

LOCHABER & GLENCOE

BEYOND Appin lies the district of Lochaber which is now widely regarded as the outdoor capital of the UK. Indeed, the facilities it offers the outdoor person really cannot be bettered in this country. With Fort William at the heart of this huge area, which takes in Glencoe, Kinlochleven, the Ardnamurchan peninsula, Britian's highest mountain and all the glory of stunningly beautiful lochs and glens, Lochaber will stay in your heart for ever.

Streams tumble down its mountainsides, waterfalls crash down from great heights. The 92-mile West Highland Way ends at Fort William and the 73-mile Great Glen Way to Inverness starts at the town.

From the central belt Rannoch Moor is the entrance to Lochaber through Glen Coe, one of the top ten sights in the world. Driving down the A82 along this looming, glooming glen, you gain a sense of its sad history with the infamous 1692 massacre. Home of the MacDonalds, descendants of the survivors of the massacre still live in Glencoe village which has a small but entrancing museum, a shop, post office and community hall.

From Glen Coe you can follow picturesque Loch Leven to its head at Kinlochleven. Once an important aluminium smelting village it is now a quiet community but busy with



A superb view from Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain. Photo: sillycatmedia.com

tourists in the summer as the West Highland Way passes through it and its amenities include pubs, shops and accommodation.

The village of Ballachulish, near Glen Coe, was once important for its slate quarrying. Now, like Kinlochleven, its industry is gone, but it is still an interesting place.

All along the A82 from Glen Coe you will find accommodation for all pockets. Near Inchree is Corran Ferry where you can take a short ferry trip across to Ardgour on the Ardnamurchan peninsula – a hidden gem of the West Highlands. But follow the A82 and you find yourself in Fort William which lies at the foot of Ben Nevis and on the shores of Loch Linnhe. Fort William has everything to show it is the outdoor capital of the UK. It has many outdoor clothing shops, pubs, bars and hotels, guesthouses and restaurants and places where you can hire outdoor equipment such as canoes and mountain bikes and skiing equipment.

A highlight is to take a gondola at Nevis Range and ascend hundreds of feet to Aonach Mor adjacent to Ben Nevis. This is a skiing area and also the home of mountain-biking championships, with superb runs where you can have a go.

Mountain-bike trails also run through the local forestry and make for a wonderful excursion if you fancy maintaining your fitness. Other sports facilities in the town include a swimming pool and gymnasium but more sedentary visitors can take a loch cruise. A walk up Glen Nevis, staggeringly

beautiful, with a stunning waterfall called Steall, is a must.

Don't forget that Lochaber is also Harry Potter country. Many scenes were filmed here and sights include the famous Glenfinnan viaduct on the Road to the Isles, Glen Coe where Hagrid's Hut was to be found and the Hogwarts Express.

Crannog Cruises offers visitors to Fort William a truly unique experience. The 90 minute cruise, sailing from the town pier in Fort William aboard Souter's Lass, gives visitors the opportunity of seeing common and grey seals, otters, porpoise, the occasional golden eagle and many other species of native wildlife.

Passengers will have numerous opportunities to photograph the astonishing local scenery including outstanding views of the southern face of Ben Nevis. The cruise is made all the more entertaining with the informative and anecdotal skipper's commentary.

Souter's Lass has a spacious bar and lounge serving a selection of hot and cold drinks and snacks and an all weather viewing deck, meaning that everything you need for a great trip is on board.

After the cruise, enjoy a meal at Crannog restaurant, also based on the town pier. Crannog's restaurant team are passionate about bringing guests the freshest tastes from the very waters you may have just cruised along, so you'll find a constantly changing menu that uses the best local

catches of the day.

Firm favourites like mussels and salmon might be joined by hand-dived scallops, local langoustines, halibut or monkfish; all cooked in a simple and classic way that lets the food speak for itself.

For those who prefer meat or vegetarian options, you'll find a range of perfect dishes, including regulars' favourite, prime Scottish Ribeye.

At Crannog, the delicious seafood is only part of the experience: the unrivalled views of Loch Linnhe's tranquil waters, attentive staff and warm ambience all add up to a perfect setting for a relaxed lunch or special dinner.

It's advisable to book ahead, for both cruises and the restaurant, especially at the weekend – Crannog's team will certainly give you a warm west Highland welcome!

The Moorings Hotel lies alongside the Caledonian Canal at the Famous Neptune's Staircase. With splendid Panoramic views of Ben Nevis and Aonach Mhor.

The Moorings Hotel offers comfort and style coupled with the Convenience of a Modern Hotel. Here you will receive a warm Highland Welcome from the friendly staff, who maintain the highest standards enhanced by the personal touch.

The hotel has benefited from an extensive upgrading of all facilities in recent times, along with the addition of 10 executive bedrooms, each with a superb outlook over the Canal and Mountains.

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CRANNOG

Crannog Restaurant & Cruises

Cruise through spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife and sample the finest speciality seafood in our award winning restaurant

To book a table at the restaurant call **01397 705589**
and for information on cruises call **01397 700714**

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