West Westray Coast (p280), Castle O'Burrian (p282), Mull Head Local Nature Reserve (p291), Muckle Roe (p288), Eshaness (p289), Hermaness & Muckle Flugga (p286), Burra Isle (p290), St Ninian's Isle (p291).

As far as travelling is concerned, child concessions for accommodation and transport are often available. Discounts may be up to half the adult rate, although the definition of 'child' varies from under 12 to under 16 years of age.

The Lonely Planet guide, *Travel with Children*, contains plenty more useful advice and information.

## CLIMATE

'Varied' accurately describes the many moods of Scotland's cool, temperate climate. The weather can change more than once during a day, and usually changes from one day to the next. There are also wide variations over small distances; one glen may languish under cloud and drizzle, the next may be basking in sunshine. As some locals say, 'If you don't like the weather, come back this afternoon'.

Country-wide, May and June enjoy the lowest rainfall. Scotland's west coast is wettest (between 150cm and 200cm annually) exposed as it is to moisture-laden winds and weather fronts from the Atlantic. The east is much drier, with an average rainfall around 65cm. Storms are rare between May and August, but become increasingly commonplace towards winter (December to February), especially in the Western and Northern Isles.

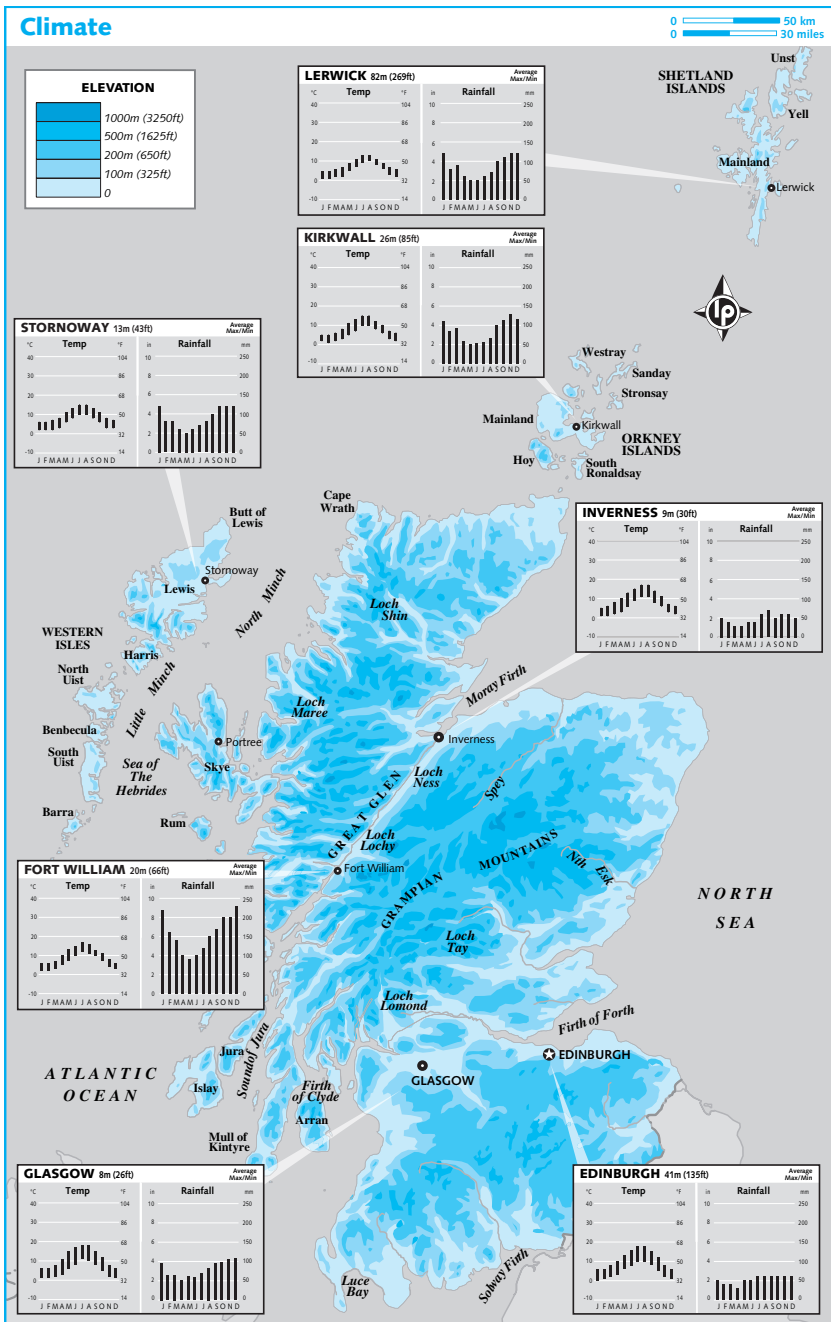
Considering Scotland's northern position (Edinburgh is on the same latitude as Moscow), you'd expect a cold climate. However, thanks to prevailing southwesterly winds warmed by the Gulf Stream, the climate is relatively mild. Summer (June to August) temperatures average between 16°C and 19°C in the west and in the Highlands. During prolonged spells of warm southern airflow, the thermometer can rise well into the 20°Cs and temperatures around 30°C are not unknown.

For more detail see the climate charts on p296.

## Weather information

The **Met Office** (☎ 0870 900 0100; www.metoffice.com) is the government's meteorological agency, and issues Mountain Area forecasts for two regions: West Highlands (Northwest Highlands, Skye, Lochaber, the Trossachs) and East Highlands (east of Rannoch Moor and including the Cairngorms). These daily forecasts include the extent of low cloud,

## Climate



visibility, wind, temperature and a general outlook. Four webcams on the website are fragmented and of little use.

The more specialised **Mountain Weather Information Service** ([www.mwis.org.uk](http://www.mwis.org.uk)) offers a better service for walkers and climbers. It covers five regions, including the south, with data for wind, wetness, cloud, sunshine, air clarity and temperature. Some of the webcams, including those on Ben Nevis and Beinn Alligin in Wester Ross, are useful.

Print-outs of local forecasts are usually available from TICs or visitor centres in mountain areas, and from some hostels; generally, such sources are mentioned in the walks chapters in this book.

## CUSTOMS

Travellers arriving in the UK from other EU countries don't have to pay tax or duty on goods for personal use. Travellers from outside the EU can bring in specified quantities of duty-free alcohol and cigarettes, and £145 worth of all other goods, including gifts and souvenirs.

For details of restrictions and quarantine regulations, see the website of **HM Revenue and Customs** ([www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)).

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES  
UK Embassies Abroad

Following is a selection of British embassies and high commissions abroad.

**Australia** (☎ 02-6270 6666; [www.britaus.net](http://www.britaus.net);

Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla, Canberra, ACT 2600)

**Canada** (☎ 613-237 1530; [www.britaincanada.org](http://www.britaincanada.org);

80 Elgin St, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5K7)

**France** (☎ 01 44 51 31 00; [www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr](http://www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr);

35 rue du Faubourg St Honoré, 75383 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 030-20457-0; [www.britischebotschaft.de](http://www.britischebotschaft.de);

Wilhelmstrasse 70, 10117 Berlin)

**Ireland** (☎ 01-205 3700; [www.britishembassy.ie](http://www.britishembassy.ie);

29 Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

**Netherlands** (☎ 0070-427 0427; [www.britain.nl](http://www.britain.nl);

Lange Voorhout 10, 2514 ED, The Hague)

**New Zealand** (☎ 04-924 2888; [www.britain.org.nz](http://www.britain.org.nz);

44 Hill St, Thorndon, Wellington).

**USA** (☎ 202-588 7800; [www.britainusa.com](http://www.britainusa.com);

3100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008)

## Consulates in Scotland

Most overseas diplomatic missions are in London, but several countries also have consulates in or near Edinburgh.

**Australia** (☎ 0131 624 3333; 93 George St, EH2 3E5)  
Passport applications and document-witnessing only; for emergencies contact the **Australian High Commission** (☎ 020-7887 5335) in London.

**Canada** (☎ 0131 473 6320; Festival Sq, 50 Lothian Rd, EH3 9WJ)

**France** (☎ 0131 225 7954; 21 Randolph Cres, EH3 7TT)

**Germany** (☎ 0131 337 2323; 16 Eglinton Cres, EH12 5DG)

**Ireland** (☎ 0131 226 7711; 16 Randolph Cres, EH3 7TT)

**Netherlands** (☎ 0131 220 3226; Thistle Ct, 1-2 Thistle St, EH2 1DD)

**USA** (☎ 0131 556 8315; 3 Regent Tce, EH7 5BW)

## FOOD &amp; DRINK

Scotland has become a gourmet's destination, as the country's excellent range of top-quality fresh meat, seafood, cheeses and vegetables (increasingly including organic produce), and the skills and enthusiasm of chefs in restaurants and pubs, has become widely known.

Locally grown beef and lamb are much sought after, as is venison, a leaner meat from red deer. Haggis, that much-maligned Scottish icon, can be very enjoyable if it's properly prepared and cooked. Scottish wild salmon is famous but scarce and expensive, while shellfish is widely available, as is brown trout and smoked fish. Many of the best cheeses come from the islands, notably Arran, Bute, Mull and Orkney.

Scotland supports a thriving brewing industry, with the mass market dominated by McEwens, Scottish & Newcastle, Tennent's and Youngers. There's a bar-full of small breweries, literally from one end of the country to the other, producing an amazing array of real ales – for our pick of the best ales, see p298. They're free of hangover-inducing preservatives and some are served in pubs by hand-pump from the cask; many more are available in bottles.

Whisky and Scotland are synonymous, and you can't leave without trying a dram or two of single malt; it's the more expensive variety, but infinitely superior to blended whisky. The more fiery malts come from the islands – Islay, Skye and Orkney. Strath-spey produces lighter, less peaty drams.

## Eating out

If you're staying in towns and villages during your walks, there will usually be a choice between dinner in a pub or restaurant/bistro. Bar suppers (as they're called) in pubs are

usually good value, and the best of them can be surprisingly good, with imaginative combinations of ingredients and sauces, far removed from the once-traditional chips-with-everything approach. There are plenty of small restaurants around the country which are dedicated to using fresh local produce whenever possible, and which offer very affordable menus, the equal of any fancy place in the cities. Almost all larger villages and towns have either an Indian or Chinese restaurant (or both), and at least one takeaway place, usually a 'chippie' (fish and chip shop); the well-known fast-food chains are very thin on the ground away

from the major centres. The recommended establishments in the regional chapters are listed in order of cost, with the least expensive first. See p294 for standard opening times.

Vegetarians, and to a lesser extent vegans, are well looked after these days; it's rare to find a menu that doesn't include at least one vegetarian dish, though it does help if you cultivate a devotion to pasta and curries.

