

Welcome to the Cairngorms

Your Digital Guide
Everything that you need to know

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Welcome to the Cairngorms

At the heart of the Cairngorms National Park, this valley of the River Spey, with its ancient pine forests and the highest mountain range in Britain, is a very special place. It boasts some of Scotland's finest attractions, a great range of outdoor activities, and exceptional wildlife.

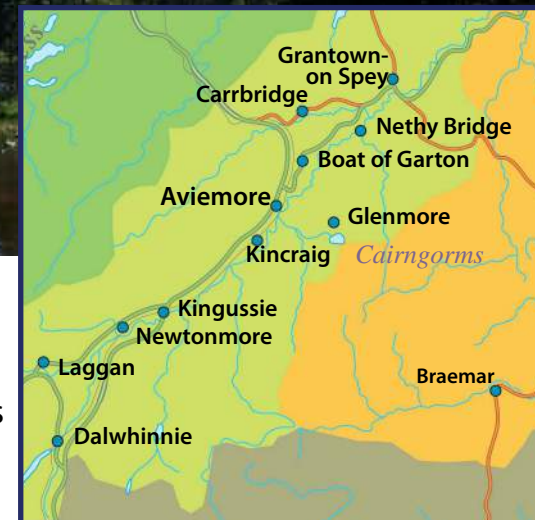
Attractions include a [funicular railway](#) that climbs almost to the summit of Cairn Gorm, the Highlands' main [folk museum](#), an out-standing [steam railway](#), and an award winning [forest adventure park](#).

Nowhere else in Scotland will you find so many activities on



offer, from great golf courses and fishing on the famous River Spey, to excellent mountain biking, whitewater rafting and river tubing. [Cairn Gorm Mountain](#) is also well known as Scotland's top winter sports resort.

The Cairngorms are rich in wildlife with the old Caledonian pine forests being one of the best places in Britain to see the rare [red squirrel](#), [capercaillie](#), crested tit and [Scottish crossbill](#). [Ospreys](#) are often seen fishing on the lochs and rivers.



- **Places to Visit**
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Places to Visit

A great range of attractions from historic sites to family fun



Castles and Historic Sites

There is huge choice of historic attractions in and around the national park. Just to the north are the fairy tale castle of [Cawdor](#), magnificent [Fort George](#) and the famous [battlefield of Culloden](#). To the east, within easy reach are the splendid [castles of Aberdeenshire](#) including Crathes and Balmoral.



Railways Old and New

The [Strathspey Railway](#) captures the atmosphere of an old Scottish branch line and has fine views of the Cairngorms, the setting for Britain's [highest funicular railway](#)



Family Fun

[Family attractions](#) are a feature of this area, with the ever-popular [Landmark Park](#) at Carrbridge a great day out – as is the [Highland Wildlife Park](#) at Kincaig.

Highland Folk

You can immerse yourself in the past at the [Highland Folk Museum](#), one of the best museums of its kind in Britain, with an authentic 18th century township and a rich collection from across the Highlands.



Sandy Beaches

Nowhere else in-land has such a great sandy beach. [Loch Morlich](#) with its wide stretch of sand beside old Caledonian pine trees is the place to be on a hot sunny day.

On the coast, a short drive away, are more superb beaches including [Nairn](#), [Findhorn](#), [Hopeman](#) and [Lossiemouth](#).

Whisky Distilleries

There is no shortage of malt whisky distilleries with easy reach. From [Dalwhinnie](#), one of the highest distilleries in Scotland, to [Speyside](#), the heartland of malt whisky distilling in Scotland, you can enjoy a dram and discover what is so special about these Highland malts.



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Things to do

Nowhere else in Scotland has so many activity options

Great Golf Courses

The valley of the River Spey has some of the best heathland courses in Britain with [Boat of Garten](#) and [Aviemore's Spey Valley](#) course being outstanding. The superb links courses of [Nairn Dunbar](#) and [Castle Stuart](#) are no distance away.



Fishing for Salmon, Trout and Pike

A mecca for anglers, this beautiful area offers excellent salmon fishing on the [River Spey](#), and good loch fishing for both trout and pike.



