

There are some wonderful scenic drives in the area, there are often minor side roads that you can explore too.

Ardnamurchan

Six miles to the north on the road to Fort William is the Corran Ferry which takes you over Loch Linnhe and from there you can reach the Ardnamurchan Peninsular. Take the whole day to explore this area and visit Ardnamurchan Point, the most westerly tip of mainland Britain. There are plenty of stopping places along the way. Strontian (take a walk through the Ariundle Atlantic Oak Woods). Salen (where the Vikings landed). Glenmore and the [Ardnamurchan Natural History Centre](#). Sanna Bay with fantastic white sands and crystal clear water and Kilchoan where you could take a ferry to colourful Tobermory on the Isle of Mull.

At Salen instead of turning left to the Ardnamurchan Point carry straight on and discover Castle Tioram which is one of our favourite places. You could also pay a visit to Kentra Bay and Ardtoe. If you are feeling energetic there is a 3 mile walk (and 3 miles back) from Acharacle, along a forest path to the Singing Sands.

Instead of returning to the Corran ferry you can continue on the A861 and drive through Moidart and past Loch Ailort. If time allows on reaching the A830 drive up to Mallaig or turn right heading back to Fort William. On this route you drive past Glenfinnan where you can see the Bonnie Price Charlie monument. Also the viaduct made even more famous by that flying car from Harry Potter.

Glen Coe, Glen Etive, Rannoch Moor and Glen Orchy

Not to be missed is the spectacular drive through Glen Coe, amazing whatever the weather. With plenty of parking areas for photography or just admiring. The Three Sisters on the south side and Aonach Eagach ridge on the north side of the pass make the journey through it quite an experience. Both sides of the pass provide challenging walks and climbs.

A favourite of ours is the drive down Glen Etive. This is a twelve mile single track road, known as the road to nowhere, with plenty of passing places, to the head of Loch Etive. Mad kayakers and deer are often spotted. You may recognise the road from the film Skyfall.

Beyond Glen Coe is Rannoch Moor which is a great wilderness and can look very eerie on a misty day.

Just beyond the Glen Orchy Hotel is the turning to Glen Orchy which is a pretty drive.

You can either return by the route you came or from the end of Glen Orchy turn left to Tyndrum or turn right and visit Oban.

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Glen Orchy & Oban

Oban to the south is a bustling ferry town where you can take a ferry to some of the islands – Mull (from here you can visit Iona), Coll, Barra, Staffa, Treshnish Islands and Ulva. Also you can take short cruises and hopefully spot some wildlife.

The road to Oban takes you on a scenic journey along the coast, past Castle Stalker. A short detour to Cuil Bay and Port Appin are well worth your time if you are looking for a bit of peace and quiet.

travelling out of Oban on the A816 signposted Lochgilpead and onto the B844 you can visit the Island of Seil and cross the ‘Bridge over the Atlantic’, a small road bridge that crosses a very narrow part of the Atlantic Ocean.

Heading home instead of turning off to the right and back over the Connel Bridge, carry straight on (A85). Look out for St Conan’s Kirk at Loch Awe and a bit further on Castle Kilchurn.

You can do a circular drive back home via Tyndrum or turn off before here and take the quieter scenic drive through Glen Orchy which brings you back out at Bridge of Orchy where you will turn left for the drive back over Rannoch Moor and through Glencoe.

Fort William & Spean Bridge

Fifteen miles to the north on the A82 is the town of Fort William, known locally as The Fort or An Gearasdan. This is the largest town in the area with shops where you can pick up souvenirs and outdoor clothing.

Going along the A830 Mallaig road is Neptune’s Staircase, a series of eight locks that rise from sea level at Fort William to the height of the Caledonian Canal. The canal links Fort William to Fort Augustus thirty miles to the north at the southern end of Loch Ness. At Fort Augustus you can see the seven locks bringing the canal to the level of Loch Ness. The canal allows quite large vessels to sail from the Atlantic Ocean to the North Sea without having to travel right around the northern Scottish coast.

Instead of returning to the Inverness road take the B8004. This is a nice drive and on good days you will get good views to Ben Nevis across the river and the canal. The B8004 takes you over the canal and up to the Commando Monument at Spean Bridge or you can bear left on the B8005 and drive up to Loch Arkaig. On this road you will drive along The Dark Mile and see some waterfalls close to the road called Eas Chia Aig. You can drive to the end of Loch Arkaig along the undulating rough single track road.

From the Commando Monument you can either turn left and drive towards Inverness, in this direction there is Urquart Castle and boat rides on Loch Ness. Or you can turn right, back to Fort William.

Mallaig

Head for Fort William and then onto the A830 for the scenic drive along the Road to the Isles.

