

# Best villages in Scotland

How to visit, travel tips and map



Mainland edition.

I absolutely love hopping between Scotland's picture-postcard villages - in fact, I think it's one of the best things to do on a Scotland trip.

The quaint streets, seafood cafes, boutique accommodation, gorgeous scenery & endless outdoor adventures create a really special, one-of-a-kind travel experience.

The big decision of course is choosing which to visit!

Over the years, I've become a bit of an expert on finding the most beautiful Scottish villages, and weaving them into my road trips.

This guide, though not exhaustive, is curated to give you a starting point, so you can plan your next trip.



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# Highland villages

## Central

- Glencoe
- Kinlochleven
- Glenfinnan
- Lochawe

## North

- Torridon
- Shieldaig
- Lochcarron
- Applecross
- Plockton
- Kinlochewe
- Lochinver



## Highlands highlight: Plockton

Hidden in the Highlands, Plockton is easily one of the most beautiful villages in Scotland. This hamlet is as charming as can be, with its palm trees, chocolate-box cottages, wild flower gardens, and tiny harbour.

Situated on a sheltered bay, the views over Loch Carron are honestly some of the most gorgeous in country – it's easy to see why Plockton is often called the 'jewel of the highlands.'

The pace in this little village is refreshingly slow yet there's still lots to do. Whilst here, go for seafront walks, hikes in the nearby hills, or seal spotting boat trips. Later, devour locally sourced fish and chips at the Harbour Fish Bar.

### Getting to Plockton

This is the perfect village to visit on a tour around the Highlands, especially if you're driving the North Coast 500. Or visit on your way to the Isle of Skye - Plockton is only 14-minutes from the Skye Bridge and Eilean Donan Castle.

Find Plockton [here](#) on Google Maps.

## **Cairngorms + Aberdeenshire villages & small towns**

- Braemar
- Ballater
- Balmoral
- Crathie
- Boat of Garten
- Kingussie
- Aviemore



## Cairngorms highlight: Braemar

Of all the villages in Scotland, Braemar is the highest. Situated in the heart of the Cairngorms, it's the perfect base to explore the National Park and Royal Deeside. In the village itself you'll find boutique shops and cafes, whilst Braemar Castle is only a short walk away.

There are plenty outdoor adventures too, with tons of hiking trails to explore. Whilst there's plenty of castles in the area to visit, including Balmoral and Craigievar.

### Getting to Braemar

Braemar sits on the A93 'snow road' – Scotland's highest drivable road. Visit Braemar as part of a road trip around the Cairngorms or Royal Deeside.

Find Braemar [here](#) on Google Maps.

## **Perthshire villages & small towns**

- Dunkeld
- Comrie
- Aberfeldy
- Grandtully
- Kenmore
- Killin
- Pitlochry
- Kinloch Rannoch
- Blair Atholl





## Perthshire highlight: Dunkeld

Historic and very lovely, the village of Dunkeld sits on the banks of the River Tay in Perthshire. Whilst you're here, wander amongst the traditional cottages, cobbled streets, visit the cathedral, and explore the boutique stores.

Later, pick up a coffee & cake from one of Dunkeld's cafes. There's a real thriving foodie scene in Dunkeld - my favourite spots are Aran Bakery and The Taybank Hotel.

After you explore the village, drive a minute along the road to the Hermitage. Here you'll find one of Perthshire's best forest walks and waterfalls.

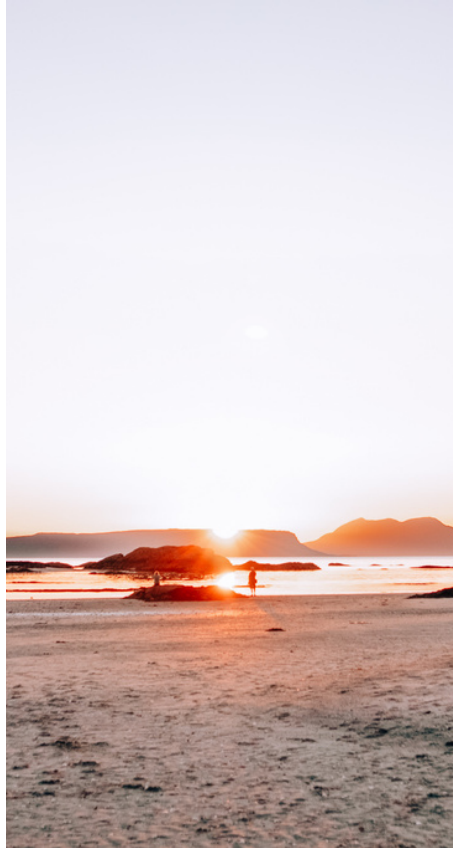
### Getting to Dunkeld

Dunkeld is a must-visit on a Perthshire road trip.

Find Dunkeld [here](#) on Google Maps.

## West Coast Highlands

- Arisaig
- Morar
- Glenelg
- Inverie
- Glenuig
- Salen
- Kilchoan



## West Coast highlight: Arisaig

Situated on the west coast is the peaceful, coastal village of Arisaig and its pretty stone cottages. Arisaig is all about that slow village life - think coastal strolls, tasty treats in the marina café, and savouring freshly caught seafood in the traditional Crofters Bar.