### Self-catering

You will find at least one supermarket in larger towns where you can stock up before

#### TOP FIVE REAL ALES *Sandra Bardwell*

Scores of real-ale breweries in Scotland produce an extraordinary range of wonderful beers, including lagers, Pilsners, Scottish ales, wheat beers, dark ales, and some using traditional ingredients such as heather and even seaweed. Many are so distinctive that they deserve to be imbibed at a particular time – before, during or after dinner. Here is a highly personal guide to five of the best, in alphabetical order (as order of merit is impossible!), and some recommendations for others well worth trying.

- **Belhaven Pilsener** ([www.belhaven.co.uk](http://www.belhaven.co.uk)) Made at Dunbar in East Lothian, this beer is orange-gold with up-front hops so it's very dry, even tart. A great thirst quencher after a walk.
- **Cairngorm Trade Winds** ([www.cairngormbrewery.com](http://www.cairngormbrewery.com)) Made at Aviemore, this multi-award winner has a high proportion of wheat and corn. The surprise ingredient is elderflower, which really hits you at first, but soon merges with plenty of hop flavours. Very refreshing and thirst-quenching.
- **Isle of Arran Dark** ([www.arranbrewery.com](http://www.arranbrewery.com)) A lovely, deep golden-brown, this is a bit thin at first for a dark beer but becomes very fruity as you sip. Ideal after dinner, served at room temperature.
- **Innis & Gunn Oak-aged Beer** ([www.innisandgunn.com](http://www.innisandgunn.com)) An amazing ale; at 6.6% it's stronger than most and very, very smooth, having been matured in oak barrels, residing in Edinburgh, for 30 days. This rich, raisin-sweet beer is definitely one for slow after-dinner sipping.
- **Orkney Red MacGregor** ([www.orkneybrewery.co.uk](http://www.orkneybrewery.co.uk)) Orkney does several fine beers, including this one, which is deep cedar in colour, rich, creamy and full of fruit. One to have with puddings.

Of the many others, **Broughton** ([www.broughtonales.co.uk](http://www.broughtonales.co.uk)) in the Borders pays tribute to writer John Buchan – also celebrated on the John Buchan Way (p76 – with Greenmantle). **Caledonian** ([www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk](http://www.caledonian-brewery.co.uk)) Golden Harvest organic ale is full of lemons and limes. **Heather Ale** ([www.heatherale.co.uk](http://www.heatherale.co.uk)) is perhaps the most innovative of all, with its delectable Fraoch, using heather, and Grozet, made with gooseberries. **Harviestoun**, at Dollar below the Ochil hills, offers Old Engine Oil and Bitter & Twisted (among others) – much more than mere marketing gimmicks. The **Black Isle Brewery** ([www.blackislebrewery.com](http://www.blackislebrewery.com)) near Inverness specialises in organic ales, notably a wheat beer and Red Kite, both superb thirst quenchers. At Uig on the west coast, **Isle of Skye** ([www.skyebrewery.co.uk](http://www.skyebrewery.co.uk)) has a great range, including Black Cuillin and Red Cuillin – what else would you drink after a stroll in those rugged mountains? Last, but certainly not least, Britain's northernmost brewery, **Valhalla** ([www.valhallabrewery.co.uk](http://www.valhallabrewery.co.uk)) on Unst in Shetland, produces a small range, of which Old Scatness, made with bere meal (an ancestor of barley), stands out as an after-walk beer.

*Slàinte!*

heading out into the wilds, though even very small villages almost always have a small shop that carries a basic range of supplies, as do some large camping grounds. These sources are listed in the respective town/village entries in the regional chapters. If you're planning to camp, specialised freeze-dried meals are only available in outdoor gear shops but it doesn't take much imagination (and much less cash) to do interesting things with, for example, pasta, packaged sauces and a few vegetables. See p317 for information about availability of fuel for camping stoves.

### HOLIDAYS

#### Public Holidays

Although bank holidays are general public holidays in the rest of the UK, in Scotland they apply only to banks and some other commercial offices. Bank holidays happen at the start of January, the first weekend in March, the first and last weekend in May, the first weekend in August and on Boxing Day. Christmas Day, New Year's Day and 2 January, and Good Friday and Easter Monday are also general public holidays.

#### School Holidays

School is out for two weeks at Easter, from early July to late August, one week in October, and two or three weeks around Christmas. These are always busy times, particularly in summer, when locals holidaying in Scotland are joined by visitors from Continental Europe and the world at large. Accommodation is harder to come by and it's well worth booking ahead.

### INSURANCE

Travel-insurance policies are many and various, and should routinely cover medical expenses, theft or loss, and cancellation of, or delays in, your travel arrangements. The international student-travel policies handled by STA Travel and other reputable student-travel organisations are usually good value.

Make sure the policy includes health care and medication in the countries you may visit on your way to/from Scotland (see also p310).

As some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which may include walking, make sure you'll be covered for everything you plan to do, especially as

### WATER

Most walks cross at least one burn, from which you could be tempted to drink long and deep. Remember, however, sheep are almost ubiquitous and deer are widespread here. Consequently, the chances of water-courses being contaminated by animals, alive or dead, are quite high. While many walkers do drink from burns in remote areas, it's better to play safe and either carry your own drinks on a day walk or boil water if you're camping. For information about purification methods see p312).

some don't cover ambulances, helicopter rescue or emergency flights home.

### INTERNET ACCESS

The best places to check email and surf the internet are public libraries. Almost every town and many villages have at least a couple of terminals, use of which is available either free or for a modest fee. Larger TICs across the country also have internet access, as do most large youth hostels.

There are also internet cafés in the cities and some large towns that are generally good value, charging up to £5 per hour.

### MAPS

#### Buying Maps

**Ordnance Survey** ([www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)) maps are available online and from outdoor gear shops, newsagents, bookshops and TICs.

**Harvey** ([www.harveymaps.co.uk](http://www.harveymaps.co.uk)) maps can also be purchased online and from TICs in the areas they cover.

#### Large-Scale Maps

For the great majority of walks in this book, two OS series are recommended – the Landranger 1:50,000 and the Explorer 1:25,000. With a contour interval of 10m, the superb Landranger maps contain an enormous amount of tourism-related information, including the location of TICs and car parks. Around 85 maps cover the country. The Explorer series comes in single- and double-sided formats and is the ideal walking map, though you may need more than one for a given walk where a single Landranger would suffice. If you feel particularly indulgent, succumb to the temptation of an

**MAPS IN THIS BOOK**

The maps in this book are intended to show the general route of the walks described and are drawn to a metric scale. They are not sufficiently detailed for route-finding or navigation. For this you will need properly surveyed maps at an adequate scale, showing all (or most) relief features. They are recommended in the Planning section for each walk.

A map legend appears on the inside front cover.

Explorer – Active map, printed on waterproof paper with a coating that allows you to write all over it. Active maps cost almost twice as much as standard Explorer maps.

All 85 Landranger maps can also be purchased on four CDs from **Anquet Maps** (☎ 0845 330 9570; www.anquet.co.uk); individual 1:25,000 (with 3D virtual landscape) and national park maps can also be downloaded (at a steep price).

Independent map publisher, Harvey, produces a wide range of walking maps in its Superwalker (1:25,000), Outdoor (1:40,000) and Summit (1:12,500) series. These excellent maps, with 10m contours, are printed on waterproof paper and contain loads of useful information. Areas covered include Torridon, the Cuillin (Skye), Ben Nevis, Cairn Gorm, Lochnagar, Arran, Pentland Hills and Galloway Hills. Harvey has also mapped the Great Glen, West Highland, Speyside and St Cuthbert's Ways in its 1:40,000 Route series.

**Small-Scale Maps**

Britain's official map maker, the Ordnance Survey (OS), publishes 1:250,000 maps in its Travel – Road series, three of which cover Scotland. They are contoured and ideal for finding your way around the country.

Other regional maps, usually available at TICs, may be a better bet, though you could finish up with a backpack full of maps.

**MONEY**

Britain's currency is the pound sterling (£), which comprises 100 pence (p).

Three Scottish banks issue their own bank notes. You shouldn't have trouble changing them immediately south of the

Scotland–England border, but elsewhere it may be difficult. All UK banks will accept the notes but overseas banks will not.

Exchange rates are listed on the inside front cover of this book. For a guide to costs see p18.

**ATMs**

You'll usually find at least one automatic teller machine (ATM, also known as cash machines) in small towns and some villages, sometimes inside a shop or service station. Cash withdrawals may be subject to a small charge, but most are free.

**Credit Cards**

Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted, although some places charge a fee for using them. Charge cards such as Amex and Diners Club may not be accepted in small establishments or off the beaten track. It's best to combine plastic and travellers cheques so you have something to fall back on if an ATM swallows your card or local banks don't accept it.

**Moneychangers**

The best places to change currencies are the bureaux de change at international airports. They charge less than most high-street banks and cash sterling travellers cheques for free. Elsewhere, you will probably have to pay outrageous commissions and fees.

**On the Walk**

If you're doing day walks from a base in a town or village, cash shouldn't be a problem. On long-distance walks make sure you have enough to cover the expected costs of accommodation and meals. B&Bs and small youth hostels don't usually take credit cards; cheques drawn on local accounts are OK if backed by a guarantee card.

**Travellers Cheques**

In Scotland, banks charge to cash travellers cheques, so it's best to cash them at a bureau de change at an international airport.

**TELEPHONE**

To call Scotland from abroad, dial your country's international access code then ☎ 44 (the UK country code), then the area code (dropping the first 0) followed by the telephone number.

In the UK, local calls are charged by time; national calls by time and distance. The cheapest times to ring are from 6pm to 8am Monday to Friday and from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday.

Public phones take either cash or credit cards; some take both. The minimum charge on BT phones is 30p, which buys you 15 minutes for local and national (Britain-wide) calls.

The following are codes to be aware of:

|           |                    |
|-----------|--------------------|
| ☎ 0800    | toll-free call     |
| ☎ 0845    | local call rate    |
| ☎ 0870    | national call rate |
| ☎ 090/091 | premium rate       |

To call abroad from Scotland, dial ☎ 00, followed by the country code, area code (drop the first 0 if there is one) and number. Direct dialling is cheaper than going via the international operator (☎ 155).

**MOBILE PHONES**

Mobile phone numbers usually begin with ☎ 07. Scotland uses the GSM 900/1800

network, which covers the rest of Europe, Australia and New Zealand but isn't compatible with the North American GSM 1900. If you have a GSM phone, check with your provider about using it in the UK, and beware of calls being routed internationally, which is very expensive for a local call. You can buy a 'pay-as-you-go' phone for as little as £40. See p315 for advice about using your mobile during a walk.

**TIME**

Summer Time (daylight-saving time) has been used in Britain since WWI. Clocks are put forward one hour during the last weekend in March and put back one hour during the last weekend in October. This means that, during Summer Time, Britain is one hour ahead of GMT. As a standard, New York is five hours behind GMT and Sydney is 10 hours ahead.

