

Chapter 15

Ayrshire and Argyll

In This Chapter

- ▶ Getting to Ayrshire and Argyll
- ▶ Seeking out the best places to stay and eat
- ▶ Discovering the Burns Heritage Trail, Culzean Castle, the Isle of Arran, and more
- ▶ Hittin' the links in Troon and Turnberry
- ▶ Shopping for local goodies and finding the best pubs

The region of Ayrshire stretches from the southern and western fringes of Glasgow south to southwest along the Firth of Clyde. Argyll covers the southwestern islands and western peninsulas of Scotland. While Ayrshire boundaries are well marked, Argyll is a bit more amorphous, encompassing a region that historically stretches into the Highlands.

One of Ayrshire's primary attractions is "Burns Country," because the area was the poet Robert Burns's birthplace as well as his predominant stomping grounds for most of his life. But Ayrshire also offers golfers some of the best links courses in the world. If you take the train from Glasgow to Ayr, the main town of Ayrshire, you can see one course after another in the sandy dunes along the shoreline.

Argyll, which means the "coast of the Gaels," encompasses islands such as Bute and Arran as well as the more remote Kintyre Peninsula. Kintyre is so sufficiently isolated that ex-Beatle Paul McCartney has long owned a ranch there where he and his family can retreat from prying eyes. It takes the better part of the day just to reach Kintyre, however, so I don't dwell on its charms for too long in this chapter. The port of Oban (pronounced oh-bin), gateway to the Hebrides and primary burgh of Argyll, and the town of Inveraray, on the shores of Loch Fyne, are more accessible, as is Loch Lomond, and all provide a pseudo-Highland experience.

You may not have time to see everything Ayrshire and Argyll have to offer, but visits to places such as the mansion and grounds of Culzean Castle or placid shores of Loch Lomond can still be accomplished as daytrips from Glasgow.

