

FOR THE TRAVEL TRADE

EXPERIENCE NATURE & WILDLIFE



Experience Nature & Wildlife in Argyll

Argyll and the Isles is a region renowned for its outstanding natural beauty and abundant wildlife. The area features diverse landscapes, including mountains, lochs, forests, and an extensive coastline, providing a habitat for various species. Visitors can explore stunning national parks, nature reserves, and coastal areas to witness a wide range of wildlife, such as red deer, golden and white-tailed eagles, otters, seals, and numerous bird species. The region offers excellent opportunities for nature enthusiasts, photographers, and outdoor enthusiasts to immerse themselves in the rich natural environment.

Argyll hosts the UK's only Hope Spot, an ecologically unique area of the ocean designated for protection under a global conservation campaign and it is one of the best places in Scotland to watch the night sky. There's very little light pollution making it an unbeatable place to enjoy the magnificence of the universe.

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DAY ONE: COASTAL GARDEN

Begin your journey in the Oban area. Check into your accommodation, such as the Loch Melfort Hotel, where you can enjoy highland tranquillity in the hotel's 17 acres of gardens and beach.

While staying at Loch Melfort Hotel or indeed nearby, your clients can visit Arduaine Garden, a one-hundred-year-old spectacular coastal garden spread over 20 acres. Originally part of the Arduaine Estate Loch Melfort Hotel is built on. The coast here is gently warmed by the Gulf Stream, offering visitors a show of exotic plants and flowers, many normally found in South America and East Asia.

Alternatively, your clients might choose Oban, a bustling coastal town known for its seafood and stunning views of the sea, there is a choice of shops, restaurants, and pubs to entertain visitors from daytime into the evening.

DAY TWO: AN ISLAND ADVENTURE

Take a short ferry ride to the Isle of Mull, one of the largest islands in the Inner Hebrides.

Spend the day exploring the rugged landscape of Mull and its rich wildlife, such as otters, red deer, and sea eagles. Explore the beautiful beaches and coastline of the island, such as Calgary Bay and Fidden Beach.

You can also take a boat tour to Staffa Island, a volcanic island with unique geological formations and a colony of puffins, which inspired Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture. From the boat, you can also see whales, dolphins, and basking sharks in the surrounding waters.



There is a rich Highland history, and the Islands have their own individual Island cultures. The region is the cradle of Christianity, and you can take a ferry ride to Iona and discover one of Scotland's most sacred sites ever since St Columba arrived in AD 563.

DAY THREE: ANCIENT WOODLANDS

Visit Kilmartin Glen, an area with over 800 ancient monuments and archaeological sites, including standing stones, burial cairns, and stone circles. The newly renovated and extended Kilmartin Museum will give an insight into the history and the remarkable finds in the area.

The Glen is also home to several nature reserves, such as the Moine Mhor National Nature Reserve and the Knapdale Forest.

Argyll is home to more than 50% of Scotland's rainforest. Scotland's rainforest is as important as tropical rainforest, but even rarer. It's a kind of coastal temperate rainforest, which itself is incredibly rare on a global level. It is made up of the native woodlands where consistent levels of rainfall and relatively mild, year-round temperatures provide just the right conditions for some of the world's rarest mosses, liverworts and lichens. This special habitat is very rare and Kilmartin Glen is one of the areas in can be explored in.

Near Lochgilphead is the Argyll Beaver Centre, a unique off-grid centre complete with a composting toilet. Here you are able to learn more about the rainforest setting at the centre, experience hands-on displays, wildlife feeding station and viewing hide. The car park has access to walks, cycling trails and a spectacular view point.

Those with a particular interest in birds can enjoy the amazing abundance of birds on the Moine Mhor (great moss), one of Argyll's Nature reserves, as it leads into the Add Estuary near Crinan. Short-eared owls, redshank, hen harriers and even an osprey, if lucky.

In the evening, return to Oban area and relax at your accommodation.

DAY FOUR: SEA ADVENTURES

Sealife Adventure awaits today. Travel to the Seil Island taking the road over the steep, humpbacked Atlantic Bridge. Seil is one of four slate islands in Argyll, a slate that has been used on the roofs of many historic and notable buildings such as Stalker Castle and Glasgow Cathedral.

Your clients will also have come to one of the most highly protected marine areas in Britain. The Firth of Lorne is a Special Area of Conservation and a Marine Protected Area, where damaging fishing methods have been banned for a decade. As a result, there are now healthy fish populations which provide rich feeding grounds and a hotspot for sightings of whales, porpoises, dolphins, basking sharks and an amazing abundance of sea birds. Porpoise populations have increased by 286% over the past 10 years and are of international importance.

From Left to right.
Iona Abbey
Corryreckan & Dolphin (Venture West)

Sealife Adventures offer trips all of which include the Corryvreckan whirlpool, one of the largest permanent whirlpools on earth, Ballachuan Hazelwood (a Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve), dramatic sea cliffs and uninhabited islands where golden and sea eagles are resident. The rugged coastline is home to otters, deer and wild goats.

In the evening, return to Oban area and enjoy a final night in your accommodation before continue a trip into other regions of Scotland from here.

WILDLIFE NOT TO MISS

Beavers at Knapdale Forest, wild beavers have been reintroduced back into Scotland after being extinct in the UK for over 400 years. It is the first official project of its kind in Britain and a ground-breaking five year trial to explore how beavers can survive in Scotland and what effects they may have on the local environment and economy.

Four beaver families were introduced to Knapdale Forest, with kits produced each year, and visitors can explore this stunning woodland and spot the signs of beaver activity, including felled and regenerating trees, stripped branches (look out for teeth marks!) and a beaver dam. Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation organise guided walks in nearby Knapdale in spring and summer, where you can observe a range of wildlife, including local beavers.

Whale watching in the Oban area is becoming increasingly popular as there are regular sightings during the warmer months. Minke whales are often seen in the Gulf of Corryvreckan and the waters around Mull, and charter boats run special whale watching trips to view these magnificent creatures of the deep.

White-tailed eagles became extinct in Scotland in 1917 due to persecution, but a reintroduction programme on the Isle of Mull in more recent years has been deemed a conservation success. Mull & Iona Ranger service offers weekly walks and regular drop-in sessions at the island's wildlife hides.



WHAT TO SEE WHEN:

Spring: Best time to see and photograph mammals and birds in woodlands before the foliage gets too thick. Roe deer, capercaillie (wood grouse), bluebells, lapwings displaying, guillemots breeding on the Treshnish Isles, Mull. Lambing season.

Summer: Puffins, dolphins, mink whales, flower meadows, osprey chicks hatching, basking sharks known to be seen off the coast of Mull. Peak time for salmon leaping is July-September

Autumn: Red squirrels, greylag geese migrating from Greenland to Islay, salmon migration, grey seal pups around the Inner Hebrides, autumnal colours, deer rutting

Winter: Mountain hare, ptarmigan, red kites, mating season for ducks, winter scenery and great crystal clear views.

From Left to right.
Basking Shark Scotland
Tour Spot local wildlife
McCaig's Tower in Oban

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