



OLD MANSE ONICH

WHAT TO SEE AND DO

The following are all available within easy distance of The Old Manse:

1. Boat Trips
2. Fantastic Beaches & Bays
3. Scenic Drives
4. Great Viewpoints
5. Places for Kids
6. Castles
7. Historic Places
8. Hill Walks
9. Non-hill walks
10. Short Walks
11. Shops
12. Lunch Stops
13. Whisky

In each case we provide an estimated time, brief directions and a personal description to give you a genuine flavour of what is on offer.

If you need any further help please ask at reception.

1. Boat Trips

1. One Hour: Around Loch Leven from the Isles of Glencoe Hotel - 01855 811658. Take the short boat trip on sheltered waters to view the historic burial islands. Great views across the water of Glencoe and Mamore mountains. Daily in summer.

2. Three Hours: Cruise Loch Linnhe from Fort William Town Pier - 0374 207135. Charming boat and characterful skipper run Seal Island Cruises the length of Loch Linnhe from the heart of Fort William adjacent Crannog Restaurant. Refreshments on board. Daily sailing times are 10am - 12 noon and 2pm - 4pm. Alternatively enquire about evening cruises.

3. Three- Four Hours: Journey down Loch Shiel from Glenfinnan - 01397 722235. Board the M.V. Sileas for a cruise down historic Loch Shiel. There are a variety of trips from 1 hour to a full day with refreshments available on board. Runs from Sunday to Friday in summer, cruises from 10am

2. Fantastic Beaches & Bays

- 1.** 10 Mins: Cuil Bay, Duror - Cuil turnoff from A85 south on Oban road is a dead-end on lovely wide bay. Views south to Mull. Great picnic spots near car or walk on where road ends and discover two further, even nicer beaches. The further you go the quieter it gets.
- 2.** 1 hour 45 mins: Sands of Morar nr Mallaig - take signs to Mallaig from Fort William. Enjoy the Road to the Isles and you end up at miles of silver beaches. Busy in parts but you will always find a quiet spot. The movie Local Hero was filmed here.
- 3.** 1 hour 45 mins: Singing Sands, Ardnamurchan - cross the Corran Ferry, 01855 841243, (runs frequently all day - last crossing Ardgour to Corran 7.50pm or 8.50pm summer) then follow signs to Acharacle. Signs there lead you to Swordle - park at the end of the road then walk 40 minutes along forestry/drove road to reach a wonderful quiet beach with stunning views to Skye and the inner Hebrides.
- 4.** 45 mins: Kilmalieu - cross the Corran Ferry (2.3) then pick up signs to Kingairloch. Where the road meets the sea a long south facing bay stretches out. Very quiet and a lovely picnic spot. Rocky coast at the end perfect for exploring.

3. Scenic Drives

- 1.** 3 hours + : Lismore - pick up signs for Port Appin on A85 Oban Road. The road ends where the passenger ferry crosses to lovely Lismore. The journey takes 5 minutes with the last crossings at 8pm. On Lismore hire a bike or just walk this quiet green Island. A great day out - fit in a visit to the Pier House Restaurant (12.1) at the ferry slipway.
- 2.** 4 hours + : The Road to the Isles - takes signs for Mallaig from Fort William. Stop on route at historic Glenfinnan (7.2) or just to enjoy the view in many places. At Arisaig and beyond enjoy the Silver Sands and views to the Hebrides and the Cuillin of Skye. We recommend The Old Library in Arisaig for lunch (11:30-2:30).
- 3.** 3 hours + : Appin & Oban - the Oban road takes in historic Kidnapped country and views of Castle Stalker with possible diversions to Cuil Bay (2.1) and Lismore (3.1). A detour round the head of Loch Creran is worthwhile in early summer to visit the Gardens at Drumavauic House. Excellent lunch stop at the Butterchurn Restaurant just over the Loch Creran Bridge. Other attractions on this route are the Sea Life Centre (5.1), the Appin Pottery and Ardchattan Priory & Gardens - all signposted off the main road. Oban itself is a busy fishing port - big enough to have a Woolworths but lots of character. We recommend the Boxtree Restaurant or the Kitchen Garden on the main street and The Waterfront Restaurant on the pier for Lunch.
- 4.** 4 hours +: Ardgour & Moidart - cross the Corran Ferry (2.3) then take signs to Acharacle then Lochailort then back via Glenfinnan and Fort William. Many obvious roadside stops all the way for lovely views. Try Castle Tioram (6.2), or the Singing Sands (2.3) for a major diversion. Recommended eating stops are Salen Crafts, Kinacarra Restaurant Loch Moidart, Glenuig Inn - all obvious from road.

