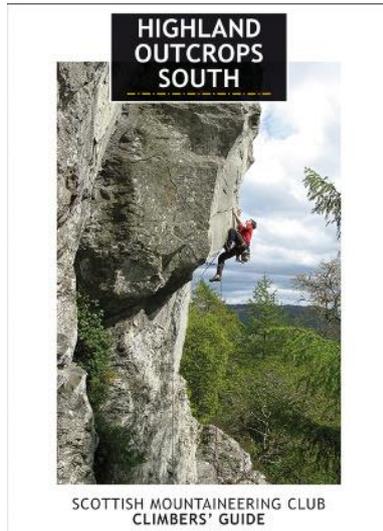


# HIGHLAND OUTCROPS SOUTH



This is the long awaited update to the Highland Outcrops (1998) guidebook. Highland Outcrops South covers crags south of Inverness and the Great Glen, including outcrops in Arrochar, Mid Argyll, Mull of Kintyre, Ardgour and Ardnamurchan. The popular crags of Craig a Barns, Glen Nevis, Binnein Shuas and Creag Dubh are updated and the guide includes over 50 new crags, covering some 700 new routes.

2500 routes, 95 action photos, 25 maps and 170 crag diagrams.

[www.smc.org.uk/publications/climbing/highland-outcrops-south](http://www.smc.org.uk/publications/climbing/highland-outcrops-south)

## AMENITIES

We detail some amenities in the less remote areas and suggest a plethora of alternatives can be found using the internet.

### Highland Perthshire

Dunkeld is a busy tourist village with an historic cathedral on the beautiful banks of the River Tay. It is well served with shops, a bank, a chippy and numerous cafes and pubs - the Taybank is recommended. In Birnam there is a good cafe in the Birnam Theatre, whilst the Birnam House Hotel offers food and coffee. There is a campsite at Inver (NO 016 421), a hostel at Birnam and there are a number of caves on Craig a Barns which provide overnight accommodation for the hardy climber!

### Strath Tummel

The Forestry Commission Queen's View Visitor Centre on the shore of Loch Tummel has a reasonable cafe and nearer the climbing there is a bar in the Caravan Park at Tummel Bridge. Kinloch Rannoch & Tummel Bridge have limited amenities.

Camping at official sites is possible at both Kinloch Rannoch and Tummel Bridge. Wild camping away from the roadside is more problematical here as the area is mainly farmed or afforested, but discrete overnight stops are possible. There is also a great Forestry Commission campsite on the south shore of Loch Rannoch at Carie.

## Strathtay

The Ballinluig truckers' cafe on the A9 junction to Aberfeldy is a regular stop for most folk giving cheap basic food. The Grandtully Hotel on the way to Aberfeldy is worth a visit (good canoeing and rafting!) and Aberfeldy itself has several cafes and a good outdoor shop (Munros) which sells some climbing gear and chalk. Excellent food is available at the Old Mill and The House of Menzies, near Weem and also in Kenmore. In Weem itself, the Weem Inn has recently been upgraded (2015) with a bar and restaurant.

## Strathearn

Crieff is the main town in the area and is gaining a reputation for quality art galleries and a selection of quality cafes, bistros and restaurants (including Thai, Nepalese, Indian and French). Muthill has an excellent Village Tea Shop. Crieff and Muthill also have 'Restaurants with Rooms' offering superb but costly French styled local food.

Comrie also has a good selection of cafes, a great Deli and a good Fish & Chip shop whilst at Comrie Croft just to the east is a Mountain Bike Trails Centre with a Bike Park and a superb seasonal cafe open from Easter to October.

For bars, The Tower Bistro Pub and The Quaich in Crieff is good, the Royal Hotel in Comrie has a good bar and the Clachan Inn at Lochearnhead is probably the best watering hole for climbers based in Glen Ogle. All serve excellent food.

Family diversions in the area, apart from the Bike Park, include The Crieff Visitor Centre with the 'Drovers' Museum', the Red Grouse (whisky) Experience at the Glen Turret Distillery, the Drummond Castle Gardens are the most impressive stately gardens in Scotland if that's your thing and the Ceramic Experience pottery below Benny Beg is great for young children. The Comrie Fortnight festival is held in July and the Crieff Highland Games in August. The Crieff Tryst (a walking and biking festival) is held in October.

