

## Exploring from Balachladaich by car

### Loch Ness and beyond

There are a huge variety of things to see and do in the Loch Ness area and beyond. Whatever your particular interest, whether it be wildlife, flora, genealogy, sites of historical interest or simply seeing this area of outstanding scenic beauty, you will not be disappointed. Balachladaich is an ideal touring base for the Highlands. The Island of Skye, the far North West, the spectacular mountains of Glen Coe, Aviemore and the Cairngorms National Park and of course a Loch Ness circular tour can all be enjoyed on day trips from here. There is a lot of information in the cottage about what you can see and do in the area and we hope that this will help you to make the best use of your time touring in the area and beyond. Listed below is a short description of some of the car tours which can be taken from Balachladaich.

#### 1. Historic Sites Tour.



This is essentially your 'classic' historic tour. From Balachladaich you would drive first to Culloden Battlefield, where in 1746 Bonnie Prince Charlie led his troops to a catastrophic defeat. The National Trust for Scotland owns the site, and it has a very informative visitor centre. But you need only walk out onto the battlefield with rain sweeping across the moor to 'feel' the history! After Culloden you could move on to nearby Clava Cairns for a short stop. Used as long ago as 3500BC these massive stone structures were used for collective burials by cremation. Tucked away in woods off the main road, they stand as an eerie testament to ancient times. After Clava carry on to Fort George. Built after Culloden, it was the largest military fortification in Europe at the time and it is still in use today. Jutting out in to the Moray Firth, you can sometimes see dolphins from its ramparts! One of the most visited attractions in the whole of Scotland this scenic ruin on Strone Point towers above some of the deepest water in Loch Ness. Return to Balachladaich, either via the village of Fort Augustus, or by going back up to Inverness and out to Dores.

## 2. Loch Ness Circular.



This is another full day tour, which takes in all the main attractions around Loch Ness and a few more. Turn right out of Balachladaich, towards Foyers - the first stop is less than six miles along the road at Boleskine Graveyard set directly below Boleskine House home to Aleister Crowley, self proclaimed 'most wicked man in the world', at the turn of the 20th century. From there carry on to Foyers where you can visit the majestic Falls of Foyers, before a quick stop at Whitebridge to view the General Wade bridge which dates back to 1732. From Whitebridge continue up to the route's highest point at Suidhe Chuimen at 1200ft. From here

there are excellent views back north towards Loch Mhor. You might even want to take a short walk across a couple of peaks to get even better views. Then it's on down past lonely Loch Tarff to Fort Augustus. Fort Augustus has many attractions, not least the Caledonian Canal and the series of locks. It's a great place just to wander and browse the shops. After Fort Augustus the next stop would be at Invermoriston with its old Telford bridge built in 1813 and picturesque riverside walk. You could also take a detour up Glen Moriston and see the very strange and unexplained 'preachers footprints' On the way home you would stop at the Loch Ness Monster Exhibition in Drumnadrochit. If you have time, you may wish to take a Jacobite cruise out onto the Loch from the Clansman Harbour (last one leaves at 4pm).

## 3. Towards Skye and Wester Ross

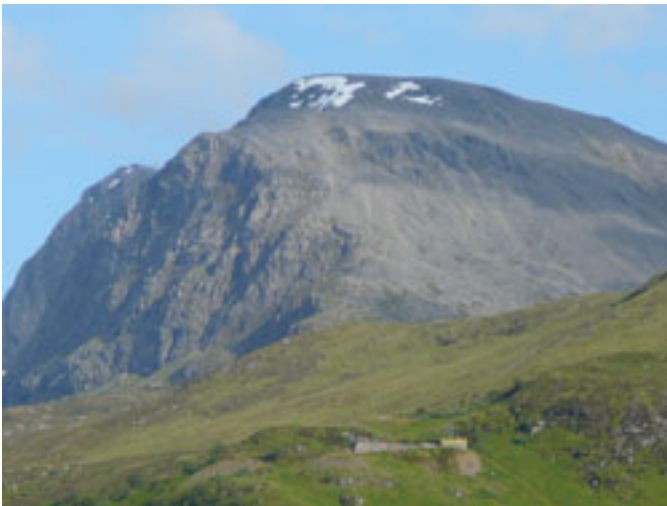


This tour takes you far into the wild and dramatic mountain and coastal scenery of north west Scotland. It is a long day but rest assured you will return with memories not only of scenic splendour, but of distant lands 'far from the madding crowd'. From Balachladaich head south to Invergarry, taking "the road to the Isles", towards Skye. This road passes Loch Garry with stunning views westward, and lonely Loch Cluanie before descending into Glen Shiel which is dominated by a range of mountains called the Five Sisters of Kintail. From there it is up the side of Loch Duich to the village of Dornie