Most public-transport timetables use the 24-hour clock but it's rarely used in everyday conversation; people refer to 9am or 9pm.

**TAKING PHOTOS OUTDOORS** *Gareth McCormack*

For walkers, photography can be a vexed issue – all that magnificent scenery but such weight and space restrictions on what photographic equipment you can carry. With a little care and planning, however, it is possible to maximise your chance of taking great photos on the trail.

**Light & Filters** In fine weather, the best light is early and late in the day. In strong sunlight and in mountain and coastal areas, where the light is intense, a polarising filter will improve colour saturation and reduce haze. On overcast days the soft light can be great for shooting wildflowers and running water, and an 81A warming filter can be useful. If you use slide film, a graduated filter will help balance unevenly lit landscapes.

**Equipment** If you need to travel light carry a zoom in the 28–70mm range, and if your sole purpose is landscapes consider carrying just a single wide-angle lens (24mm). A tripod is essential for really good images and there are some excellent lightweight models available. Otherwise a trekking pole, pack or even a pile of rocks can be used to improvise.

**Camera Care** Keep your gear dry – a few zip-lock freezer bags can be used to double wrap camera gear and silica-gel sachets (a drying agent) can be used to suck moisture out of equipment. Sturdy cameras will normally work fine in freezing conditions. Take care when bringing a camera from one temperature extreme to another; if moisture condenses on the camera parts make sure it dries thoroughly before going back into the cold, or mechanisms can freeze up. Standard camera batteries fail very quickly in the cold. Remove them from the camera when it's not in use and keep them under your clothing.

For a thorough grounding in photography on the road, read *Lonely Planet's Travel Photography* by Richard l'Anson, a full-colour guide for happy-snappers and professional photographers alike. Also highly recommended is the outdoor photography classic *Mountain Light* by Galen Rowell.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**VisitScotland** (☎ 0845 225 5121; www.visitscotland.com; Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Dr, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6JH) is the country's official tourist agency. It does handle post and telephone enquiries, but you'll probably do better by contacting local sources (listed in the Information Sources sections, and in individual towns in the regional chapters).

TICs in cities and large towns are open daily from around March to October, and Monday to Saturday from October to March. In smaller places most are usually open only from Easter to September or October.

Many of the local TICs are, for better or (probably) worse, hooked up to centralised call centres, which deal with phone enquiries. Face-to-face, you can expect friendly, helpful service.

## VISAS

Visa regulations are subject to change so it's essential to check with your local British embassy before leaving home. Currently, if you're a citizen of Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA, you can stay for up to six months without a visa, but are not allowed to work. EU citizens do not need a visa to enter the country. For more information, see **UKvisas** (www.ukvisas.gov.uk).

## WALKING FESTIVALS

A distinctively Irish event, walking festivals have caught on in Scotland with a vengeance. Not quite a contradiction in terms, although walking can be a very serious business for some, festivals typically comprise day and evening programs, spread over a weekend or even a week. During the day there'll be one or more guided walks, ranging from easy to demanding, and in the evening a variety of entertainment is usually put on, including illustrated talks, exhibitions, BBQs, dinners and that Scottish speciality, a *ceilidh*, which is part-party, part-concert. Does it cost anything (apart from accommodation and meals)? Yes and no – some organisers charge participants for each of the walks, others don't.

Mountain film festivals are another growth industry, having expanded from the Dundee original. Their focus is pretty wide (covering the spectrum of outdoor adventure activities) but always includes mountaineering and climbing. Programs include

lectures (often by famous 'names'), exhibitions and, of course, social events, without which any festival would be incomplete.

The festivals listed below are all well established, so the contact details should hold good. If not, then the **VisitScotland** (www.visitscotland.com/walking) website may be useful; alternatively, check with a local TIC.

### EDINBURGH & GLASGOW

**Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival** (www.edinburghmountainfilm.com) In a city with some experience in festivals, this one takes place in October with the focus on adventure in a program of films, lectures and exhibitions.

### THE SOUTH

**Moffat Walking Festival** Usually takes place in October, and features walks along rivers and in the hills, including the several Corbetts in the area, and sections of the Southern Upland Way (p63). Contact the **Moffat TIC** (☎ 01683 220620; www.visitmoffat.co.uk) for details.

**Newton Stewart Walking Festival** (☎ 01671 402770; www.newtonstewartwalkfest.co.uk) Around May, this makes the most of the nearby Galloway Hills and forest park, and includes challenging mountain walks (such as the Merrick, p72) and a variety of low-level walks along the coast and to archaeological and historic sites.

**Scottish Borders Walking Festival** The pioneer in Scotland in the mid-1990s, this week-long festival happens during early September. St Cuthbert's Way (p85) and the Borders Abbeys Way (p86) are hardy annuals, plus there's the Cheviot hills, and easy valley and river-side walks. For information see **Scottish Borders Tourist Board** (☎ 0870 608 0404; www.visitscottishborders.com).

### CENTRAL HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS

**Crieff & Strathearn Drovers' Tryst** (www.droverstryst.co.uk) Many of the walks at this festival commemorate the cattle drovers of yesteryear, for whom Crieff was the crossroads of their long journeys across Scotland. The festival takes place during October.

**Dundee Mountain Film Festival** (www.dundee-mountainfilm.org.uk) This festival has been going for years, usually in late November, with films on skiing, Himalayan expeditions and polar exploration, as well as trade stands.

### LOCHABER & GLEN COE

**Fort William Mountain Festival** (www.mountainfilmfestival.co.uk) Staged in the self-styled outdoor capital of Scotland, the festival happens in the second half of February and offers films, talks, book readings and exhibitions.

### THE CAIRNGORMS

**Aviemore Mountain Film Festival** (www.amff.co.uk) Over a March long weekend, this festival presents top-class

productions featuring many adventure sports, including mountaineering and climbing.

**Aviemore Walking Festival** (PO Box 5349, Aviemore PH22 1YG; www.aviemorewalking.com) May is the month for this feast of Munros (including Ben Macdui, p150), the Speyside Way (p163) and shorter strolls through forests and beside rivers, mostly in Cairngorms National Park.

**Ballater Royal Deeside Walking Week** This well-organised event has walks ranging from Munro ascents to long glen walks following old rights of way, mostly in Cairngorms National Park. Mountain guides, full-time rangers and local residents with specialised knowledge lead the walks. Information can be obtained at ☎ 013397 55467 or www.royal-deeside.org.uk.

**Blaigowrie Walking Festival** (www.walkingfestival.org) Taking place in early October at the foot of the Angus Glens on the southern fall of the Cairngorms, this festival offers climbs of Munros and Corbetts or, less strenuously, a walk along the Catearan Trail. Information can also be obtained from the **Blaigowrie TIC** (☎ 01250 872960). **Spirit of Speyside Walking & Wildlife Festival** (☎ 01343 557147; www.walkingfestival.net) Encourag-

ing the use of public transport is another theme at this Speyside festival, in late August. The walks are either along the Speyside Way (p163) or, more remotely and adventurously, in the Glenlivet estate.

### HIGHLAND GLENS

**Caithness & Sutherland Walking Festival** (☎ 01847 851991) During early May, walks are led by Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Forestry Commission rangers and members of the Caithness Field Club. **Glen Affric Walking Festival** (☎ 01456 476363; lebrunshenal@hotmail.com) All the low- and high-level walks are in Glen Affric National Nature Reserve, highlighting the long-term conservation work in the area.

### NORTHERN ISLES

**Shetland Walking Week** By far the most distant festival, this one has developed a surprisingly strong following. During early September, the program of walks includes the highest hill in Shetland and Hermaness National Nature Reserve. Contact the **Lerwick TIC** (☎ 08701 999440; www.visitshetland.com) for details.

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### AIR

#### Airports & Airlines

Scotland has four main international airports. London is the major UK gateway for long-haul flights.

**Aberdeen** (code ABZ; ☎ 0870 040 0006; www.aberdeenairport.com)

**Edinburgh** (code EDI; ☎ 0870 040 0007; www.edinburghairport.com)

**Glasgow** (code GLA; ☎ 0870 040 0008; www.glasgowairport.com)

**Glasgow Prestwick** (code PIK; ☎ 0871 223 0700; www.gpta.co.uk)

**London Gatwick** (code LGW; ☎ 0870 000 2468; www.gatwickairport.com)

**London Heathrow** (code LHR; ☎ 0870 000 0123; www.heathrowairport.com)

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research

Many airlines service Scottish airports. The main ones are the following.

**Aer Arann** (airline code RE; ☎ 0818 210210; www.aerarann.com)

**Aer Lingus** (airline code EI; ☎ 0845 973 7747; www.aerlingus.com)

**Air France** (airline code AF; ☎ 0845 084 5111; www.airfrance.com)

**Air Transat** (airline code TS; ☎ 0870 556 1522; www.airtransat.com)

**American Airlines** (airline code AA; ☎ 0845 778 9789; www.aa.com)

**bmbibaby** (airline code WW; ☎ 0870 264 2229; www.bmbibaby.com)

**British Airways** (airline code BA; ☎ 0845 773 3377; www.britishairways.com)

**British European** (airline code BE; ☎ 0870 567 6676; www.flybe.com)

**British Midland** (airline code BD; ☎ 0870 607 0555; www.flybmi.com)

**Continental Airlines** (airline code CO; ☎ 0845 607 6760; www.continental.com)

**Eastern Airways** (airline code T3; ☎ 0870 366 9100; www.easternairways.com)

**easyJet** (airline code U2; ☎ 0870 600 0000; www.easyjet.com)

**KLM UK** (airline code UK; ☎ 0870 507 4074; www.klmuk.com)

**Lufthansa** (airline code LH; ☎ 0845 773 7747; www.lufthansa.com)

**Ryanair** (airline code FR; ☎ 0870 156 9569; www.ryanair.com)

**Zoom Airlines** (airline code OOM; ☎ 0870 240 0055; www.flyzoom.com)

### Australia & New Zealand

Many airlines compete on flights between Australia and New Zealand and the UK, and there is a wide range of fares. Round-the-world (RTW) tickets are often real bargains and can sometimes work out cheaper than a straightforward return ticket.

#### AUSTRALIA

**Flight Centre** (☎ 131 133; www.flightcentre.com.au)

**STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au)

#### NEW ZEALAND

**Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz)

**House of Travel** (☎ 04-496 3010; www.houseoftravel.co.nz)

### BAGGAGE RESTRICTIONS

Airlines impose tight restrictions on carry-on baggage. No sharp implements of any kind are allowed onto the plane, so pack items such as pocket knives, camping cutlery and first-aid kits into your checked luggage.