Mountain Biking

This has to be Scotland's best area for mountain biking with superb tracks through the forests of [Glenmore](#) and [Rothiemurchus](#) and the dedicated mountain bike centre [Wolftrax](#) at Laggan.

Adventure

There are plenty of [operators](#) offering courses and organised experiences in everything from winter survival to white water rafting, tubing, canoeing and rock climbing.



Horse Riding & Pony Trekking

Newtonmore is where [pony trekking](#) in Scotland began and the area continues to offer a good choice of horse riding.

Walking

With woodland trails around Rothiemurchus and Glenmore, plus the scale and variety of the routes in the Cairngorms themselves, this is peerless [walking country](#).



Snowsports

[CairnGorm Mountain](#) is Scotland's premier ski resort with a wide range of runs to suit all abilities. [Lecht 2090](#) also offer good skiing with 20 different runs.

Other Sports

Other activities include clay pigeon shooting at Rothiemurchus, [off-road driving](#) on Rothiemurchus and Alvie estates, plus watersports at [Loch Insh](#) and [Loch Morlich](#).



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Eating Out



Eating Out

No where else in the Highlands has such a variety of [great places to eat](#), from award winning restaurants, to riverside pubs, cosy cafes and classy cake shops, plus such a choice of cuisines: Scottish; Italian; French; Indian and Chinese.

Dinner on Rails

[Dine on a train](#) as it used to be while watching a changing panorama of the Cairngorm mountains. Enjoy a traditional Sunday lunch on the Strathspey Clansman from March to October or board the Strathspey Highlander for dinner between June 1st and August 31st.



Britain's Highest Restaurant

In a spectacular setting, 1097m above sea level, Cairngorm Mountain's

[Ptarmigan Restaurant](#) may not be the best place to see a ptarmigan but it offers an excellent menu throughout the day.

Cakes and Squirrels

Try the [Potting Shed Tearoom](#) at Inshriach Nursery with its wildlife viewing gallery for the most delicious of cakes and the closest views of red squirrels.

Cairngorms Events



There is no shortage of choice here with a strong programme of traditional and unusual of [events](#) throughout the year.

Sled Dogs

The biggest event in [Britain's sled dog racing](#) calendar takes place in Glenmore Forest when 1,000 dogs and 250 mushers race along the trails around Loch Morlich.

Highland Games and Shows

Three major events take place during the first two weeks in August, the [Grantown Show](#) and highland games at [Newtonmore](#) and [Nethy Bridge](#).



Steam Fair

For the largest gathering of [steam traction engines](#) in the North of Scotland plus a steam fairground organ, [Boat of Garten](#) is the place to go.

Chainsaw Carving

Be amazed at the spectacular sculptures that can be created with a chainsaw at [Carve Carrbridge](#), the national chainsaw carving competition

Thunder in the Glens

Even if you do not own a motorbike – the UK's largest [Harley Davidson rally](#) is a memorable and highly enjoyable event.



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Local Wildlife

Many excellent wildlife watching experiences



Crested tits and crossbills

If you are hankering after some Strathspey specials, such as [crested tit](#) and [Scottish crossbill](#), then try the trails network on the [Rothiemurchus Estate](#). Go to the estate's trout fishery, close to the bridge over the Spey at Aviemore, to see [ospreys](#) trying for fast-food take-aways in summer.

Year-round reindeer

Get the low-down on reindeer at the [Cairngorm Reindeer Centre](#) then go on a guided walk to meet some of the herd. Further up from the Cairngorm car park there are paths into the Northern Corries where you have every chance of seeing [ptarmigan](#).



The original ospreys



The osprey eyrie you can see from the [Loch Garten Osprey Centre](#) in Abernethy Forest is perhaps the world's best watched nest. [Ospreys](#) have bred here since 1958. At the centre, attractions in addition to the star fish-hawk turn (viewable through telescopes and video link) include siskin, great-spotted woodpecker and [red squirrel](#).

There's a dawn watch here for [capercaillie](#) at a nearby lek in early summer.