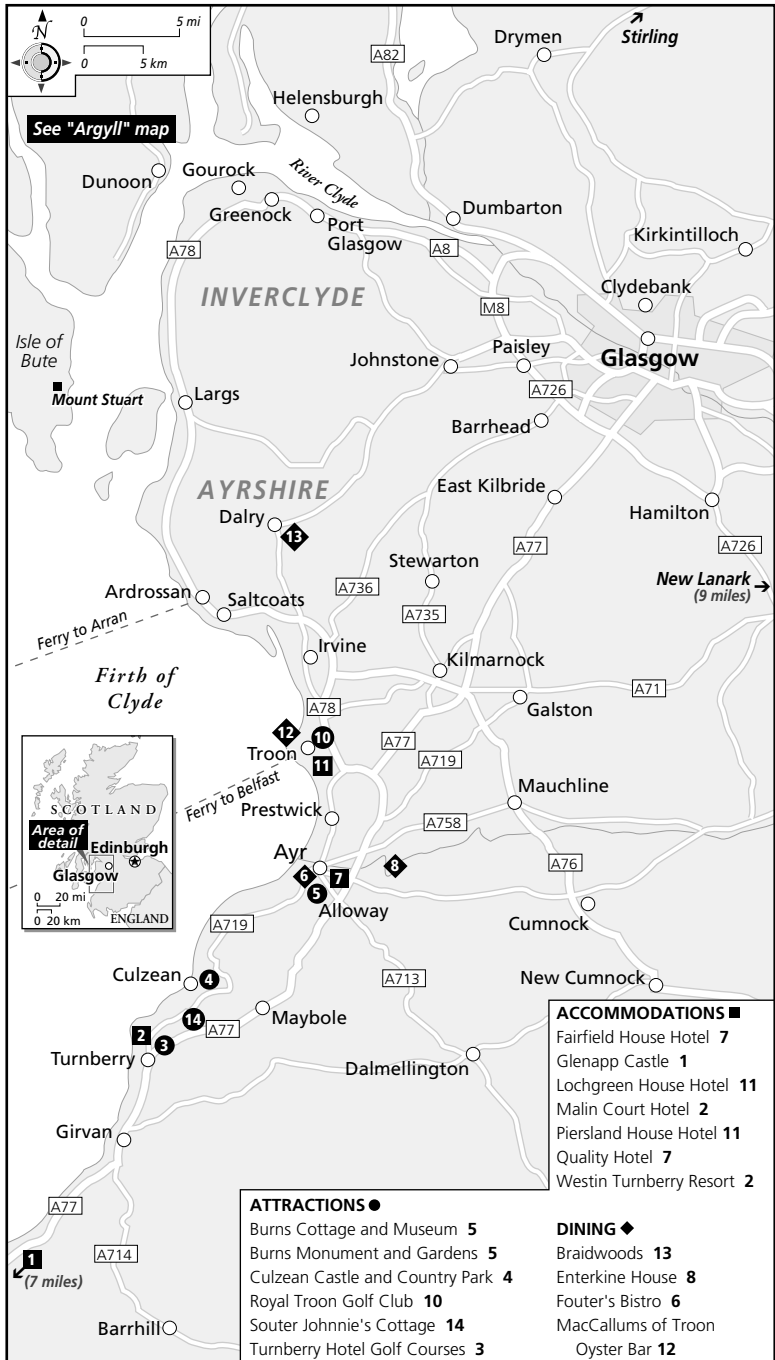
Getting There

Your options for getting in and out of the area include scheduled buses and trains that run from Glasgow to towns and terminals such as Wemyss Bay, Largs, and Ayr in Ayrshire and Oban in Argyll. If you're ambitious, however, and want to fully explore the Cowal or Kintyre peninsulas or the Clyde coastline, a car is your best choice.

- ✓ **By car:** From Glasgow, the main road to Ayrshire is the M77 (A77) from the city's south side. It's the fastest route to towns such as Troon, Ayr, and points further south, such as Culzean. You can also drive west on the M8, along the Clyde to Greenock or Gourock, connecting to the A78, which goes south along the Firth of Clyde to ports such as Wemyss Bay or Ardrossan. To get to Argyll, take the A82 from the West End of Glasgow north toward Tarbet (there are several Tarbets in Scotland, but this one is on the shores of Loch Lomond). From Tarbet, you can take the A83 to Inveraray and down the Kintyre Peninsula. The fastest route to Oban is the A82 from Tarbet: Go north along Loch Lomond to Crianlarich and Tyndrum, where the A85 goes west to Oban.
- ✓ **By train:** **First ScotRail** (☎ 0845-748-4950; www.firstscotrail.com) service overlaps with the the greater Glasgow rail service operated by **Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT)** (☎ 0141-333-3708; www.spt.co.uk). Between the two (and they're largely interchangeable, unless you're a dedicated trainspotter), you have reasonably frequent service from Glasgow to Ayrshire and Argyll. Remember, however, that trains to Ayrshire depart from Central Station, while those heading toward Loch Lomond and Oban leave from Queen Street Station. A one-way journey to Ayr costs \$5.50 (\$10).
- ✓ **By bus:** From Glasgow, **Scottish Citylink** (☎ 0141-332-9644 or 0870-550-5050; www.citylink.co.uk) runs buses to Western Scotland, including towns such as Oban, Inverary, and Cambeltown. **Stagecoach Express** (☎ 01292-613-500) also runs buses to Ayr twice an hour during the week from Glasgow's Buchanan Street bus terminal. The round-trip fare to Ayr is \$7.40 (\$13.75).
- ✓ **By ferry:** **Caledonian MacBrayne** (☎ 01475-650-100; www.calmac.co.uk) — or "CalMac," as it's more colloquially known — serves 22 islands and 4 peninsulas over the West Coast of Scotland. From Gourock, you can reach Dunoon on the Cowal Peninsula or cross the Clyde north to Helensburgh (no cars). Ferries from Wemyss Bay go to Rothesay on the isle of Bute. The boat for Brodick on Arran departs from Ardrossan. Connections between train stations and ferry terminals are fairly well linked.

