

# Gallaibh Caithness



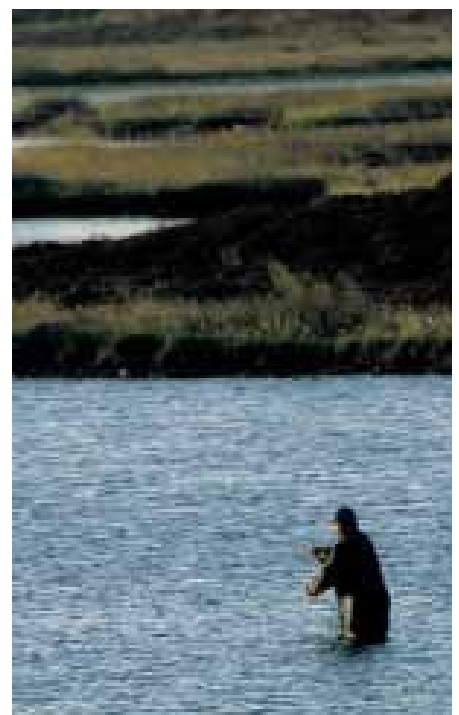
the lowland beyond the Highland  
*an dùthaich bhog air a' Ghàidhealtachd*

**T**he landscape of Caithness is mostly rich arable farmland, although extensive areas are covered by deep peat with many lochans (little lochs) and pool systems. This extends into neighbouring Sutherland and is known as “The Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland”, an internationally protected area that is home to a rich and varied flora and fauna.

Renowned for fishing, farming and flagstone, the area is perhaps best known in recent times as the location for Dounreay - the site of the United Kingdom’s nuclear fast reactor programme which is now being decommissioned. Over the past 50 years this has attracted many hundreds of people to live in the area from around the UK.

Thurso, on the north coast, is home to many who work at Dounreay and the nearby port of Scrabster offers links to Stromness, Orkney, and is a leading white fish port. There are also ferry links to Orkney from Gills Bay and John O’Groats, the famous landmark, which attracts thousands of visitors every year. Wick, the county town, has its own airport with links to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Inverness and Sumburgh.

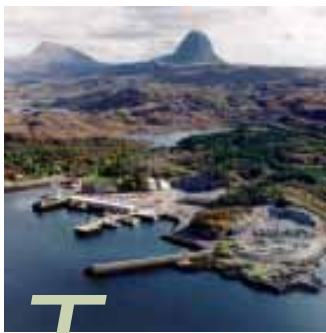
Rich in archaeological interest, Caithness is well-known as one of the top surfing locations in the UK thanks to its excellent water quality, which right across the Highlands shows improvement each year.



# Cataibh Sutherland



a land of outstanding geology and landscape  
*creagan is cumadh-tìre ìongantach*



**T**he coastal villages stretching from Lochinver in the West to Dornoch in the North West are characterised by their crofting communities. The nearby North Lochinver Estate was the subject of the first crofters' buy-out in Scotland by the Assynt Crofters Trust.

Lochinver and Kinlochbervie are two of the biggest white fish ports in Scotland and the coast here lends itself to a number of salmon farms.

The major population centres are, however, located on the East Sutherland coast stretching from Bonar Bridge to Helmsdale, home of the heritage centre, Timespan.

Tourism plays a large part in the economy of this area as it boasts several top class golf courses including the renowned Royal Dornoch. It is also home to some of the most spectacular beaches in the country.

Dunrobin Castle, Golspie - a leading attraction - is finished in classic French chateau style and Dornoch Cathedral put the area on the world map when pop singer Madonna chose it for the baptism of her son, Rocco. She married Guy Ritchie at the nearby Skibo Castle - an exclusive retreat once in the ownership of philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, the Scot who made his fortune in America. Inland is Lairg - the crossroads of Sutherland which is the venue for Britain's biggest one-day lamb sale.