If you're travelling with a camping stove you should remember that airlines also ban liquid fuels and gas cartridges from all baggage, both check-through and carry-on. Empty all fuel bottles and buy what you need at your destination.

### Canada

Zoom Airlines flies direct to Glasgow from Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary and Halifax. Charter operator Air Transat links Toronto to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and Calgary and Vancouver to Glasgow.

**Travel CUTS** (☎ 1-866 246 9762; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency and it has offices in all the major cities.

### Continental Europe

Major airlines run several direct flights daily to Edinburgh from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Geneva, Hamburg, Paris and Rome. Budget airlines fly direct to Glasgow and/or Edinburgh from Cologne-Bonn, Geneva, Milan, Nice, Rome and Zurich.

### England & Wales

BA has flights to Glasgow and Edinburgh from London, Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester, Plymouth and Southampton, and to Aberdeen and Inverness from London.

EasyJet flies from London to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Aberdeen; bmbibaby has flights from East Midlands and Cardiff to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Eastern Airways flies from Norwich to Edinburgh, and from various English airports to Aberdeen and Inverness. Ryanair flies from Liverpool to Inverness.

Good UK travel agencies include **STA Travel** (☎ 0131 226 7747; www.statravel.co.uk) and **Traifinders** (☎ 0141 353 2224; www.traifinders.com).

### Ireland

BA flies from Belfast and Derry to Glasgow, and from Belfast to Aberdeen and

Edinburgh. EasyJet has direct flights from Belfast to Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness. There are daily flights from Dublin to Edinburgh and Glasgow with Aer Lingus and BA. Ryanair flies from Dublin to Glasgow Prestwick, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. British European flies from Cork and Shannon to Glasgow and Edinburgh via Birmingham. Aer Arann flies from Dublin to Inverness.

The youth and student travel agency **USIT** (☎ 01-602 1904; www.usitnow.ie) has offices in most major Irish cities.

### USA

Continental flies daily from New York (Newark) to Glasgow and Edinburgh. **STA Travel** (☎ 800 781 4040; www.statravel.com) has offices in major cities.

### LAND

#### Bus

Buses are normally the cheapest way to reach Scotland from other parts of the UK. The main operators, **National Express** (☎ 0870 580 8080; www.nationalexpress.com) and its subsidiary **Scottish Citylink** (☎ 0870 550 5050; www.citylink.co.uk), run regular services from London and regional cities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Citylink operates a daily service linking Dublin and Edinburgh.

**Silver Choice Travel** (☎ 01355 249499; www.silverchoicetravel.co.uk) operates a daily overnight service between London and Glasgow/Edinburgh. **Megabus** (☎ 0900 160 0900; www.megabus.com) offers inexpensive fares from London to Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness.

#### Car & Motorcycle

Drivers of EU-registered vehicles must carry registration papers and have insurance; the vehicle must have a nationality plate. The International Insurance Certificate (Green Card) isn't compulsory but is excellent proof that you're covered.

### Train

Travelling to Scotland by train is usually faster and more comfortable, but more expensive, than by bus. The train is also a competitive alternative to air travel on the London-Edinburgh route. Timetable and fare information for all UK trains is available from **National Rail Enquiries** (☎ 0845 748 4950; www.nationalrail.co.uk).

## CONTINENTAL EUROPE

You can travel from Paris or Brussels to London Waterloo (in 2½ hours) on the **Eurostar** (UK ☎ 0870 518 6186, France ☎ 0892 35 35 39; www.eurostar.com), but to reach Scotland you'll have to transfer to Kings Cross or Euston stations to connect with Edinburgh or Glasgow trains. Total journey time from Paris is about eight hours.

## UK

**GNER** (☎ 0845 722 5225; www.gner.co.uk) operates frequent services between London Kings Cross and Edinburgh. The **Virgin Trains** (☎ 0845 722 2333; www.virgintrains.co.uk) service between London Euston and Glasgow is slower.

**First ScotRail** (☎ 0845 755 0033; www.firstscotrail.com) runs the *Caledonian Sleeper* service connecting London Euston with Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fort William and Inverness. Services to Edinburgh from elsewhere in England and Wales usually involve at least one change. First ScotRail also does Rail and Sail deals between Edinburgh and Glasgow and Belfast on the Stena Line ferries.

## SEA

**Superfast Ferries** (☎ 0870 410 6040; www.superfast.com) runs a car ferry between Zeebrugge in Belgium and Rosyth, 12 miles northwest of Edinburgh.

Car ferry services from Northern Ireland to Scotland are run by **Stena Line** (☎ 0870 570 7070; www.stenaline.com) between Belfast and Stranraer, and **P&O Irish Sea** (☎ 0870 242 4777; www.poirishsea.com) between Larne and Troon, and Larne and Cairnryan. Standard and high-speed ferries ply the Stranraer and Cairnryan routes. There are also Rail and Sail deals with Stena and First ScotRail between Edinburgh and Glasgow and Belfast.

# GETTING AROUND

Public transport is generally good in Scotland but costly compared with other European countries. Buses are usually the cheapest way to travel, but also the slowest. With a discount pass, trains can be competitive; they're also quicker, though you may still need to catch a bus to reach walking areas.

**Traveline** (☎ 0870 608 2608; www.travelinescotland.com) provides timetable information for all public-transport services in Scotland, but can't give fare information or book tickets.

## AIR

Flying is a pricey way to cover relatively short distances, and only worth considering if you want to visit the Western or Northern Isles.

**Loganair** (☎ 0870 850 9850; www.loganair.co.uk) is the main domestic airline, providing flights from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness to the islands.

**British Midland** (☎ 0870 607 0555; www.flybmi.com) flies from Edinburgh to Stornoway. **Highland Airways** (☎ 0845 450 2245; www.highlandairways.co.uk) operates flights from Inverness to the Northern and Western Isles.

## BOAT

The main ferry operators are **Caledonian MacBrayne** (CalMac; ☎ 0870 565 0000; www.calmac.co.uk) for the west coast and islands, and **NorthLink Ferries** (☎ 0845 600 0449; www.northlinkferries.co.uk) for Orkney and Shetland. Calmac's Island Rover ticket gives unlimited travel on its ferry services. It also offers more than two-dozen Island Hopscotch tickets, with lower fares for various combinations of crossings; these are listed on the website and in its timetables booklet, available from TICs throughout Scotland. NorthLink ferries sail from Aberdeen and Scrabster on the north coast to Orkney, from Orkney to Shetland, and from Aberdeen to Shetland. See the various destinations for full details of services and fares.

## BUS

The national network is operated by **Scottish Citylink** (☎ 0870 550 5050; www.citylink.co.uk), with reliable buses serving all main towns. Elsewhere, you'll have to switch to local services. During summer, seats are at a premium, so it's a good idea to make reservations at least a few days ahead.

Some remote villages can only be reached by **Royal Mail postbuses** (☎ 0845 774 0740; www.postbus.royalmail.com). These are usually minibuses used for delivering and collecting mail and following circuitous routes. While timetables usually suit reaching the start of a walk, you might be left in the lurch at the end of the day, so check carefully before boarding.

## SHEEP MAY SAFELY ROAM

Driving to many of the walks in this book will take you through areas where sheep, and occasionally cattle, graze unconfined, particularly in the Western and Northern Isles.

Sheep are irresistibly attracted to roads on wet or cool days, when the bitumen surface is the driest and/or warmest place for miles around. During April and May, beware of very young lambs – they have no road sense at all.

In fenced farming country, stock are often moved along public roads while going from one field to another. If you do come upon a flock on the move, the only thing to do is to wait for it to pass around you, or until the farmer waves you on.

During the long hours of summer daylight, stock are easy to see if you're driving in the evening. But from late September, wandering stock can be a hazard, especially dark-coated animals. One Western Isles farmer hit upon the idea of painting the horns of a prized black sheep luminous orange to warn drivers of its presence! You have to wonder whether this was a status symbol or an embarrassment for the sheep.

**Haggis Scotland** (☎ 0131 557 9393; www.haggisadventures.com) and **MacBACKPACKERS** (☎ 0131 558 9900; www.macbackpackers.com) offer jump-on, jump-off minibuses, running from Edinburgh to Inverness, Ullapool, Skye, Fort William, Glencoe and Glasgow. Tickets are valid for up to three months. Bear in mind that you'll still need onward connections from most of these places.

## Bus Passes

The Scottish Citylink Explorer Pass can be bought in the UK by both UK and overseas citizens. It offers unlimited travel on all Scottish Citylink services within Scotland for three of five consecutive days, five of 10 consecutive days, and eight of 16 consecutive days. It also entitles you to discounts on various regional bus services, on CalMac ferries and at SYHA hostels. It's not valid on National Express coaches.

Scottish Citylink offers 20% discounts to holders of the Euro<26 card, and the **Young Scot card** (☎ 0870 513 4936; www.youngscot.org).

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Travelling by car or motorcycle allows you to travel quickly, independently and flexibly. Indeed, your own wheels are essential to reach the start of a fair proportion of the walks in this book.

Scotland's roads are generally good and far less busy than those in England, so driving is more enjoyable. Motorways (designated 'M') are toll-free dual carriageways, limited mainly to central and southern Scotland. Main roads ('A') are dual or single carriageways and are often busy.

Secondary roads, most of which are designated 'B', wander between villages, and are quieter – some, mainly in the Highlands and islands, are only a single lane with passing places. Remember that passing places are not only for allowing oncoming traffic to pass, but also for overtaking. Check your rear-view mirror frequently and pull over to let faster vehicles pass if necessary. It's illegal to park in passing places. In the Highlands and islands there's the added hazard of sheep wandering onto the road; be particularly wary of lambs in spring (see the boxed text, above).

At around £1 per litre (equivalent to about US\$4 for a US gallon) petrol is expensive by American or Australian standards; diesel is slightly more expensive. Distances, however, aren't great. Prices rise even more as you travel further from the main population centres and are up to 10% higher in the Western Isles. In remote areas, petrol stations are few and far between and are sometimes closed on Sunday.

## Driving Licence

A foreign licence is valid in Britain for up to 12 months from time of entry into the country. If bringing a car from elsewhere in Europe, make sure you're adequately insured.

## Hire

Car rental is relatively costly and often you'll be better off making arrangements in your home country for a fly/drive deal. The international rental companies charge from around £160 a week, plus insurance, for a



small car (Ford Fiesta, Peugeot 106); local companies such as **Arnold Clark** (☎ 0845 607 4500; www.arnoldclarkrental.co.uk) start from £160 a week including insurance.

Following are the main international hire companies:

**Avis** (☎ 0870 606 0100; www.avis.co.uk)

**Budget** (☎ 0870 153 9170; www.budget.co.uk)

**Europcar** (☎ 0870 607 5000; www.europcar.co.uk)

**Hertz** (☎ 0870 844 8844; www.hertz.co.uk)

**Thrifty** (☎ 01494 751600; www.thrifty.co.uk)

TICs have lists of local car-hire companies. To rent a car, drivers must usually be aged 23 to 65; outside these ages, special conditions or insurance requirements may apply.