CalMac has some competition from another company, **Western Ferry** (☎ 01496-840-681), which, for example, runs a route to Dunoon from Greenock. And, **Seacat** (☎ 08705-523-523) hydrofoils arrive in the Ayrshire port of Troon from Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Ayrshire



Spending the Night

When it comes to accommodations, you may want to stay on the mainland in larger towns such as Ayr, Inveraray, or Oban for the sake of convenience. Some other choice accommodations, however, are available in more far-flung precincts. Some have even earned star ratings from the tourist board; see Chapter 8 for a description of the rating system. In the listings below, room rates generally include full breakfast, unless otherwise stated. And don't forget: You may well get a better deal than the advertised "rack" rates.

Alexandra Hotel

\$-\$\$ Oban

On the northern end of the Oban seafront, this hotel affords views of the town and the waterfront. Once one of the largest buildings in town, this stately pile has been refurbished and modernized. You can play a little table tennis or snooker or simply paddle around in the large heated indoor pool. The friendly staff will make your stay very comfortable, and the hotel offers 24-hour room service. It also has accommodations especially created for travelers with disabilities. Rooms are modestly furnished but pleasing, with small bathrooms.

See map p. 289. North Pier, Oban. ☎ **01631-562-381**. Fax: 01631-564-497. Rack rates: £40-£80 (\$74-\$148) double. AE, DC, MC, V.

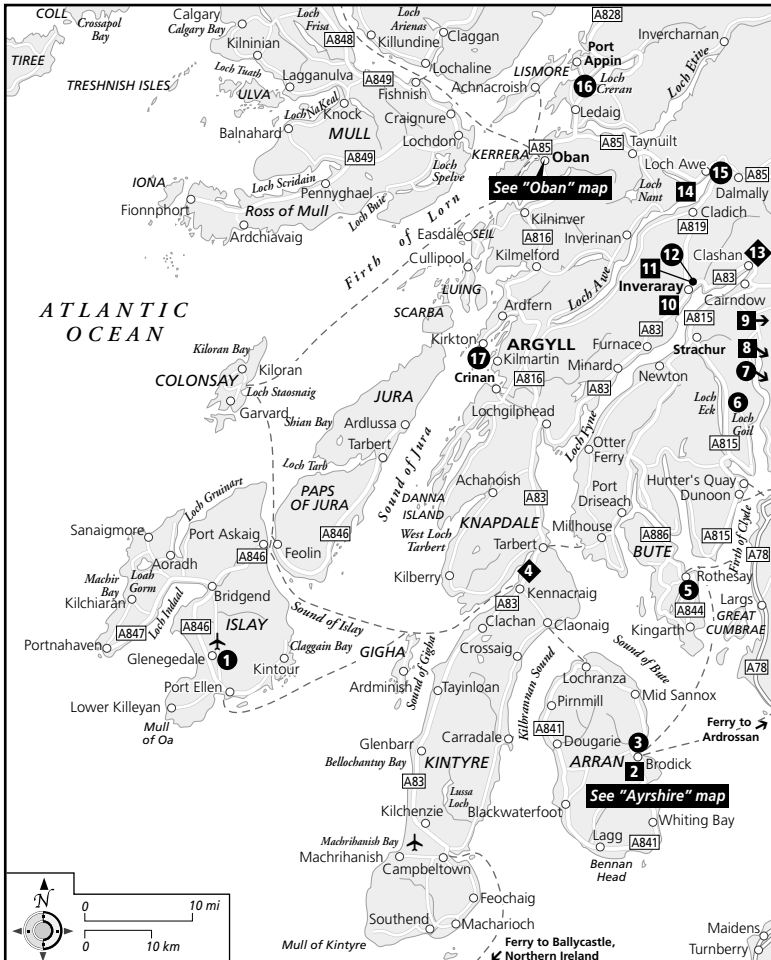


Ardanaiseig

\$\$\$ Kilchrenan

This hotel is arguably the poshest and least accessible place listed in this chapter, so if you seek a bit of luxury in an out-of-the-way corner, read on. The Ardanaiseig (pronounced *ard-na-sag*) hotel is a stone Scottish baronial pile built in the 1830s on the shores of Loch Awe; it sits at the end of a curvy single-track road through the woods some 15 miles from Taynuilt (on the road to Oban). The gardens are especially colorful in spring when the rhododendrons are in bloom, but they have plenty of year-round interest as well. The public spaces include a large drawing room with views of the hotel's own wee island in the loch. Evening meals, supervised by head chef Gary Goldie, are especially memorable, and every day brings a different four-course menu. Guests can rent the gatehouse, called Rose Cottage, which sleeps up to five. Another small cottage was being built near the hotel's pier in late 2004. The hotel, which prefers not to take small children, closes for three weeks in January.