5. 8 Hours +: Iona - start early for this long but worthwhile journey to the cradle of British Christianity. Visit the Abbey and explore the colourful rocky and sandy beaches of this lovely Island. Cross the Corran Ferry (2.3), then take signs for Lochaline. Take the Mull Ferry to Fishnish (runs frequently all day, last crossing from Fishnish-Lochaline 6.45pm or 7.35pm summer) then take signs to Fionnphort where you take the passenger ferry to Iona.

6. 3 hours + : Loch Ness - the trip to Loch Ness is on the rather busy A82 from Fort William. There are obvious roadside diversions and a good turning point is the historic Urquhart Castle (6.3) near Drumnadrochit.

7. 2 hours + : Loch Etive - head towards Glasgow on the A82 and take the sign to Loch Etive at the top of the Glen near the Kingshouse Hotel. The long and winding road to the loch head takes you by the lovely river and there are many stopping points in this quiet glen. Dwarfed by hills you will feel very small here. In autumn the glen is filled with the sound of rutting stags.

8. 5 hours + : Ardnamurchan - after crossing the Corran Ferry (2.3), the long and winding route to Ardnamurchan point rewards the persistent driver. The single track road has the character of times gone by with many lovely views along the way of Scots Pine, Loch Sunart and the Hebrides. The impressive lighthouse at the tip of the peninsula is the most westerly point of the Britishmainland and has wonderful views. Nearby Sanna bay is delightful on sunny days. Stop on the way for something to do and something to eat at Cosy Knits, Strontian, Salen Craft Shop or the Ardnamurchan Natural History Centre, Glenborrodale (5.4). At the lighthouse there is a small tea room. For something different hop on the summer only ferry to Tobermory for lunch.

9. 3 hours: Loch Arkaig - A circular walk with a real sense of wilderness too it. Follow signs for Inverness from Fort William before turning left onto B8004 at Commando Monument to Gairloch. After crossing canal turn right and follow road all the way to Forestry Commission Car Park. Take the route immediately to the right of the dramatic waterfalls near the car park which takes you on a sweeping circuit inland before returning you to the minor road along the shores of Loch Arkaig on the final leg. Other walks are also signposted from here

10. 5 hours: The Two Passes - A real sense of achievement comes from skirting one of Glencoe's mighty mountains. Ever changing views come in this long walk which involves over 2000 feet of ascent. Park in any car park near the narrowest gorge in Glencoe and walk uphill to find the sign marked as a footpath to Loch Etive (Lairig Eilde). Follow this right through the Glen. When the path starts to descend at the half way point and meets a fence, strike along to circumnavigate the mountain and return through the valley (Lairig Gartain) on its other side. Beware - this walk is often boggy, even in summer. When you meet the main road again it is possible to follow the old road back to the Gorge.

4. Great Viewpoints

1. 40 mins: Glen Nevis - drive through Fort William on the A82 then follow signs at the third (smaller) roundabout. The location for the movies Rob Roy and Braveheart has many fine views including Ben Nevis. At the bitter end of the road begins a lovely walk to the Steall Falls (9.6).
2. 10 mins: Glencoe - A82 to Glasgow. Speaks for itself and famous all over the world. Try the small National Trust Visitor Centre, the old road through Glencoe Village and lay-bys in upper Glen. Also see walks below for Hidden Valley (9.4) and others

5. Places for Kids

1. 30 mins Sea Life Centre - 01631 720386, A85 to Oban signposted off main road. Fun for all the family including frequent seal and fish feeding. The Sea Life Centre also rescues and rehabilitates orphaned seal pups. Outdoor play area shop and cafe. Open daily from 10.
2. 45 mins : Rare Breeds Park - 01631 770608 take A85 to Oban then watch out for sign on left just after you have crossed Connel bridge or pick up A816 south of Oban. A weird and wonderful collection of animals in hill side pens and runs. Its a funny farm for kids with lots of opportunities to feed the animals. Parents also admit they have a great time here. Tearoom. Open daily from 10am.
3. 1 hour 45 mins : Natural History Centre, Ardnamurchan, 01972 500209, after crossing the Corran Ferry (runs frequently all day check last crossing time), follow the winding single track road to Glenborrodale. A Living Building put together by famous photographer Michael MacGregor and his wife - hands-on wildlife exhibits plus impressive slide show. Nice shop and home cooking in small restaurant. 10:30-5:30

6. Castles

1. 2 hours : Duart Castle, Mull - get there by direct boat trip from Oban or by driving to Mull via Lochaline. This is the ancestral seat of the Clan MacLean who still take up summer residence. A heady atmosphere of bloodthirsty history. Tearoom. May to September only 10:30am - 6pm. Additional nearby activities include Torosay Castle and lovely Gardens and the Mull Light Railway.
2. 1hour 30 mins: Castle Tioram - cross the Corran Ferry (2.3) then take signs to Acharacle then look out for signposted left turn. Pronounced 'cheeram', these atmospheric, romantic ruins are only accessible when the tide is out. The wooded surroundings of Loch Moidart are lovely. See also Ardgour and Moidart (3.4) and the Singing Sands (2.3) above for other diversions.
3. 1hour 30 mins : Urquhart Castle - follow A82 towards Inverness (3.6) to get to this popular ruin of a fortress with impressive views over Loch Ness. Car park closes if busy in which case amuse yourself at Loch Ness Monster exhibitions in nearby Drumnadrochit while you wait.

