

# ISLE OF BUTE - a favourite holiday destination

At the tiny ferry stage at Colintraive the Isle of Bute look's just a stone's throw away and to cross over to it takes five minutes. To land on Bute is to enter a magical island lying sheltered in the Clyde estuary.

Another ferry at Wemyss Bay between Gourock and Largs takes about 30 minutes to arrive at Bute's main community of Rothesay. The town, a royal burgh, is a firm favourite with holidaymakers with its castle, shops and its very fine, ornate Victorian architecture. Its classic Victorian seafront façade, pier and promenade are especially fine. Rothesay also has a castle and plenty of accommodation together with restaurants and cafes.

The Gulf Stream ensures Bute has a mild climate and you can see tropical plants and palm trees in many places.

Bute has been occupied by man for more than 5,500 years and if you explore the island you'll find standing stones and cists and even a vitrified fort at Dunagoil Bay. Bute Museum in Stuart Street, Rothesay displays many of the island's ancient artefacts. There are early Christian sites dedicated to St Ninian and St Blaine, mis-



Rothesay Gardens

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sonaries who settled here to spread the Christian word.

The island is also the ancestral home of the Stuart kings of Scotland and an important legacy of this is the castle at Rothesay. Built of circular design it withstood many attempts to sack it. The English took it at one time but Robert the Bruce recaptured it in 1311, only for it to be destroyed

by Oliver Cromwell in 1659 and finally burned by the Duke of Argyll. However, it has been substantially restored in the last 120 years. Mount Stuart was built to replace the castle.

Each year Bute holds a jazz festival, Highland Games, agricultural show, concerts and art festivals. For other activities there are plenty of coastal walks, horse

riding and there are three golf courses with some of the finest views in Scotland.

You can cycle in peace along the island's almost deserted roads and find fine sandy beaches and legacies of the island's past. An abundance of seafood round the island means its restaurants can offer top quality food. Also the island is renowned for the taste and quality of its beef and lamb.



Sunset at Craigmore

Thanks to Phillip Kirkham for the photographs used on this page



Rothesay Castle



Rothesay Harbour. Photo: Scottish Viewpoint



Ettrick Bay Bridge

## Rothesay Pavilion



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