See map p. 287. 3 miles north of Kilchrenan, off the B845 from Taynuilt. ☎ **01866-833-333**. Fax: 01866-833-222. www.ardanaiseig-hotel.com. Rack rates: £103-£138 (\$190-\$255) double. AE, MC, V. Closed Jan-mid-Feb.



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The Argyll Hotel

\$\$ Inveraray

This Best Western–managed waterfront hotel overlooking the picturesque Inveraray harbor is a pretty, white-stone building with green trim. Originally built in 1750 to accommodate guests of nearby Inveraray Castle, the Argyll is still putting up the castle's many visitors. You'll find a lovely atrium sitting room, a cozy formal dining area, and the beautiful wood-and-gilt Argyll Bar. Each room is nicely put together, with blond wood furniture. If you can, book a room with a view of Loch Fyne.

See map p. 287. *Front Street.* ☎ **01499-302-466.** Fax: 01499-302-389. www.the-argyll-hotel.co.uk. Rack rates: £90 (\$166) double. AE, DC, MC, V.

De Vere Cameron House

\$\$\$\$ Luss

Posh and plush, the five-star Cameron House offers the premier lodgings along the banks of Loch Lomond. The midrange deluxe rooms face the loch, and the luxury suites are part of the original house and allow guests to have their meals in their own sitting room with dining table. Guests also can rent the hotel's 46-foot cruiser, the *Celtic Warrior*, moored in the hotel's private marina. The fine dining option is the Georgian Room, which is not suitable for children under 14; gentlemen are expected to don jackets and ties. Smollets is the name of the hotel's casual dining option.

See map p. 287. *A82 north of Balloch, Dumbartonshire.* ☎ **01389-755-565.** www.cameronhouse.co.uk. Rack rates: £245–£285 (\$453–\$527) double. AE, MC, V.