7. Historic Places

1. 1 hour 45 mins: Kilmartin - follow A85 to Oban then continue south towards Lochgilphead. This area is littered with standing stones and other ancient relics. Ancient capital Dunadd is worth a visit with mysterious footprint on the rocks. Great new exhibition and visitor centre at Kilmartin House (in village) is an excellent stop and also has first class café.
2. 45 mins: Glenfinnan - follow Mallaig road from Fort William. The place where Bonnie Prince Charlie raised the standard in 1745 to rally the clans now has a climbable monument, small visitor centre and classic views down Loch Shiel. See also Loch Shiel cruises (1.3).

8. Hill Walks

1. 3-4 hours: Pap of Glencoe (2700ft) - park in Glencoe village then walk a mile along single track road towards Clachaig Inn. Pass through gate into first field on the left when trees end then follow the river than the path to the top. A rewarding and quite arduous 3 hour walk with tremendous views.
2. 3 hours: Beinn a Chrulaiste (2800 ft) - an easy 2 hour hill walk in Glencoe that gives a stunning perspective on the Glen and surrounding areas. Park in car parks on either side of A82 at the head of Glencoe where there is a signed public footpath to Kinlochleven (The Devil's Staircase from Altnafeadh). The hill you are climbing is to the right of this path which you follow to begin with then use your sense of direction.
3. 6 hours: Ben Nevis (4400 ft) - although there is a "tourist path" to the top the weather conditions on this mountain are notorious and it should not be undertaken lightly. Park at the Visitor Centre in Glen Nevis where a footbridge leads to the path.
4. 2 hours : Cuil Hill (1800 ft) - park at the Duror Hotel and follow the dirt track behind up the hill keeping a sharp eye for a gate set back from the track on the right. Once through that make for the skyline then follow the easy spine of the hill to the summit. This very easy two hour walk gives rewarding views to Ben Nevis, Mull and Ardgour.

9. Non-hill walks

1. variable: West Highland Way - Some of the best sections of the Way can be done from within 30 minutes drive - bus or taxi transport is easy to arrange. Try the sections from Inveroran to Glencoe on the original road (also cycleable); over the Devils Staircase from Glencoe to Kinlochleven; through the Mamores from Kinlochleven to Fort William. Splendid views everywhere - lunch stops at Bridge of Orchy Hotel and Tail Race Inn, Kinlochleven.

2. variable: Around Ben Vair - follow the Old Drovers roads through the glens behind Ballachulish through to Duror and return either by the same route or by bus. Follow the road inland through Ballachulish passing the co-op and playing fields. Cross over the small bridge and then take a sharp left up past the school, then keep following the track inland as it passes through a steading. Now simply follow the track as it climbs and curves around to the right following the line of the river. Eventually you reach a watershed and cross through into forestry for a short time before joining forestry roads which eventually lead you down into the village of Duror. Lovely views - small Hotel at Duror has reasonable food if waiting for the bus back.

3. variable: The Blackwater Dam, Kinlochleven - Another great walk for views and very varied. Park in the centre of Kinlochleven, take the road running alongside the Alcan factory then continue up alongside the pipeline. When you reach a corrugated hut decide whether to stick to the pipes and brave the steep incline or follow the longer but less punishing road. At the top pause for a moment to enjoy the views then continue along the long concrete conduit until you reach the vast Blackwater Reservoir and Dam. For an alternative, wilder, route back cross the dam and follow the path back down the opposite side of the valley.

4. 2 hours+ : The Hidden Valley - This moderate but rewarding walk gives a real feel for the remoteness and alpine nature of Glencoe. Find a space in one of the large car parks in Glencoe where the road climbs, opposite a small white cottage close on the road. Pick up the path (signposted Corrie Gabhail) which descends to the valley floor from the rim of the carpark and leads to a sturdy but dramatic footbridge over the River Coe. Follow the well-worn path up the valley on the other side until you eventually reach the hidden valley.