If you plan to visit the Western or Northern Isles, it will probably be cheaper to hire a car on the islands, rather than pay to take a rental car across on the ferry.

### Parking

In virtually all towns you'll find off-street parking areas, which operate a pay-and-display system. In major centres there are also long-stay car parks.

In the countryside, at the starting and finishing points of popular walks, there's usually a formal car park, increasingly with a voluntary payment facility.

### Road Rules

Anyone doing a lot of driving should buy the *Highway Code*, available from major bookshops. Vehicles drive on the left-hand side. Front seat belts are compulsory, and if belts are fitted in the back seat they must be worn. The speed limit is generally 30mph in built-up areas, 60mph on single carriageways and 70mph on dual carriageways. You give way to your right at roundabouts (traffic already on the roundabout has right of way). Motorcyclists must wear helmets.

It is a criminal offence to use a hand-held mobile phone or similar device while driving; this includes while you are stopped at traffic lights or stuck in traffic.

When driving you're allowed a maximum blood-alcohol level of 35mg/100mL.

### HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. Travellers who hitch take a small but potentially serious risk. However, many people choose to

hitch, and the advice that follows should help to make their journeys as fast and safe as possible.

Hitching is fairly easy in Scotland, except around big cities and built-up areas, where you'll need to use public transport. Although the northwest is more difficult because there's less traffic, waits of more than two hours are unusual (except on Sunday in 'Sabbath' areas).

It's against the law to hitch on motorways or their slip roads; make a sign and use approach roads or service stations.

### TRAIN

Scotland's rail network extends to all major cities and towns, but the railway map has a lot of large blank areas in the Highlands and Southern Uplands, where you'll need to switch to bus or car.

For information on train timetables contact one of the following.

**First ScotRail** (☎ 0845 755 0033; www.firstscotrail.com)

**National Rail Enquiries** (☎ 0845 748 4950; www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**Traveline Scotland** (☎ 0870 608 2608; www.traveline-scotland.com)

There are two classes of train travel: first and standard. First class is 30% to 50% more than standard but, except on very crowded trains, isn't really worth the extra money.

### Reservations

First ScotRail operates most train services in Scotland. Reservations are recommended for intercity trips, especially on Fridays and public holidays; for shorter journeys, just buy a ticket at the station before you depart, or on the train if the station is not staffed.

Among the bewildering array of ticket types, Saver tickets can be used on any day and with few time restrictions.

### Train Passes

First ScotRail offers a range of good-value passes. You can buy them at BritRail outlets in the USA, Canada and Europe, at the **British Travel Centre** (Regent St, London), at train stations throughout Britain and from **First ScotRail telesales** (☎ 0845 755 0033).

The Freedom of Scotland Travelpass gives unlimited travel on all ScotRail and Strathclyde Passenger Transport trains,

plus NorthLink ferry services and on First Edinburgh buses serving the Borders. It's available for four days' travel out of eight, or eight days out of 15 consecutive days. The Highland Rover pass covers travel from Glasgow to Fort William, and from Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh, Thurso, Aviemore and Aberdeen, and free travel on the Fort

William to Inverness, Isle of Skye and Thurso to Scrabster buses, plus a discount on NorthLink ferry services. It allows four days' travel out of eight.

While the prices represent a great saving, you'd have to do a lot of travelling to get full value, and probably not as much walking as you might like.

# Health & Safety

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In Scotland you're more likely to sprain an ankle out in the 'hills' than succumb to a dreaded illness. If you take care to treat the water you drink along the way, cover up on sunny days and exercise sensible precautions when walking, this chapter will be the least read in the whole book.

## BEFORE YOU GO

While excellent medical services are readily available in Scotland, prevention is the key to staying healthy during your visit. A little planning before departure, particularly for any existing medical conditions, will save trouble later. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed, dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, may also be useful. If you use syringes or needles, be sure to carry a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. Pack a spare pair of contact lenses and/or glasses, and take your optical prescription with you.

### INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), available from

health centres or, in the UK, post offices, covers you for most medical care. EHIC will not cover you for non-emergencies, or emergency repatriation. If you're a citizen of a non-EU country, find out whether there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between your country and the UK. If you do need health insurance, make sure you take out a policy that covers you for the worst possible case, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance policy will make payments directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenses.

### MEDICAL CHECK LIST

This is a list of items to consider including in your medical kit – consult your pharmacist for brands available in your country.

- Acetaminophen (paracetamol) or aspirin
- Adhesive or paper tape
- Antibacterial ointment for cuts and abrasions
- Antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- Antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- Bandages, gauze swabs, gauze rolls
- Elasticised support bandage
- Iodine tablets or water filter (for water purification)
- Nonadhesive dressings
- Oral rehydration salts
- Paper stitches
- Permethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- Scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- Sterile alcohol wipes
- Steroid cream or cortisone (for allergic rashes)
- Sticking plasters (Band-Aids, blister plasters)
- Sutures
- Thermometer

See also the equipment check list, p317.

### RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No vaccinations are required to travel to Scotland. However, the **World Health Organi-**

**zation** (WHO; www.who.int) recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and hepatitis B, regardless of their destination.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

A wealth of travel advice is to be found on the internet. The **WHO** (www.who.int/ith) publishes *International Travel and Health*, a handy volume that is revised annually and is available free online.

### FURTHER READING

*Hillwalking* by Steve Long et al is the official handbook of the Mountain Leader and Walking Group Leader Schemes; it's an excellent reference, written by experts.

## IN SCOTLAND

### AVAILABILITY AND COST OF HEALTH CARE

Excellent health care is readily available and pharmacists can give valuable advice about minor illnesses and sell over-the-counter medication. They can also advise you when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction.

### Preparing for a Walk

It's always a good idea to know what to do in the event of a major accident or illness. Consider doing a recognised basic first-aid course before you go, and/or including a first-aid manual with your medical kit (and reading it).

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

#### Giardiasis

Giardiasis is a potential risk only in areas where water supplies may be contaminated by human or animal faeces or dead animals, so drinking untreated water is not recommended. Use water filters and boil or treat water with iodine to help prevent the disease. Symptoms consist of intermittent foul-smelling diarrhoea, abdominal bloating and wind. Effective treatment is available (tinidazole or metronidazole).

#### Lyme Disease

This is a tick-transmitted infection that may be acquired through contact with vegetation or merely walking in areas inhabited

## COMMON AILMENTS

### Blisters

To avoid blisters make sure your boots are well worn in before you set out. Your boots should fit comfortably with enough room to move your toes; boots that are too big or too small will cause blisters. Make sure socks fit properly and are specifically made for walkers; even then, make sure there are no seams across the widest part of your foot. Wet and muddy socks can also cause blisters, so even on a day walk, pack a spare pair of socks. Keep your toenails clipped but not too short. If you do feel a blister coming on, treat it promptly. Apply a simple sticking plaster or, preferably, a special blister plaster that acts as a second skin.

### Fatigue

More injuries happen towards the end of the day rather than earlier, when you are fresher. Although tiredness can simply be a nuisance on an easy walk, it can be life-threatening on narrow, exposed ridges or in bad weather. You should never set out on a walk that is beyond your capabilities on the day. If you feel below par, have a day off. To reduce the risk, don't push yourself too hard – take a rest every hour or two and take a good-length lunch break. Towards the end of the day, reduce the pace and increase your concentration. You should also eat and drink sensibly throughout the day; nuts, dried fruit and chocolate are all good energy-giving snack foods.

### Knee Strain

Many walkers feel the judder on long, steep descents. Although you can't eliminate strain on the knee joints when dropping steeply, you can reduce it by taking shorter steps that leave your legs slightly bent and ensuring that your heel hits the ground before the rest of your foot. Some walkers find that tubular bandages help, while others use high-tech, strap-on supports. Walking poles are very effective in taking some of the weight off the knees.

by red deer or sheep. The illness usually begins with a spreading rash at the site of the tick bite, and is accompanied by fever,

headache, extreme fatigue, aching joints and muscles and mild neck stiffness. If untreated the symptoms usually resolve over several weeks, but disorders of the nervous system, heart and joints may develop later. Medical help should be sought immediately as treatment works best at an early stage. For more information and advice go to [www.bada-uk.org](http://www.bada-uk.org).

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### Bites & Stings

#### BEES & WASPS

Stings from bees and wasps are usually painful rather than dangerous. However, people who are allergic may suffer severe breathing difficulties and need urgent medical care. Calamine lotion or a commercial sting-relief spray will ease discomfort, and ice packs will reduce the pain and swelling.

#### SNAKES

The adder is the only poisonous snake you're likely to encounter in Scotland, and its venom is rarely fatal; an antivenin is usually available.

Immediately wrap the bitten limb tightly, as you would for a sprained ankle, and then attach a splint to immobilise it. Keep the victim still and seek medical help. Tourniquets and sucking out the poison are comprehensively discredited.

#### TICKS

You should always check all over your body and clothing if you have been walking through a potentially tick-infested area (especially overhanging vegetation), as ticks can cause skin infections and other more serious diseases, such as Lyme disease (p311). Ticks are most active from March to September, especially where there are

plenty of sheep or deer. It's wise to wear trousers, gaiters and a long-sleeved shirt, and to apply insect repellent in areas where ticks are likely to be prevalent.

If you find a tick attached to your skin, press down around its head with tweezers, grab the head and gently pull upwards. Avoid pulling the rear of the body as this may squeeze the tick's gut contents through the attached mouth into the skin, increasing the risk of infection and disease. Smearing chemicals on the tick will not make it let go and is not recommended. Spread antiseptic cream over the bite area.

### Dehydration & Heat Exhaustion

Potentially dangerous and generally preventable, dehydration is precipitated by excessive fluid loss. Sweating and inadequate fluid intake are the most common causes among walkers. Other important causes are diarrhoea, vomiting and high fever. The first symptoms are weakness, thirst and passing small amounts of very concentrated urine. This may progress to drowsiness, dizziness or fainting upon standing up and, finally, coma.

It's easy to forget how much fluid is lost through perspiration while you're walking, particularly if a strong breeze is drying your skin quickly. You should always maintain a good fluid intake – a minimum of 3L a day is recommended.

Dehydration and salt deficiency can cause heat exhaustion. Salt deficiency is characterised by fatigue, lethargy, headaches, giddiness and muscle cramps; adding extra salt to your food should be sufficient – taking salt tablets isn't necessary.

### Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a significant risk whenever the weather turns cold, wet and windy, which can happen at any time of the year. Strong winds produce a high chill factor that can cause hypothermia even in moderately cool temperatures. Early signs include the inability to perform fine movements (such as doing up buttons), shivering and a bad case of the 'umbles' (fumbles, mumbles, grumbles, stumbles). The key elements of treatment involve moving out of the cold, changing out of wet clothing into dry warm clothing (especially windproof and waterproof layers), wrapping-up in a sleeping

### MEGABITES FROM MIDGES

Tourist literature promoting Scotland, and the western Highlands and islands in particular, is still coy about mentioning an unavoidable and less-than-delightful fact of the country's summer life: midges.

The midge is a pin-head-sized, black insect, which gathers in dense, dark clouds and swarms on humans (and animals), making life a misery. The insect can detect its prey from up to 100m away by scent and shape, and can also let other midges know about the 'find'.

Midges usually appear in early June and blight the countryside until the first chilly weather of autumn. They congregate wherever there's damp or wet ground, in rushes and sphagnum moss. They're most active in the early morning and evening, and on overcast days. Fortunately, they don't like wind, dry ground, bright sunshine or a scent emitted by some lucky people, who remain untouched while their companions are being attacked.

The bite causes an itchy reaction in most people, which can last from several minutes to several hours. Scratching the bite only prolongs the itch. It is best to brush rather than slap them away, so as not to spread the saliva.

Stories abound about the desperate measures taken to escape the biting hordes – immersion in the sea, or donning gloves and balaclava to eat a meal outdoors. Some people swear by swallowing heaps of vitamin C, others add liberal amounts of garlic to their meals.

The best protection is to cover your arms and legs, and wear a hat with a fine netting veil, available at outdoor gear shops. Insect repellents containing DEET (diethyl toluamide), DMP (dimethyl phthalate) or natural oils (such as bog myrtle and neem) should keep your skin midge-free for a few hours. Burning coils impregnated with repellent are an effective weapon, especially at camping grounds. It's best to avoid sheltered, windless sites when you stop for lunch or to pitch a tent. Midges rarely venture indoors – your last refuge.

The creatures have an ecological niche as food for some species of birds, bats and worms, and insectivorous plants such as sundews love them. Midge larvae in turn feed on other organisms in the soil (where they live for about 10 months after the eggs hatch).

Attempts to eradicate midges from their natural habitat have adversely affected other wildlife, and research into harmless and 100% effective methods of protection continues. For a good laugh, and more information, track down Alasdair Roberts' book *Midges*.

bag if available and ingesting fuel (water and high-energy, easily digestible food). With severe hypothermia, shivering stops. This is a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention in addition to the above measures.

### Ultraviolet (UV) Light Exposure

Surprisingly perhaps, Scotland has a high rate of skin cancer. You should certainly monitor your exposure to direct sunlight; slap on sunscreen and a barrier cream for your nose and lips, wear a broad-brimmed hat and protect your eyes with high-quality sunglasses with UV lenses, particularly when walking near water, sand or snow. Ultraviolet exposure is greatest between 10am and 4pm, so be particularly vigilant about skin exposure during these times. Always use 30+ sunscreen, apply it 30 minutes before going into the sun and repeat regularly to minimise damage.

## TRAUMATIC INJURIES

### Major Accidents

Falling or having something fall on you, resulting in head injuries or fractures, is always possible, especially if you're crossing steep slopes or unstable terrain. Following is some basic advice about what to do if a major accident happens; detailed first-aid instruction is outside the scope of this book. If someone suffers a bad fall:

- Make sure you and other people with you are not in danger.
- Assess the injured person's condition.
- Stabilise any injuries, such as bleeding wounds or broken bones.
- Seek medical attention (see p315).

If the person is unconscious, immediately check their breathing (clear the airway if it's blocked) and check whether there's a pulse by feeling the side of the neck rather than the wrist. If there is a pulse but no

#### WATER

Tap water in Scotland is safe to drink, but all other water should be treated. This can be done by boiling it for around five minutes, filtering it or chemically disinfecting it (with iodine tablets, available from outdoor gear stores and pharmacies) to prevent diarrhoea and Giardiasis. Prolonged use of iodine, for several weeks, can be harmful; use a filter instead.

breathing, start mouth-to-mouth resuscitation immediately. In these circumstances the patient should be moved as little as possible, just in case their neck or back is broken.

Check for wounds and broken bones; if the victim is conscious, ask where pain is felt. Otherwise, gently inspect the person all over (including the back and back of the head), moving them as little as possible. Control any bleeding by applying firm pressure to the wound. Bleeding from the nose or ear may indicate a fractured skull. Don't give the person anything by mouth, especially if they're unconscious.

You will have to manage the person for shock. Raise their legs above the level of the heart (unless their legs are fractured); dress any wounds and immobilise any fractures; loosen tight clothing; keep the person warm by covering them with a sleeping bag or dry clothing; and insulate them from the ground if possible, though do not heat them.

Some general points to bear in mind:

- Simple fractures take several weeks to heal, so they do not need fixing straight away, but they should be immobilised to protect them from further injury. Compound fractures (those associated with open wounds) need urgent treatment.
- If you do have to splint a broken bone, remember to check regularly that the splint is not cutting off the circulation to the hand or foot.
- Most cases of brief unconsciousness are not associated with any serious internal injury, but any person who has been knocked unconscious should be watched for deterioration. If they do deteriorate, seek medical attention straight away.

## Sprains

Ankle and knee sprains are common injuries among walkers crossing rough ground. To help prevent ankle sprains, wear boots that have adequate ankle support. If you do suffer a sprain, immobilise the joint with a firm bandage and, if feasible, immerse the foot in cold water. Once you reach shelter, relieve pain and swelling by keeping the joint elevated for the first 24 hours and, where possible, by applying ice to the swollen joint. For severe sprains, seek medical attention.

## SAFETY ON THE WALK

By taking a few simple precautions, such as those listed in the boxed text on opposite, you can significantly reduce the odds of getting into difficulties. A list of the clothes and equipment you should carry is on p317.

### CROSSING STREAMS

Sudden downpours can speedily turn a small burn into a raging torrent. If you're in any doubt about the safety of a crossing, look for a safer passage or wait. If the rain is short-lived it may subside quickly.

If you decide it is essential to cross (late in the day, for example), look for a wide, shallow stretch of the stream rather than a bend. Take off your trousers and socks, but keep your boots on to prevent injury. Put dry, warm clothes and a towel in a plastic bag near the top of your pack. Before stepping out from the bank, unclip your chest strap and hip belt. This will make it easier to slip out of your pack and swim to safety if you lose your balance and are swept downstream. Use a walking pole as a third leg on the upstream side, grasped in both hands, or go arm in arm with a companion, clasping each other at the wrist, crossing side-on to the flow, taking short steps.

### LIGHTNING

If a storm brews, avoid exposed areas. Lightning has a penchant for crests, lone trees, small depressions, gullies, caves and building entrances, as well as wet ground. If you are caught out in the open, try to curl up as tightly as possible with your feet together and keep a layer of insulation between you and the ground. Place metal objects such as metal-framed backpacks and walking poles away from you.

### RESCUE & EVACUATION

If someone in your group is injured or falls ill and can't move, leave somebody with them while another person goes for help. They should take a clear written description of the condition and location of the victim (as a six- or eight-figure grid reference), and of the terrain should a helicopter be needed. If there are only two of you, leave the injured person with as much warm clothing, food and water as is sensible to spare, plus a whistle

and torch. Mark their position with something conspicuous – an orange bivvy bag or perhaps a large stone cross on the ground.

### Emergency Communications & Equipment

#### MOBILE PHONES

Although mobile-phone coverage in walking areas in Scotland is generally good, there are still gaps and it's very unlikely to reach glens and corries. Reception may be good on high points but the strength of transmission can't be guaranteed. When you ring the **emergency services** (☎ 999, 112), ask for the service required (mountain rescue, ambulance) and be ready to give information on where the accident happened, how many people are injured and the injuries sustained. If a helicopter needs to come in, explain the terrain and the weather conditions at the accident site.

#### GPS RECEIVERS

Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers (see p318) may help you avoid some emergency situations, though there is no substitute for common sense and map and compass skills.

#### DISTRESS SIGNALS

If you need to call for help, use these internationally recognised emergency signals. Give six short signals, such as a whistle, a yell or the flash of a light, at 10-second intervals, followed by a minute's rest. Repeat the sequence until you get a response. If the responder knows the signals, this will be three signals at 20-second intervals, followed by a minute's pause and a repetition of the sequence.

#### Search & Rescue Organisations

In Scotland, search-and-rescue operations for walkers are coordinated by the police, and involve the local volunteer mountain-rescue team, and possibly a search-and-rescue dog team and an RAF helicopter. You can be connected to a police station

### WALK SAFETY – BASIC RULES

- Allow plenty of time to complete a walk before dark, particularly when daylight hours are short.
- Study the route carefully, noting the possible escape routes and the point of no return (where it's quicker to continue than to turn back). Monitor your progress against the time estimated for the walk, and keep an eye on the weather.
- It's wise not to walk alone. Always leave details of your intended route, number of people in your group and expected return time with someone responsible before you set off; let that person know when you return.
- Before setting off, make sure you have the relevant map, compass, whistle, spare clothing, adequate food and water and that you know the local weather forecast for the next 24 hours.

by ringing ☎ 999 or ☎ 112 from either a landline or a mobile phone and asking for mountain rescue.

### HELICOPTER RESCUE & EVACUATION

If a helicopter arrives on the scene, there are a couple of conventions you should know. Standing face on to the chopper:

- Arms up in the shape of a letter 'V' means 'I/We need help'.
- Arms in a straight diagonal line (like one line of a letter X) means 'All OK'.

For the helicopter to land, there must be a cleared space of 25m x 25m, with a flat landing-pad area of 6m x 6m. The helicopter will fly into the wind when landing. In cases of extreme emergency, where no landing area is available, a person or harness might be lowered. Take extreme care to avoid the rotors when approaching a landed helicopter.

# Clothing & Equipment

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Mishaps that befall walkers in Scotland can often be traced to unsuitable equipment or to underestimating the difficulty of a walk or the fickleness of the weather. Walking anywhere in the country should never be treated lightly and it makes sense to start with the most suitable kit for the type of outing. If it's not up to the mark, you can risk a cold and miserable day; in extreme conditions, it can mean the difference between life and death.

Good footwear, a rain jacket, overtrousers and a sweater or fleece jacket are the key items. Even if you already have some or all of these, check they don't need replacing. You don't have to spend a fortune; indeed, the most expensive may not be the best. The following section is not exhaustive. Browse product reviews in local walking magazines or consult staff in reputable outdoor gear shops for advice before you buy.

## CLOTHING Layering

A secret of comfortable walking is to wear several layers of light clothing, which you can easily take off or put on as you warm up or cool down. Most walkers use three main layers: a base layer next to the skin; an insulating layer; and an outer, shell layer for protection from wind, rain and snow.