Drover's Inn

\$ Inverarnan

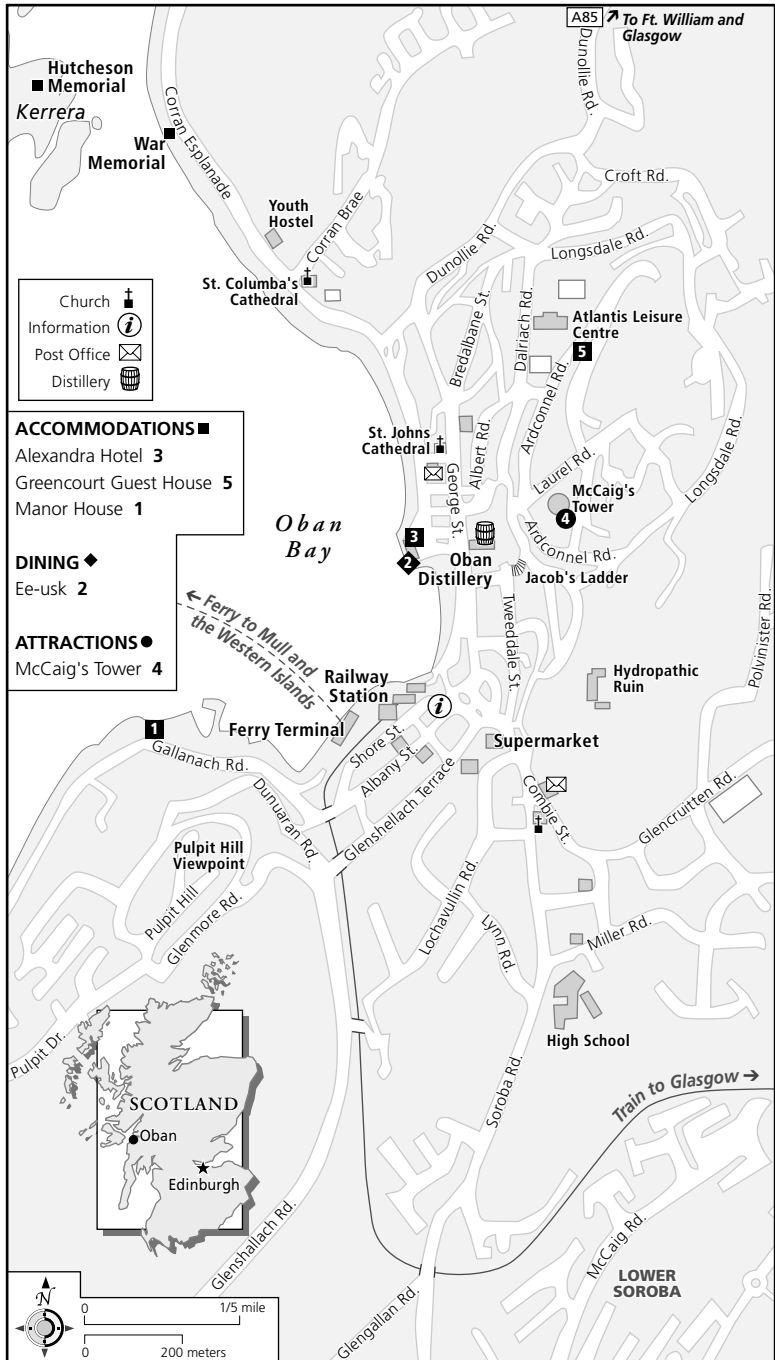
The stuffed, snarling, and slightly worn animals near this inn's entrance give a pretty good hint as to the nature of this rustic tavern with restaurant and overnight rooms. The atmospheric pub usually has an open fire going, barmen in kilts, and plenty of travelers by foot and car nursing their drinks. The pub food is average, but the ambience of the place makes the Drovers a worthwhile stop. The inn has 10 overnight units in the original house built in 1705, and another 16 rooms in a new building in the rear. Rooms are run of the mill and worn but comfortable enough.

See map p. 287. *A82 at by Ardlui.* ☎ **01301-704-234.** www.droversinn.co.uk. Rack rates: £46 (\$85) double. MC, V.

Fairfield House Hotel

\$\$\$ Ayr

On the seafront near Low Green, this circa-1912 town house has been restored and converted into a 44-unit hotel. The staff is attentive and will help you arrange tee times at nearby golf courses. A noted designer of classic British interiors decorated the rooms in a country-house style. The units are large and luxurious, many done in chintz; most of the bathrooms



have bidets. The British AA guide rates the Fairfield House's restaurant highly for the "freshness and seasonality" of its cuisine.

See map p. 285. 12 Fairfield Rd. ☎ 01292-267-461. Fax: 01292-261-456. www.fairfieldhotel.co.uk. Rack rates: £110–£170 (\$203–\$314) double. AE, DC, MC, V.

Glenapp Castle **\$\$\$\$ Ballantrae**

This beautifully decorated pile close to the city of Stranraer offers Victorian baronial splendor with antiques, oil paintings, and elegant touches at every turn. Other accommodations in the region pale in comparison. The mansion was designed in the 1870s by David Bryce, a celebrated architect of his day, and it overlooks the Irish Sea. Lounges and dining rooms are elegant, and the spacious bedrooms and suites are individually furnished. Tall windows let in the afternoon and long summer evening light, making the rooms bright on many days. The hotel, open seasonally unless by special arrangement, stands on 12 hectares (30 acres) of lovely, secluded grounds that are home to many rare plants. Smoking is only permitted in the library.

See map p. 285. Ballantrae, Ayrshire, some 20 miles south of Ayr. ☎ 01465-831-212. Fax: 01465-831-000. www.glenappcastle.com. Rack rates: £365–£405 (\$675–\$750) double. Rates include dinner. Open only Apr–Oct. AE, V.