Accommodation: There are a few organised campsites and caravan parks in the area although none are popular with climbers as most visit on a day basis. There are also some very good cheap B&Bs and hotels. The only bunkhouse style accommodation to date is Comrie Croft, between Crieff and Comrie which would be very handy for visitors from further afield. They also offer Tepees and Yurts as well as good camping with open fires allowed. Otherwise discrete camping or bivouacking is possible in those areas away from habitation (follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code).

## Strathyre

Despite the acres of sitka plantations the strath is very picturesque, especially in its upper reaches around Loch Voil. It is a great place to mellow out, with an award winning hotel and restaurant near the head of the strath (the Monachyle Mhor).

Balquhiddar church is the resting place of the notorious highland hero Rob Roy. His grave is worth a visit for any non-climbing family members, as is a nearby Bhuddist Retreat.

The Mhor 84 Motel and tea room (previously called the Kingshouse Hotel) lies on the main A84 road at the junction with the Balquhiddar turnoff and offers the same stunning local food as the Monachyle Hotel. There are several ale houses in Strathyre village also offering coffee and cakes.

Callendar has all the usual facilities including a climbing wall at the MacLaren Sports Centre. For food check out Mhor Fish for the best fish suppers you'll ever taste.

There is a good caravan and camping site on the southern outskirts of Strathyre, otherwise accommodation is available from B&Bs, hotels and discrete wild camping. At weekends Loch Voil is sometimes overwhelmed by fisherman camping on the shore line and litter, drinking and bad behaviour is becoming a problem!

## **Fort William Area**

Fort William is branded as the Outdoor Capital of the UK and climbing and mountaineering are integral to the economy of the area, with Ben Nevis and Glen Coe attracting winter climbers from many parts of the world. As a result, Fort William has several outdoor shops including Ellis Brigham's, the original Nevisport (now run by Trespass), Cotswold and Field and Trek.

If the weather or the midges get too bad, there is a small bouldering wall at Calluna and the Ice Factor in Kinlochleven. The Ice Factor houses the world's first indoor ice climbing wall along with rock climbing walls and a bouldering room. It also has a café, bar and equipment shop and kit is available to hire. There are also approved plans for an indoor climbing centre in Fort William, which may be open by the time this guide is published (Three Wise Monkeys Climbing at the MacIntosh Memorial Church in Fassifern Road).

Mention should also be made of the excellent mountain biking trails on offer in the area as another bad weather alternative. For downhill trails, both Nevis Range and Glencoe ski centres offer uplift and a number of trails for the brave! Bike hire is available at both and in Fort William itself - Nevis Cycles (01397 705555) and Alpine Bikes (01397 704008).

There is a limited bus service from Fort William to the Lower Falls, just before the Polldubh Crags. Contact Stagecoach (0871 2002233) for details.

## **Glenfinnan to Mallaig**

A visit to the Mallaig crags is best done with a local overnight stay. The area is essentially remote so wild camping is rarely a problem. The white sands of Morar down by the sea give a delightful setting and an escape from the midges. There are some official campsites, a Youth Hostel near the village of Morar, and a few hotels in the area. Arisaig in particular is a lovely wee spot with a good seafood

restaurant. This is also the departure point for the boat to the Isle of Eigg. The train stops at all the small villages and those without a car can access any of these crags in this way. The Glenfinnan crags are easily visited from Fort William for a day trip, but although the train goes past the base of the crags, British Rail overlooked the installation of a platform so a walk from Glenfinnan is required. The only other form of transport feasible for a quick trip is the car.

## Strathspey

The Spey Valley is geared up for tourists and has a wide selection of accommodation, cafes, hotels and restaurants. Covering the area, there are several mountaineering club huts, independent hostels and two SYHA hostels (see intro pxxx for general websites). There are campsites at Coylumbridge and Glenmore. There is a large supermarket and 24hr petrol station at Aviemore, with further petrol stations at Newtonmore and Grantown.