For the upper body, the base layer is typically a shirt of synthetic material that wicks moisture away from the body and reduces chilling. The insulating layer retains heat next to your body, and is usually a windproof fleece jacket or sweater. The outer shell consists of either or both a windproof top or a waterproof jacket that also protects against cold wind.

For the lower body, the layers generally consist of either shorts or a pair of loose-

fitting trousers, 'long-john' underwear and waterproof overtrousers.

## Footwear

Runners (training shoes) are OK for walks in this book graded easy or moderate. However, you'll probably appreciate, if not need, the support and protection provided by proper boots for the demanding walks. Nonslip soles (such as Vibram) provide the best grip.

Buy boots in warm conditions or go for a walk before trying them on, so that your feet can expand slightly, as they would on a walk. Most walkers carry a pair of sandals to wear at night or during rest stops. Sandals are also useful when fording waterways.

## Gaiters

Gaiters help to keep your feet dry in wet weather and on boggy ground; they can also deflect pebbles or small stones and maintain leg warmth. The best are made of strong fabric, with a robust zip protected by a flap, and have an easy-to-use means of securing them around the foot.

## Overtrousers

Choose trousers with slits for pocket access and long leg zips so that you can pull them on and off over your boots.

## Socks

Walking socks should be free of ridged seams in the toes and heels.

## Waterproof jacket

Ideal specifications are a breathable, waterproof fabric, a hood that's roomy enough to cover headwear but still allows peripheral vision, a capacious map pocket and a heavy-gauge zip protected by a storm flap.

## EQUIPMENT Backpack

For day walks, a day-pack (30L to 40L) will usually suffice, but for multiday walks you will need a backpack of between 45L and 90L capacity. Even if the manufacturer claims your pack is waterproof, use heavy-duty liners.

## EQUIPMENT CHECK LIST

This list is a general guide to the things you might take on a walk. Your list will vary depending on the kind of walking you want to do, whether you're camping or planning to stay in hostels or B&Bs, and on the terrain, weather conditions and time of year.

### Clothing

- boots and spare laces
- gaiters
- hat (warm), scarf and gloves
- overtrousers (waterproof)
- rain jacket
- runners (training shoes) or sandals
- shorts and trousers
- socks and underwear
- sunhat
- sweater or fleece jacket
- thermal underwear
- T-shirt and long-sleeved shirt with collar

### Equipment

- backpack with waterproof liner
- first-aid kit\*
- food and snacks (high energy) and one day's emergency supplies
- insect repellent
- map, compass and guidebook
- map case or clip-seal plastic bags
- plastic bags (for carrying rubbish)
- pocket knife
- sunglasses
- sunscreen and lip balm
- survival bag or blanket
- toilet paper and trowel
- torch (flashlight) or headlamp, spare batteries and globe (bulb)
- water container
- whistle

### Overnight Walks

- cooking, eating and drinking utensils
- dishwashing items
- matches and lighter
- sewing/repair kit
- sleeping bag and bag liner/inner sheet
- sleeping mat
- spare cord
- stove and fuel
- tent, pegs, poles and guy ropes
- toiletries
- towel
- water purification tablets, iodine or filter

### Optional Items

- backpack cover (waterproof, slip-on)
- binoculars
- camera, film and batteries
- candle
- emergency distress beacon
- GPS receiver
- groundsheet
- mobile phone\*\*
- mosquito net
- notebook and pen
- swimming costume
- walking poles
- watch

\* see the Medical Check List (p310)

\*\* see Mobile Phones (p301)

## Fuel

The easiest type of fuel to use is butane gas in disposable containers; true, it doesn't win many environmental points but it's much easier to come by than liquid fuels. The most widely-used brands are Coleman and Camping Gaz, available from outdoor

gear shops and, in some remote areas, from small supermarkets.

Liquid fuel includes Coleman fuel, methylated spirits and paraffin. Again, outdoor gear shops, possibly hardware stores or even small supermarkets are the best places to look for it. You may be able to obtain

## NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT

### Maps & Compass

You should always carry a good map of the area in which you are walking (see p299), and know how to read it. Before setting off on your walk, ensure that you are aware of the contour interval, the map symbols, the magnetic declination (difference between true and grid north), plus the main ridge and river systems in the area and the general direction in which you are heading. On the trail, try to identify major landforms such as mountain ranges and valleys, and locate them on your map to familiarise yourself with the region's geography.

Buy a compass and learn how to use it. The attraction of magnetic north varies in different parts of the world, so compasses need to be balanced accordingly. Compass manufacturers have divided the world into five zones. Make sure your compass is balanced for your destination zone. There are also 'universal' compasses on the market that can be used anywhere in the world.

### How to Use a Compass

This is a very basic introduction to using a compass and will only be of assistance if you are proficient in map reading. For simplicity, it doesn't take magnetic variation into account. Before using a compass we recommend you obtain further instruction.

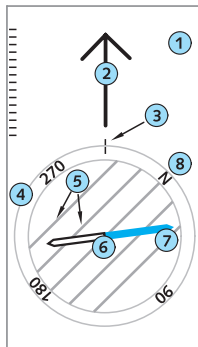
### Reading a Compass

Hold the compass flat in the palm of your hand. Rotate the bezel (4) so the red end (7) of the needle (6) points to the N (north point; 8) on the bezel. The bearing is read from the dash (3) under the bezel.

### Orienting the Map

To orient the map so that it aligns with the ground, place the compass flat on the map. Rotate the map until the needle is parallel with the map's north/south grid lines and the red end is pointing to north on the map. You can now identify features around you by aligning them with labelled features on the map.

- 1 Base plate
- 2 Direction of travel arrow
- 3 Dash
- 4 Bezel
- 5 Meridian lines
- 6 Needle
- 7 Red end
- 8 N (north point)



small quantities of unleaded petrol from service stations.

Airlines prohibit the carriage of any flammable materials and may well reject empty liquid-fuel bottles or even the stoves themselves.

### Sleeping Bag & Mat

Down fillings are warmer than synthetic for the same weight and bulk but, unlike synthetic fillings, do not retain warmth when wet. Mummy-shaped bags are best for weight and warmth. The given figure (-5°C, for instance) is the coldest temperature at which a person should feel comfortable in the bag (although the ratings are notoriously unreliable).

An inner sheet will help keep your sleeping bag clean, as well as adding another

layer of insulation. Silk 'inners' are the lightest, but you can also get them in cotton or synthetic fabric.

Self-inflating sleeping mats work like a thin air cushion between you and the ground; they also insulate from the cold. Foam mats are a low-cost, but less comfortable, alternative.

### Stoves

Fuel stoves operate on butane gas, Coleman fuel (white gas), unleaded petrol, methylated spirits (ethyl alcohol) or paraffin. In general the liquid fuels are efficient and inexpensive, while gas is more expensive, but cleaner and still a reasonable performer. However, the gas canisters can be awkward to carry on walks, and present a potential litter problem.

### Taking a Bearing from the Map

Draw a line on the map between your starting point and your destination. Place the edge of the compass on this line with the direction of travel arrow (2) pointing towards your destination. Rotate the bezel until the meridian lines (5) are parallel with the north/south grid lines on the map and the N points to north on the map. Read the bearing from the dash.

### Following a Bearing

Rotate the bezel so that the intended bearing is in line with the dash. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate (1) until the red end points to N on the bezel. The direction of travel arrow will now point in the direction you need to walk.

### Determining Your Bearing

Rotate the bezel so the red end points to the N. Place the compass flat in the palm of your hand and rotate the base plate until the direction of travel arrow points in the direction in which you have been walking. Read your bearing from the dash.

### GPS

Originally developed by the US Department of Defense, the Global Positioning System (GPS) is a network of more than 20 earth-orbiting satellites that continually beam encoded signals back to earth. Small, computer-driven devices (GPS receivers) can decode these signals to give users an extremely accurate reading of their location – to within 30m, anywhere on the planet, at any time of day, in almost any weather. The cheapest hand-held GPS receivers now cost less than US\$100 (although these may not have a built-in averaging system that minimises signal errors). Other important factors to consider when buying a GPS receiver are its weight and battery life.

Remember that a GPS receiver is of little use without an accurate topographical map. The receiver simply gives your position, which you must then locate on the local map. GPS receivers will only work properly in the open. The signals from a crucial satellite may be blocked (or bounce off rock or water) directly below high cliffs, near large bodies of water or in dense tree cover and give inaccurate readings. GPS receivers are more vulnerable to breakdowns (including dead batteries) than the humble magnetic compass – a low-tech device that has served navigators faithfully for centuries – so don't rely on them entirely.

### Tent

A three-season tent will fulfil most walkers' requirements. The floor and the outer shell, or fly, should have taped or sealed seams and covered zips to stop leaks. The weight can be as low as 1kg for a stripped-down, low-profile tent, and up to 3kg for a roomy, luxury, four-season model. Dome- and tunnel-shaped tents handle windy conditions better than flat-sided tents.

### BUYING LOCALLY

The British brands of clothing and equipment prominently displayed in outdoor gear shops in Scotland are generally designed and manufactured to high standards. A decision to purchase gear here will probably depend very much on the exchange rate available when you are

looking into buying stuff, and whether you consider you will be getting value for money. Outdoor gear shops are listed in the town descriptions in the regional chapters wherever they're readily accessible. You can, of course, do some online browsing beforehand. The main outlets in Scotland are listed below.

**Blacks** ([www.blacks.co.uk](http://www.blacks.co.uk)) Stores in Aviemore, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fort William and Inverness.

**Ellis Brigham** ([www.ellis-brigham.com](http://www.ellis-brigham.com)) Stores in Aviemore and Fort William.

**Nevisport** ([www.nevisport.com](http://www.nevisport.com)) Stores in Aviemore, Edinburgh, Fort William, Glasgow and Inverness.

**Tiso's** ([www.tiso.com](http://www.tiso.com)) Stores in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Stirling.

It's worth noting that gear hiring services are very few and far between.

# Language

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Scottish Gaelic (*Gàidhlig* – pronounced *gal-lic* locally) is spoken by about 80,000 people in Scotland, mainly in the Highlands and islands, and by many native speakers and learners overseas. It is a member of the Celtic branch of the Indo-European family of languages, which has given us Gaelic, Irish, Manx, Welsh, Cornish and Breton.

Although Scottish Gaelic is the Celtic language most closely associated with Scotland, it was quite a latecomer to those shores. Other Celtic languages in the form of Pictish and Brittonic had existed prior to the arrival and settlement by Gaelic-speaking Celts (Gaels) from Ireland from the 4th to the 6th centuries AD. These Irish settlers, known to the Romans as Scotti, were eventually to give their name to the entire country. Initially they settled in the area on the west coast of Scotland in which their name is perpetuated, Earra Ghaidheal (Argyll). As their territorial influence extended so did their language, and from the 9th to the 11th centuries Gaelic was spoken throughout the country. For many centuries the language was the same as the language of Ireland; there is little evidence of much divergence before the 13th century. Even up to the 18th century the bards adhered to the strict literary standards of Old Irish.