Greencourt Guest House **\$–\$\$ Oban**

Of the many B&Bs and guesthouses in Oban, this one stands out for its warm reception and view over the town's bowling green. Greencourt only has six units, five with en suite bathrooms. Nonsmokers will appreciate the nonsmoking policy. Unlike many other homes along the winding streets of Oban, Greencourt has its own small parking area.

See map p. 289. Benvoullin Road. ☎ 01631-563-987. Fax: 01631-571-276. www.greencourt-oban.co.uk. Rack rates: £48–£64 (\$88–\$118) double. MC, V. Usually closed in Dec and Jan.

Kilmichael Country House **\$\$\$ Isle of Arran**

This small, 300-year-old hotel is the best accommodation — and the oldest building — on the island. The lovely, spacious rooms hold antique wood furniture, fresh flowers, and pleasant pastel upholstery and drapes. The sitting room, formerly a chapel, has an impressive stained-glass window, and you'll enjoy sitting by one of the fireplaces on a blustery day. The hotel has an interesting collection of Japanese ornaments — but the tasty cuisine in the dining room is traditional Scottish.

See map p. 287. Glen Coy, near Brodick on a private road off the A841. ☎ 01770-302-219. Fax: 01770-302-068. www.kilmichael.com. Rack rates: £150–£190 (\$277–\$351) double. MC, V.

**Loch Fyne Hotel****\$\$ Inveraray**

Just north of town, this old stone house perches on a lovely spot over the loch. It offers big rooms, a friendly desk staff, and a large pool and steam room. The last time I visited, the pool was full of kids. The attractive rooms aren't fancy, but little couches and beautiful views of the water make for a relaxing time between trips to the Jacuzzi or sauna. The food in the restaurant is quite satisfying and a good value.

See map p. 287. On the A83, just above the center of Inveraray. ☎ **01499-302-148**. Fax: 01499-302-348. Rack rates: £65–£125 (\$120–\$231) double. MC, V.

Lochgreen House Hotel**\$\$\$ Troon**

Adjacent to the fairways of the Royal Troon Golf Course, Lochgreen is a lovely country-house hotel set on 12 lush hectares (30 acres) of forest and landscaped gardens. The property opens onto views of the Firth of Clyde and Ailsa Craig. The interior evokes a more elegant, bygone time, with detailed cornices, antique furnishings, and oak and cherry paneling. Guests can meet and mingle in two luxurious sitting rooms with log fires or take long walks on the well-landscaped grounds. The spacious bedrooms have the finest mattresses.

See map p. 285. Monktonhill Road. ☎ **01292-313-343**. Fax: 011292-318-661. www.costley-hotels.co.uk. Rack rates: £140–£235 (\$260–\$435) double. AE, MC, V. Free parking.

**Malin Court Hotel****\$–\$\$ Turnberry**

On one of the most scenic strips of the Ayrshire coast, this well-run hotel fronts the Firth of Clyde and the Turnberry golf courses. It's not a great country house, but rather a serviceable, welcoming retreat offering a blend of informality and comfort. Bedrooms are mostly medium in size. The staff can arrange hunting, fishing, riding, sailing, and golf activities.

See map p. 285. Turnberry. ☎ **01655-331-457**. Fax: 01655-331-072. www.malin-court.co.uk. Rack rates: £52–£75 (\$96–\$139) double. 20 percent discount for children under 16 staying separately from their parents. AE, DC, MC, V.

Manor House**\$\$–\$\$\$ Oban**

At one time, the Duke of Argyll owned this Georgian residence on the coast road. Despite its formal exterior, the house is warm and inviting inside. The tasteful rooms have excellent views of the bay, fine antiques, and floral linens. The Manor House is known for its well-stocked bar and fine restaurant. Rates here include breakfast *and* dinner, but rates without dinner may be available — check the Web site or call for details.

See map p. 289. *Gallanach Road.* ☎ **01631-562-087.** Fax: 01631-563-053. www.manorhouseoban.com. Rack rates: £85–£102 (\$157–\$189) double. AE, MC, V.