In truth, Arisaig is exceptionally small and often only a stopover for those heading westward to Skye. Yet it's worth staying overnight, especially to see the most breathtaking sunset in Scotland from one of Arisaig's many wild beaches (the most beautiful beach in the area is Camusdarach).

Also don't miss the nearby Prince's Cairn and views over the Loch Nan Uamh viaduct, especially when the Harry Potter steam train is passing.

### Getting to Arisaig

You'll find Arisaig on the A830, better known as the road to the isles. Stay for the night before travelling onwards to nearby Skye or Knoydart. Alternatively, visit for the day - Arisaig is a 50-minute drive north west of Fort William.

Find Arisaig [here](#) on Google Maps.

## Moray Firth villages & small towns

- Pennan
- Crovie & Gardenstown
- Portsoy
- Sandend
- Cullen
- Portknockie
- Findochty
- Lossiemouth
- Hopeman



## Moray Firth highlight: Pennan

The Moray Firth coast is jam-packed with villages that are simply incredible. However, the pretty village of Pennan is one of my favourites, with its heritage rich white cottages and historic harbour. It's a small place, and a quintessential Scottish fishing village.

Once there, make sure to explore the coastal path out along the cliffs. Pennan is famous for being a dolphin watching hotspot on the Moray coast.

### Getting to Pennan

Visit Pennan on a daytrip from Aberdeen. Or visit on a North East 250 road trip to explore the entire Moray Firth coastline.

Find Pennan [here](#) on Google Maps.

## Fife

- East Neuk (coastal)
- West Fife (UNESCO coast)
- North Fife (countryside)



## **Fife highlight: Crail**

It's almost impossible to choose between the East Neuk coastal villages. Yet Crail is always one of my absolute favourite places to visit. It has everything you want for a magical seaside daytrip: a beautiful harbour, quaint fishing village charm, pretty cottages, tranquil streets, art galleries, and bucket loads of fresh sea air.

As Crail is tiny, a long morning is plenty of time to walk around the village, the harbour, and visit a local café.

### **Getting to Crail**

Visit Crail whilst on a Fife road trip, whether around the East Neuk or a mix of coast & countryside. Alternatively, base yourself in St Andrews and visit Crail on a daytrip.

Find Crail [here](#) on Google Maps.

## Loch Lomond & Trossachs + Argyll

- Luss
- Milarrochy Bay
- Arrochar
- Aberfoyle
- Drymen
- Inveraray
- Tarbet





## Trossachs highlight: Luss

Luss is a beautiful village, nestled in the heart of Trossachs National Park. Once here, explore the narrow streets of quaint cottages, coffee shops, and small stores.

Situated on the banks of Loch Lomond, there's also plenty of opportunity for adventure – hike nearby Ben Lomond or head into the hills for spectacular views over the village below. The Beinn Dubh trail is one of my favourite Trossachs walks.

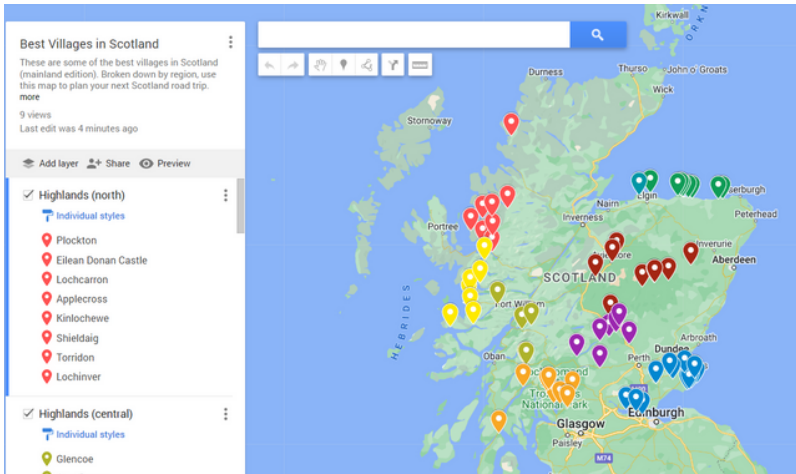
Alternatively, if you'd like to get out on the water there are companies in Luss hiring SUPs, canoes, and kayaks. There are regular boat trips too from Luss pier, and a swimming spot by the small beach.

### Getting to Luss

Why not visit Luss on a road trip north. The road to Luss (the A82) hugs the shore of Loch Lomond, heading north to Glencoe and beyond.

Find Luss [here](#) on Google Maps.

# Plan your trip: interactive map



Handily, I've saved all my favourite Scottish villages right here in **this Google Map**. You can use it to help plan your next trip and I'll update it with each lovely new village I find!

# Where to next?

With all these beautiful destinations, you're probably feeling inspired to book a Scotland trip.

To make things easier for you, I've curated my favourite Scottish villages in **[this blog post](#)**.

If it's your first time visiting Scotland, you might find these posts helpful:

- **[Complete Scotland road trip packing list](#)**
- **[Best Scotland travel books](#)**
- **[Tips for driving in the Scottish Highlands](#)**
- **[Best time to visit Scotland \(seasons + weather\)](#)**

Looking for more Scotland inspiration? Then head over to **[this page](#)** for a curated list of my favourite places, split into regions.

Happy Scotland travels!

Lesley

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