The Viking invasions from AD 800 brought linguistic influences which are evident in many of the coastal place names of the Highlands.

Gaelic culture flourished in the Highlands until the 18th century and the Jacobite rebellions. After the Battle of Culloden in 1746 many Gaelic speakers were forced from their ancestral lands; this 'ethnic cleansing' by landlords and governments culminated in the Highland Clearances of the 19th century. Although it is still studied at academic level, the spoken language

declined, being regarded as a mere 'peasant' language of no modern significance.

It was only in the 1970s that Gaelic began to make a comeback with a new generation of young enthusiasts who were determined that it should not be allowed to die. People from all over Scotland, and indeed worldwide, are beginning to appreciate their Gaelic heritage.

After two centuries of decline, the language is now being encouraged through financial help from government agencies and the EU. Gaelic education is flourishing from playgroups to tertiary levels. This renaissance flows out into the field of music, literature, cultural events and broadcasting.

The Gaelic language has a vital role to play in the life of modern Scotland.

## MAKING CONVERSATION

### Good morning.

*Madainn mhath.* madding va

### Good afternoon/Good evening.

*Feasgar math.* fesskurr ma

### Good night.

*Oidhche mhath.* uh eech uh va

### How are you?

*Ciamar a tha thu?* kimmer uh ha oo?

### Very well, thank you.

*Glè mhath, tapadh leat.* gley va, tappuh let

### I'm well, thank you.

*Tha mi gu math, tapadh leat.* ha mee goo ma, tappuh let

### That's good.

*'S math sin.* sma shin

### Please.

*Mas e do thoil e.* mahs eh doh hawl eh

### Thank you.

*Tapadh leat.* tappuh let

### Many thanks.

*Mòran taing.* moe ran ta eeng

### You're welcome.

*'Se do bheatha.* sheh doh veh huh

### I beg your pardon.

*B'àill leibh.* baaluv

### Excuse me.

*Gabh mo leisgeul.* gav mo lishk yal

### I'm sorry.

*Tha mi duilich.* ha mee dooleech

### Do you speak (have) Gaelic?

*A bheil Gàidhlig agad?* uh vil ga lick ackut?

### Yes, a little.

*Tha, beagan.* ha, beg an

### Not much.

*Chan eil mòran.* chan yil moe ran

### What's your name?

*De an t ainm a tha ort?* jae an tannam uh ha orsht?

### I'm...

*Is mise...* is meeshuh...

### Good health/Cheers!

*Slàinte mhath!* slahntchuh va!

### Goodbye. (lit: Blessings go with you)

*Beannachd leat.* b yan achd let

### Goodbye. (The same with you)

*Mar sin leat.* mar shin let

## FOOD & DRINK

### I'm hungry.

*Tha an t-acras orm.* ha an tac russ orrom

### I'm thirsty.

*Tha am pathadh orm.* ha am pah ugh orrom

### I'd like...

*Bu toigh leam...* boo tawl lehum

### I don't like...

*Cha toigh leam...* chah tawl lehum

### That was good.

*Bha siud math.* va shooh ma

### Very good.

*Glè mhath.* gley va

### a biscuit

*brioscaid*

briskatch

### bread

*aran*

aran

### broth/soup

*brot*

broht

### butter

*im*

eem

### cheese

*càise*

kashuh

### cream

*bàrr*

baahrr

### dessert

*mìlsean*

meehlshuhn

### fish

*iasg*

eeusk

### meat

*feòil*

fehnyawl

### oatcakes

*aran coirce*

aran korkuh

### peas

*peasair*

peessir

### porridge

*lee lite*

chuh

### potatoes

*buntàta*

boontahtuh

### salmon

*bradan*

brahdan

### vegetables

*glasraich*

glasreech

### a cup of coffee

*cupa cofaidh*

coopa cawfee

### a cup of tea

*cupa ti*

coopa tee

### black coffee

*cofaidh dubh*

cawfee dooh

### black tea

*ti dhubh*

tee dhooh

### with milk

*le bainne*

leh bahnyuh

### with sugar

*leh le siùcar*

shooh car

### a glass of water

*glainne uisge*

glahnyuh ooshkuy

### a glass of wine

*glainne fion*

glahnyuh feeuhn

### beer

*leann*

lyawn

### red wine

*fion dearg*

feeuhn jerrack

### white wine

*fion geal*

feeuhn gyahl

### whisky

*uisge beatha*

ooshkuy beh huh

# Glossary

Some English words and phrases commonly used in Scotland will be unknown to visitors from abroad, even if English is their first language. There are also many walking and geographical terms, often derived from ancient and endemic languages, which you're likely to come across during your travels. We have translated some of these terms here. Lonely Planet's *British Phrasebook* provides an in-depth introduction to the British English language.

**AA** – Automobile Association

**abhainn** – river; stream

**allt** – river; stream

**aoinach** – ridge

**arête** – narrow or sharp ridge separating two glacial valleys

**bag** – to reach the top of a mountain or large hill

**bàn** – white

**bank holiday** – public holiday (when banks are closed)

**beag** – small

**bealach** – pass between hills

**beinn** – mountain

**ben** – mountain

**bidean** – peak

**bitumen** – road-surfacing material; asphalt; Tarmac

**bonxie** – great skua (a bird – Orkney Islands)

**bothy** – simple hut in the hills used by walkers (and shepherds and others)

**broch** – ancient circular dry-stone tower, large enough to serve as a fortified home

**burn** – stream

**cairn** – pile of stones to mark a path or junction; peak

**clan** – group of people claiming descent from a common ancestor

**cnoc** – rounded hillock

**coire** – high mountain valley; cirque; *corrie*

**col** – the lowest point of a ridge connecting two peaks

**contour interval** – vertical distance between contour lines on a topographical map

**Corbett** – hill or mountain between 2500ft and 2999ft high

**corrie** – semicircular basin at the head of a steep-sided valley, usually formed by glacial erosion; cirque; *coire*

**crag** – rocky outcrop

**croft, crofting** – plot of land and adjacent house, worked by occupiers

**cull, culling** – systematic reduction of deer population as part of a wildlife management program

**dearg** – red; reddish

**Donald** – Scottish hill between 2000ft and 2499ft high

**dram** – whisky measure

**druim** – ridge

**dubh** – dark; black

**dùn** – fortress; fort

**dyke** – stone wall

**eas** – waterfall

**eilean** – island

**estate** – large (usually) area of landed property

**EU** – European Union

**exclosure** – fenced enclosure to protect internal trees from external grazing stock

**fionn** – white

**firth** – river estuary

**fraoch** – heather

**geal** – white

**gendarme** – large block (of rock) barring progress on a narrow ridge

**geo** – very narrow coastal inlet or chasm

**GGW** – Great Glen Way

**ghillies** – estate employees who guide hunters and anglers

**glas** – grey; grey-green

**glen** – valley

**gloup** – blowhole (Northern Isles)

**GNER** – Great North Eastern Railway

**gorm** – blue

**gully** – small, steep-sided valley

**hag** – mound of *peat*, usually in bogs

**hamlet** – small settlement

**hillwalker** – person who enjoys walking in the 'hills' of Scotland

**horseshoe** – curved or circular route up one ridge and down another, round a valley

**HS** – Historic Scotland

**inch** – island

**inn** – pub, usually with accommodation

**inver** – river mouth

**JMT** – John Muir Trust

**ken** – head (noun); know (verb)

**kin** – head (noun)

**kirk** – church

**kissing gate** – swinging gate in fence, built to allow people through, but not animals or bicycles

**kyle** – narrows; strait

**lairig** – pass (mountain)

**law** – round hill

**LDP** – long-distance path

**linn** – waterfall

**loch** – lake

**lochan** – small lake

**lock** – section of canal that can be closed off and the water level changed to raise or lower boats

**machair** – area of sandy, calcium-rich soil, confined to the west coast, extending inland from the beach and very rich in summer wildflowers

**màm** – rounded hill; pass in the hills

**MBA** – Mountain Bothies Association

**MCoS** – Mountaineering Council of Scotland

**meall** – lumpy, rounded hill

**mheadhoin** – middle; central

**mhor** – big; great

**midge** – minute, biting insect, irresistibly attracted to humans in damp, moist areas on dull, still days

**MoD** – Ministry of Defence

**moor** – open, treeless area

**mor** – big; great

**moraine** – ridge or mound of debris deposited by retreating glacier

**moss** – bog; morass; mire

**Munro** – mountain over 3000ft high

**Munro bagger** – someone who deliberately sets out to reach the top of a *Munro*

**ness** – headland

**NNR** – National Nature Reserve

**NP** – National Park

**NTS** – National Trust for Scotland

**off-licence** – shop selling alcoholic drinks to take away

**OS** – Ordnance Survey

**passing place** – area beside a *single-track road* where vehicles can wait for others to pass, allowing the smooth flow of traffic in remote areas

**peat** – compact, brownish deposit of partially decomposed vegetable matter saturated with water, and used as a fuel when dried; see also *hag*

**Pict** – early Celtic inhabitant

**postbus** – mail delivery van, which also carries passengers

**RA** – Ramblers Association

**RAC** – Royal Automobile Club

**real ale** – any beer that is allowed to ferment in the cask, contains no chemicals or additives and, when served, is pumped up without using carbon dioxide

**RSPB** – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

**rubha** – headland

**sàil** – long mountain slope; heel

**scrambling** – using hands for balance and/or to enable movement upwards on rock

**sealed road** – road surfaced with *bitumen*

**sea stack** – pillar of rock rising from the sea

**sgurr** – pointed hill or mountain

**shieling** – traditional stone cottage used in summer for fishing or tending herds in remote areas

**single-track road** – sealed road, one-lane wide with regularly spaced passing places

**SMC** – Scottish Mountaineering Council

**SNH** – Scottish Natural Heritage

**sròn** – ridge running off mountain top; nose

**SROWAS** – Scottish Rights of Way & Access Society

**stalking** – hunting of deer for sport and/or to control population

**stell** – small corral for sheep etc

**stile** – set of steps enabling crossing of a fence or stone wall

**stob** – peak

**strath** – broad, flat river valley

**SUW** – Southern Upland Way

**SWT** – Scottish Wildlife Trust

**SYHA** – Scottish Youth Hostels Association



**TIC** – tourist information centre

**torr** – small hill

**tràigh** – beach

**trig point** – survey pillar or *cairn*

**true left/right bank** – side of the river as you look downstream

**tryst** – cattle market

**VAT** – value-added tax

**voe** – large bay or sea inlet (Northern Isles)

**WHW** – West Highland Way

**wick** – bay (Northern Isles)

**woodland** – forest