Piersland House Hotel

\$\$\$ Troon

Designed by William Leiper in 1899, this hotel was originally occupied by Sir Alexander Walker of the Johnnie Walker whisky family and remained a private residence until 1956. The importation of some 17,000 tons of top-soil transformed the marshy surrounding property into a lush 1.6-hectare (4-acre) garden. The moderately sized guest rooms have traditional country-house styling.

See map p. 285. 15 Craigend Rd. ☎ **01292-314-747.** Fax 01292-315-613. www.piersland.co.uk. Rack rates: £124 (\$230) double, £180 (\$333) suite with dinner. AE, MC, V.



Quality Hotel

\$\$ Ayr

The Ayr railway station, a landmark since 1885, is still going strong. Connected to it is the Quality, with its red-sandstone Victorian exterior. It isn't the most modern hotel in town, but many visitors consider the Quality's high ceilings, elaborate detailing, and old-world charm reason to check in. Many of the guest rooms are quite spacious, if routinely furnished. All come with small shower-only bathrooms.

See map p. 285. Burns Statue Square. ☎ **01292-263-268.** Fax: 01292-262-293. www.choicehotelseurope.com. Rack rates: £71 (\$130) double. Children under 14 stay free in parent's room. AE, DC, MC, V.

The Westin Turnberry Resort

\$\$\$\$ Turnberry

The 1908 pile is a remarkable and well-known landmark. You can see its white facade, red-tile roof, and dozens of gables from afar. The public rooms contain Waterford crystal chandeliers, Ionic columns, molded ceilings, and oak paneling. Each guest room is furnished in unique early-1900s style and has a marble-sheathed bathroom. The units, which vary in size, open onto views of the lawns, forests, and the golf course along the Scottish coastline. The spa and health facilities are exemplary.

See map p. 285. Maidens Road. ☎ **01655-331-000.** Fax: 01655-331-706. www.turnberry.co.uk. Rack rates: £252–£475 (\$466–\$880) double. Off-season rates are lower. AE, DC, MC, V.

Dining Locally

Ayrshire and Argyll are dominated by vast coastline, so some of the finest food you'll find in the region highlights locally-landed fish and

seafood. While your hotel may satisfy your dining needs, below are some of the best dining options in the region.

Anchorage Restaurant

\$\$-\$\$\$ Kintyre Peninsula FISH/SEAFOOD

The Anchorage has won many awards (such as a Michelin “bib gourmand” for good food and moderate prices), and people come from all around Kintyre to sample the Mediterranean-influenced seafood here. House specialties include monkfish and scallops, but almost every dish incorporates local produce in novel recipes.

See map p. 287. Harbour Street, Tarbert. ☎ 01880-820-881. Reservations recommended. Main courses: £8-£16 (\$15-\$30). MC, V. Open: daily 7-10 p.m. during high season. Closed Jan to mid-Feb, 2 weeks in Nov, and Sun-Mon during off-season.

Braidwoods

\$\$\$ Dalry FRENCH/SCOTTISH

One of the standout restaurants in Ayrshire, this simple cottage (known as a “butt and ben”) has been converted into a small dining space in rural Ayrshire. Keith and Nicola Braidwood share the cooking chores. The place gets very busy on weekends. Holder of a Michelin star and other accolades, Braidwoods is expensive but worth the price.

See map p. 285. Saltcoats Road. ☎ 01294-833-544. www.braidwoods.co.uk. Reservations required. Fixed-price dinner: £32 (\$60). AE, MC, V. Open: Tues 7-9 p.m., Wed-Sat noon-2 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., Sun noon-2 p.m.

Ee-usk

\$\$ Oban FISH/SEAFOOD

This modern restaurant’s name, Gaelic for “fish cafe,” sums up the place quite well, because it prepares a host of simple fish and shellfish dishes, from the creamy delights of smoked haddock Cullen skink to lightly breaded white fish to fresh shellfish platters. Located at the recently renovated North Pier in Oban, on nice days, you can sit in the sun on the bay-side deck. Ee-usk has a good wine list and some rare Scottish ales.