5. 2 hours+: Ariundle Oakwoods - These mature woodlands form part of a nature reserve. Walks of varied length can be chosen and can be enjoyed in wetter weather thanks to the shelter of the trees. Cross the Corran Ferry (runs frequently all day check last crossing time), following the main road to Strontian. Watch out for signs to Ariundle Forest. Excellent maps and info on site. Cosy Knits (11.4) on same side road recommended for snacks.

6. 2 hours+ : Glen Nevis - drive through Fort William on the A82 then follow signs at the third (smaller) roundabout. The location for the movies Rob Roy and Braveheart has many fine views including of Ben Nevis. At the bitter end of the road begins a lovely walk to the Steall Falls. The early section skirts the dramatic river gorge before you emerge onto a meadow over which you walk to inspect the dramatic falls before returning by the same route.

7. 3 hours : Loch Arkaig - A circular walk with a real sense of wilderness too it. Follow signs for Inverness from Fort William before turning left onto B8004 at Commando Monument to Gairloch. After crossing canal turn right and follow road all the way to Forestry Commission Car Park. Take the route immediately to the right of the dramatic waterfalls near the car park which takes you on a sweeping circuit inland before returning you to the minor road along the shores of Loch Arkaig on the final leg. Other walks are also signposted from here

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10. Short Walks

1. 20 mins: 1 hour Glencoe Lochan - easily accessed and well marked easy walks through forestry and around an ornamental loch give splendid views of the surrounding countryside. Drive through Glencoe Village, over the humpbacked bridge, turn left into the Glencoe Hospital then pick up signs. All walks well marked - only 5 minutes from the Hotel.

2. 20 mins : 1 hour Inchree Waterfalls - you can reach the viewpoint of these spectacular waterfalls in just a few minutes from the car park. Well marked routes provide options for various extensions through the forest. Follow the A82 to Fort William looking out for signs for the village of Inchree on the right. Follow the road right through the houses to reach the Forestry Commission carpark at the end. All walks well marked.

11 Shops

1. 25 mins : The Granite House, High Street, Fort William, 01397 703651. The shop which truly has something for everyone! Browse downstairs for gifts, cards, jewellery and novelties. Upstairs you'll find clothes, music and a great selection of candles.

2. 5 mins: Great Glen Confectionery Factory, Old Ferry Road, North Ballachulish, 01855 821277. One for those with a sweet tooth! They make their own Islay Tablet and luxury chocolates on the premises and stock a wide range of specialist Scottish food and drinks. Free factory tours and tastings.

3. 1 hour: Cosy Knits, Strathview, Strontian, 01967 402279

Travel over the Corran Ferry to this busy craft workshop and tearoom. They produce and sell batiks, hand spun knitwear, wooden toys and pyrography.

4. 5 mins : The Arches Craft Shop, opposite Tourist Information Centre, Ballachulish, 01855 811866. Traditional Scottish crafts, many made by local crafts people. Look out for the interesting wood exhibition.

5. 5 mins : Crafts & Things, Tighpuirst, Glencoe, 01855 811325. This traditional whitewashed cottage contains a well stocked and varied craft shop, there's also a great selection of knitwear.

12. Lunch Stops

- 1.** 25 mins The Pier House, Port Appin, 01631 730302. A locally renowned restaurant which deserves its reputation for the best seafood in the area. Spend the day on lovely Lismore (3.1) and then treat yourself.
- 2.** 25 mins : The Crannog Seafood Restaurant, Town Pier, Fort William, 01397 705589. Enjoy the views from this waterfront restaurant which is set right on the pier. The food is fresh and caught locally
- 3.** 5 mins : Crafts & Things, Glencoe. Try the coffee shop for light meals and terrific home baking all in light, airy surroundings. The coffee's good too!
- 4.** 5 mins : Mrs Matheson's Tearoom, Glencoe Village, 01855 811590. Be sure of a hearty meal at this small tearoom in Glencoe Village.
- 5.** 25 mins : No 4, Cameron Square, Fort William, 01397 704222. This is one of the newest places to eat in Fort William. Lunches are light and inexpensive.

13. Whisky

- 1.** 25 mins : The Ben Nevis Distillery and Visitor Centre, Lochy Bridge, Fort William, 01397 702476. You'll get a warm welcome at The Ben Nevis Distillery! Join the tour and sample the 'Dew of Ben Nevis'.
- 2.** 50 mins : Oban Distillery and Visitor Centre, Stafford Street, Oban, 01631 5642. Visit this distillery set in the heart of Oban. See the distillers at work, try a complementary dram. Oban is one of the six 'Classic Malts of Scotland'.
- 3.** 25 mins : Scottish Crafts and Whisky Centre, High Street, Fort William, 01397 704406. Tour the interesting, independent, whisky exhibition and then spend a while browsing in the huge gift shop.