# Ros & Cromba

## Ross & Cromarty



east coast convenience meets rural west coast living  
goireasan an taobh sear is dòigh-beatha an taobh siar

**A**s you head north over the Kessock Bridge from Inverness, the Easter Ross towns of Dingwall, Alness, Invergordon, Tain, Cromarty and Fortrose quickly appear and are all within easy daily commuting distance of Inverness.

Dingwall, a traditional market town, has its own senior football club in Ross County and is a popular shopping and service hub for many from rural Wester Ross. Nearby is the spa village of Strathpeffer, lying in the shadow of Ben Wyvis, one of the locations where red kites - a reintroduced bird of prey - are often seen catching the thermal currents.



Alness - the biggest town in Easter Ross - has made a name for itself for its award-winning floral displays. Invergordon is a destination for some of the world's largest cruise liners and is a port where oil rigs are maintained in the natural deep water harbour of the Cromarty Firth.



Easter Ross gives way to Wester Ross where a roll-on roll-off ferry operates from picturesque Ullapool to the Western Isles. This area is characterised by its warmer, temperate climate thanks to the effects of the Gulf Stream. Inverewe Gardens by Gairloch are a major attraction.

Beinn Eighe - Britain's first designated National Nature Reserve - provides access to a range of trails and typifies the natural environment of this wonderful landscape.



# An t-Eilean Sgitheanach & Loch Aillse Skye & Lochalsh

home of the mighty Cuillin mountains  
beanntan àrda a' Chuilthinn



The island of Skye - famous for its impressive scenery - is linked to the Highland mainland by the toll-free Skye Bridge and has recently experienced significant increases in population.

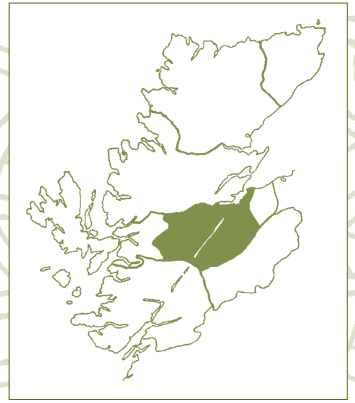
The main centres of Portree and Broadford in Skye and Kyle of Lochalsh, on the mainland, give way to a large number of smaller communities spread throughout the area. Tourism is the mainstay of the economy and attractions like Dunvegan Castle, the Cuillin range of mountains, the Clan Donald Centre at Armadale and Talisker Distillery at Carbost draw thousands to the island every year.

Skye has ferry links to the Western Isles from Uig and to Lochaber from Armadale. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig - the Gaelic college at Sleat - is a significant local employer and is part of the UHI Millennium Institute.

Bilingual road signs in this area give a clue to the rich culture where the Gaelic language is very strong and is taught in many local schools.



# Inbhir Nis Inverness



at the heart of the Highlands  
aig cridhe na Gàidhealtachd



Sitting on the banks of the River Ness, Inverness is the capital of the Highlands, and home to the administrative, transport and entertainment centres of the region. It has a bustling and exciting atmosphere and regularly scores highly in UK quality of life surveys.

Jobs in the public administration, education and health sectors account for the bulk of employment in Inverness, although recent expansion of the retail and medical sectors offer an increased range of job opportunities. Major banks, building societies, other financial institutions and retail high street names all have premises here.

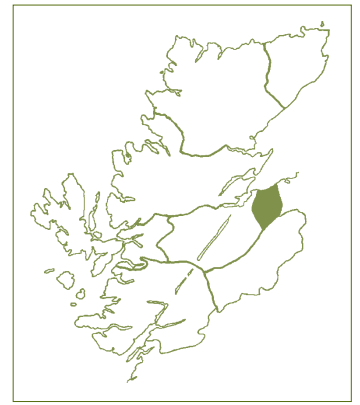


Hotels and restaurants offer a diverse range of international flavours and bars and coffee shops add a relaxed but vibrant atmosphere to Inverness city life. Leisure facilities are in abundance with a range of health and fitness centres and swimming pools.

Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club, which plays in the shadow of the spectacular Kessock Bridge, is part of the senior Scottish football league.