First point of interest is Glenfinnan where you can see the monument to commemorate where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised the Jacobite standard and rallied his clansmen for battle in 1745. This is now owned by the National Trust and the centre is open April to October, although there is access to the base of the monument and shore all year round.

Also at Glenfinnan is the viaduct made more famous by the Harry Potter books. Look out for the Jacobite steam train along the route and watch out for mad photographers who stop and leap out of their cars at key photographic points, hoping that the train will put out a puff of smoke.

A cruise on Loch Shiel can also be taken here with a chance to spot golden eagles, red deer and black throated divers.

A stop at Arisaig and Morar along the way to see the lovely white sands is well worth while. Fans of the film *Local Hero* may recognise the beach at Camusdarach.

From Mallaig you can take a ferry to Skye, Canna, Eigg, Muck and Rum.

Returning you may wish to take the A861 at Lochailort and drive through the beautiful areas of Moidart, Sunart and Ardgour and take the Corran Ferry (check for last ferry times) across Loch Linnhe and then just a few miles back to Ballachulish.

Lochleven & Kinlochleven

The 20 mile circular drive on the B863 around Loch Leven is very scenic. At the east end of the loch is Kinlochleven, a village that was nearly given the name Aluminiumville. The village was developed around the start of the twentieth century as a means of producing aluminium. The industry has closed down and the building now houses the Ice Factor which claims to have the largest ice climbing wall in the world.

There are easy walks to Grey Mares Tail and to the Blackwater reservoir or if you feel more energetic you can climb in the Mamores.

Red Fox Trail

Rivalry, rebellion, retribution and revenge - the story of the Appin Murder, made famous by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*. Follow the scenic Red Fox Trail and discover the story of the murder of Colin Campbell of Glenure and of James of the Glen who was unjustly hanged for it.

Starting at Ganavan Sands in Oban work your way north, stopping off at specified points along the way at Dunbeg, Creagan, Acharn, Lettermore and finally South Ballachulish, where you will find information panels at each stop. Each panel covers a different aspect of the Appin Murder Story and also has suggestions about interesting places to visit nearby.

Skye and Mull

We are not too familiar with the islands but can offer a few suggestions of places to see which have usually been passed on to us by guests.

Skye

There are 3 options to choose to go over the sea to Skye:

Cross the bridge at the Kyle of Lochalsh.

It is about a 2 hour drive from Fern Villa to the bridge.

Look out for the wild goats along the way. You will pass Eilean Donan Castle on this route.

Take the CalMac ferry from Mallaig to Armadale.

It is just under a 2 hour drive to Mallaig .

Take a short detour to see the white sands of Morar and Arisaig especially if you are a fan of the film Local Hero.

www.calmac.co.uk

And our favourite the [Glenelg ferry](#) . The ferry, The Glenachullish, used to cross the narrows between Loch Leven and Loch Linnhe before the Ballachulish Bridge was built. It's about a 2 hour drive to Glenelg. Look out for the wild goats along the way and then prepare yourself for the stunning views as you climb up the 1100ft hairpinned Mam Ratagan Pass. There are Brochs and a fort at Glenelg and you might get the chance to see Victor the white tailed sea eagle. Also nearby is Sandaig where Gavin Maxwell lived made famous by the book and film Ring of Bright Water.

Mull

There are 3 options to get to Mull:

Take the CalMac Ferry from Oban to Craignure

It is just under an hours drive to Oban along the scenic A828.

Along the route you will pass Castle Stalker and Dunstaffnage Castle.

Take the CalMac ferry from Kilchoan where you have a lovely arrival into the colourful town of Tobermory. It is about a 2 hour drive to Kilchoan with a scenic drive along the banks of Loch Sunart and along the Ardnamurchan peninsular.

Take the CalMac ferry from Lochaline to Fishnish. It is about a two hour drive to Lochaline with a scenic drive passing by the cleared village of Inniemore.

www.calmac.co.uk

Tips

Make sure you've got a full tank of petrol, the prices creep up the further north west you go..

For the Mull trips from Kilchoan and Lochaline make sure to check the last crossing time for the Corran Ferry. If you do miss it you can take the long drive around Loch Linnhe back into Fort William.

During the high season it would be advisable to book the ferry. You don't need to book the Glenelg or Corran Ferry.

Other sources of reference

To help a bit further in your planning your days out from Fern Villa, visit these sites for more inspiration.

[Discover Glencoe](#) - Glencoe and Loch Leven area.

[Ardnamurchan](#) - the most westerly point of mainland Britain

[The Road to the Isles](#) - take the coastal route past white sands and blue seas up to the fishing village of Mallaig.