and Eilean Donan Castle, ancient seat of the MacKenzies of Kintail and one of the most picturesque castles in Scotland. After a stop here, carry on to Kyle of Lochalsh where you will get a good view "over the bridge over to Skye" and then on to Plockton, (possibly the most beautiful village in Scotland!) with it's palm trees, brightly painted houses and an excellent seafood restaurant! Then follow the coast road along the shores of Loch Carron before heading up and

over Bealach nam Bo (pass of the cattle), which at 2000ft is the highest mountain pass in Scotland, to the remote and beautiful Applecross Peninsula. From the summit of Bealach nam Bo you can enjoy spectacular views across to the Isle of Skye and Raasay as well as further west to the Outer Hebrides. From Applecross head north east to Shildaig a small and beautiful white painted village on the shores of Loch Torridon. After the village of Torridon you will pass below the towering massif of Liatach and Ben Eighe which are amongst the most spectacular Scottish mountains, and along Glen Torridon to the small village of Kinlochewe. From Kinlochewe continue east to Achnasheen which translates as "the field of storms" in Gaelic and get good views of Ben Wyvis which can be clearly seen from Inverness. From the village of Garve turn south to cross the Kessock Bridge across the Beaully Firth and into Inverness. From there it is back to Balachladaich.

#### 4. High Mountains and Glens.



This tour takes you south west to Spean Bridge, Fort William, Ben Nevis and Glencoe. It is a tour on which to appreciate the wild beauty of Scotland's highest mountains. From Balachladaich, turn right and head down past Fort Augustus to your first stop just outside Spean Bridge at the Commando Memorial. The memorial is to the commandos who trained in the area during WW2 and the spot affords excellent views of the massive Nevis range of mountains. Also near here is where the first shots of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745 were fired.

It is an eerie place in a deep gorge near the remains of General Wade's spectacular High Bridge. Moving on, you might want to briefly stop in Spean Bridge itself at the very good gift shop, before heading down to the Aonach Mor Mountain Centre. Why not take a trip up the mountain gondola to a height of over 600m. A short walk from here and you can view Ben Nevis itself, which at 1344m is Britain's highest mountain. From Aonach Mor travel down to Fort William and onto Glen Coe, scene of the massacre of the Macdonalds in 1692 and also of spectacular mountain scenery which has been a mecca for mountaineers for many years. Stop at the new Glencoe Visitor Centre before moving on to absorb the atmosphere of the Claichaig, the most famous of all climbing fraternity hostels in Scotland!

From Glen Coe return to Spean Bridge and then follow the winding road past Roy Bridge. Then onto Loch Laggan and "Monarch of the Glen Country". Join the A9 at Kingussie and return to Inverness and Balachladaich.

## 5. Journey to the Edge....



This is a round trip to the far north coast of Scotland. From Balachladaich, turn right to Inverness, and head north over the Kessock Bridge up the A9 past Carbisdale castle and the Falls of Shin (time for a stop here to visit the 'Harrods of the north') to Lairg. From here on it's all single track as you head up past Altnaharra to Tongue. The landscape you pass through is harsh, barren and empty which gives it a truly unique beauty of it's own. This is one of the wildest and lonely roads in Scotland and certainly not a place to breakdown! From Tongue it's on along the coast to Durness. The

coastal scenery here is rugged and the beaches are quite simply the most beautiful in Europe – absolutely no question! It's just a pity that the climate is not a bit warmer! Durness itself is perched on the edge, the edge of Europe, the edge of the world(?) There is a sense here of being so far away from anywhere that it is hard to believe that you are only a few hours drive from Balachladaich. After a visit to the spectacular Smoo Cave start the journey home via Laxford Bridge and Loch Shin. On this part of the journey keep an eye out for Golden Eagles, which thrive in the more remote highland glens that we pass through.