Red squirrels close-up

Get a red squirrels-eye view of Scots pine on a tree-top trail at the [Landmark Adventure Park](#) in Carrbridge. Other good spots to see [red squirrels](#) are the [Highland Wildlife Park](#) near Kingussie and the Tearoom at [Inshriach Nursery](#)



Magnificent marshes

A huge wetland, thick with floating beds of sedges and other water plants, might seem tricky to visit. But if you use marked trails to the two hides at the [Insh Marshes](#) you'll get a good idea of one of the riverside marvels of the Spey. Watch for breeding waders such as lapwing, redshank, curlew and snipe and listen for water rail.



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Local History

A cross roads of the Highlands with a fascinating past

Garrisoned with Troops

A wild and lawless part of the United Kingdom in the 1700s the Highlands were garrisoned with troops. Prominent buildings of this period are [Ruthven Barracks](#) near Kingussie built in 1719, the attractive old castle of [Corgarff](#), and the massive [Fort George](#).



River Highway

Like the A9 road today, the River Spey was once the main highway for moving timber out of the valley. Logs and rafts of sawn timber were floated down to the shipyards and sawmills at the river mouth. There is no trace today of these shipyards but you can still see the remains of dams used during these log floating days to raise the levels of [Loch Morlich](#), [Loch an Eilean](#) and [Loch Einich](#).

Boats and Bridges

The River Spey, with no bridges, and just ferries known as 'boats', was once a major barrier. One of the first bridges across the river is the [Old Spey Bridge](#) built in 1754 to carry the military road from Braemar to [Fort George](#). The packhorse [Bridge of Carr](#), 1717, is the oldest, while the most spectacular is [Dulsie Bridge](#) built in 1755 across a deep gorge on the River Findhorn.



Trains and Tourism

The completion of the railway linking Perth to Inverness via the Pass of Drumochter in 1863 helped put the valley on the map and led to the development of many of its towns and villages. For a flavour of these early railway days visit the stations of Aviemore and Boat of Garten and take a trip on the [Strathspey Steam Railway](#).

Townships and Towns

There were no towns or villages here until the end of the 18th century. Before that people lived in small groups of heather thatched houses or townships like that at the [Highland Folk Museum](#) at Newtonmore. The first town to be built here was Grantown on Spey, it was founded in 1765 by Sir James Grant of Grant. Its interesting story is told in the [Grantown Museum](#).



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Scotland App

The Free Mobile App



- **Save Money** – Many outstanding offers from local attractions
- **What's Nearby** – Discover all the things to see and do near you
- **What's On** – All major events from highland games to festivals
- **Where to Eat** – Huge choice of local restaurants and cafes
- **Instant Access** – Wherever you are, no internet connection is required
- **Cairngorms Map** – Detailed maps of all regions of Scotland included
- **Where to Stay Next** – Hotels to hostels, one click to call and book



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Useful Information



Emergency

Major Incident – Tel 999

Minor Incident – Tel 101
<http://www.police.uk/101/>

Health

Doctor – NHS 24 - Tel 0854 24 24 24
<http://www.nhs24.com/>

Dentist - NHS Direct Tel 0845 4547
<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1776.aspx?CategoryID=74&SubCategoryID=742>

Weather Forecasts

BBC Weather
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/2656752>

Met Office
http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/he/aviemore_latest_weather.html

Mountain Weather Information Service
<http://www.mwis.org.uk/eh.php>

Avalanche Information Service
<http://www.sais.gov.uk/>

Travel

Traffic Scotland – live traffic information
<http://www.trafficscotland.org/>

Traveline - public transport information
<http://www.travelinescotland.com/>

ScotRail
<http://www.scotrail.co.uk/>

Scottish City Link – coach service
<http://www.citylink.co.uk/>

Stagecoach
<http://www.stagecoachbus.com/>

Inverness Airport –live flight information
<http://www.hial.co.uk/inverness-airport/>

Cairngorms

Cairngorms National Park
<http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/>

Visit Cairngorms
<http://visitcairngorms.com/>

Webcams

Cairngorm Mountain
<http://www.cairngormmountain.org/Webcam>

RSPB Abernethy Reserve
<http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/l/lochgarten/feederCam.aspx>



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