Only seven miles from Inverness city centre is the world famous Loch Ness, which stretches from Lochend to Fort Augustus. Thousands of visitors each year visit the attractions along the route in the hope of spotting the loch's "monster".

# Inbhir Nàrann Nairn



a traditional holiday resort with historic roots

àite shaor-làithean le freumhaichean eachdraidheil

**N**airn is just a 20 minute drive from Inverness and has an award winning beach, from where the only resident population of bottlenose dolphins in the north of Britain can be spotted. Inverness Airport, Dalcross, is on its doorstep.

Leisure craft use the busy harbour which is situated between two first class links golf courses. To the west is The Nairn Golf Club, which staged the Walker Cup in 1999, and to the east is Nairn Dunbar Golf Club. High quality housing and the Balmakeith Industrial Estate - home to a number of successful businesses - make the Nairn area an attractive place to live and work, as well as play.

Linked to the historic events of 1746, nearby Fort George and Culloden Battlefield are hugely popular visitor centres run by Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland, respectively.



# Loch Abar Lochaber



the outdoor capital of the UK  
prìomh bhaile spòrs na rìoghachd

Lochaber is an area of contrasts. From the population centre of Fort William - the biggest town in the Highlands outside Inverness - to Ardnamurchan and Morvern, more remote areas which have recently experienced population increases.

Smaller settlements include Mallaig, Kinlochleven and Ballachulish as well as the 'Small Isles' of Canna, Rum, Eigg and Muck.

Ben Nevis, the UK's highest mountain at 1344 metres and the nearby Glen Nevis, are major attractions. At Aonach Mor, a gondola system ferries skiers and visitors to the mountain paths and slopes.

Glenfinnan, where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised the Jacobite Standard in 1745, and Glencoe, scene of the famous massacre and now a spectacular climbing and skiing area, are other major attractions for those with a love of history and the great outdoors.

From snowboarding and skiing to mountain biking and ice climbing, Lochaber is marketing itself as the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

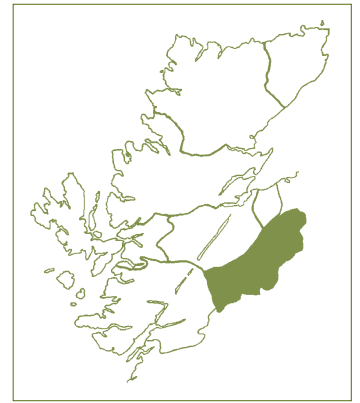
With international events like the Mountain Bike World Cup being held annually, the area is in a league of its own. Its reputation as a high quality outdoor sports location in an area of outstanding natural beauty is second to none.

The economically important sectors of aluminium smelting, fishing, tourism, agriculture and quarrying feature strongly. The area is also just a two and a half hour road journey away from Glasgow and has direct rail links with Glasgow, Edinburgh and London.



# Bàideanach & Srath Spè Badenoch & Strathspey

the gateway to the Highlands  
a-steach dhan Ghàidhealtachd



**A** key feature of Badenoch and Strathspey is the recent creation of the Cairngorms National Park. As the biggest national park in the UK, it has been set up to ensure the unique aspects of the Cairngorms - both the natural environment and the local communities - are cared for, sustained and enhanced for current and future generations to enjoy.

Aviemore is undergoing a major investment programme as accommodation facilities are brought right up to date. Tourism is the major economic driver in this area as improvements continue to be made to the increasing range of world class visitor attractions. One of these - the CairnGorm Funicular Railway - provides an unrivalled experience as the country's highest and fastest funicular railway for skiers and tourists.

With the A9 trunk road passing through the centre of the area, much of Badenoch and Strathspey lends itself to commuting daily to Inverness. Kingussie and Newtonmore to the south are attractive villages which are home to the Highland Folk Museum.

The wonderful environment is what really characterises this area though. From some of the highest mountain peaks in the UK to osprey watching at Boat of Garten, fishing on the River Spey, water sports at Loch Morlich and Loch Insh, family fun at the Landmark forest heritage park, Carrbridge, to the arctic wilderness of Cairngorm - this land of extremes has it all.