See map p. 289. North Pier. ☎ 01631-565-666. Main courses: £10-£17 (\$18.50-\$31.50). MC, V. Open: daily noon-2:30 p.m. and 6-9 p.m.

Enterkine House

\$\$\$ Annbank MODERN SCOTTISH

Dining at this highly rated, five-room country house hotel, done in Art Deco from the 1930s, can be a special treat. East of Ayr in the village of Annbank, Enterkine’s menus emphasize local ingredients, whether seasonal game or fish landed at nearby Troon.

See map p. 285. Coylton Road, Annbank near Ayr. ☎ 01292-521-608. Reservations required. Fixed-price dinner: £37.50 (\$69). AE, MC, V. Open: Sun-Fri noon-2:30 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., Sat 7-9 p.m.

Fouter's Bistro

\$\$ Ayr MODERN SCOTTISH

In the heart of Ayr, Fouter's Bistro occupies the cellar of an old bank, retaining the original stone floor and a vaulted ceiling. The restaurant's name derives from the Scottish expression "foutering about," which is equivalent to fiddling about. But no one's goofing around here. Under new ownership in 2003, the restaurant has one of the best reputations in the region and emphasizes fresh local produce whenever possible.

See map p. 285. 2A Academy St. ☎ **01292-261-391**. www.fouters.co.uk. Reservations recommended. Main courses: £9–£16 (\$16.50–\$30). AE, MC, V. Open: Tues–Sat noon–2 p.m. and 6:30–10:30 p.m.

Loch Fyne Oyster Bar

\$\$-\$\$\$ Cairndow SEAFOOD

On the road to Inveraray past Cairndow and the top of the loch is the famous Loch Fyne Oyster Bar. The company that owns it farms both oysters and mussels in the clear cool waters of Loch Fyne. With a glass of dry white wine at this casual (although almost often busy) restaurant, there are few things finer. Be sure to browse the nice gift shop next door.

See map p. 287. At the head of Loch Fyne on the A83. ☎ **01499-600-264**. Reservations recommended and required for dinner Nov–Feb. Main courses: £8–£16 (\$15–\$30). AE, MC, V. Open: Mar–Oct daily 9 a.m.–10 p.m.; Nov–Feb daily 9 a.m.–7:30 p.m..

MacCallums of Troon Oyster Bar

\$\$ Troon FISH/SEAFOOD

Near the ferry terminal at the harbor in Troon, this rustic seaside bistro is adjacent to the fresh fish market. Oysters, whole sardines, grilled langoustines, sole, and combination platters are usually on the menu here.

See map p. 285. The Harbour, Troon. ☎ **01292-319-339**. Main courses: £10–£16 (\$19–\$30). AE, MC, V. Open: Tues–Sat noon–2:30 p.m. and 7–9:30 p.m.; Sun noon–3:30 p.m. (and 7–9:30 p.m. May–Sept).

Exploring Ayrshire and Argyll

Just as Sir Walter Scott dominates Lothian and the Borders, the prominence of Robert Burns is felt southwest of Glasgow in Ayrshire. The heart of "Burns Country" is here, although it extends to Dumfries, as well (see Chapter 14). Down the Clyde Coast is another popular tourist attraction: Culzean Castle. Pronounced "*cul-lane*," it's more of a mansion than a castle and became a favorite of General Eisenhower, who has a wing named after him. This region of Scotland is home to some of the world's great links golf courses, including world-famous Royal Troon and Turnberry, with windswept coastal views and gorse-filled (bristly) dunes.

At one time, the royal burgh of Ayr was the most popular resort on Scotland's West Coast. On the reasonably picturesque Firth of Clyde, it's only some 56km (35 miles) southwest of Glasgow — about an hour by train or by car. For many years it was a busy market town with a more important and indeed larger port than Glasgow's until the 18th century. Today, Ayr offers visitors some 4km (2½ miles) of beach (more suitable for combing than swimming), cruises, fishing, and golf — as well as the top horse racing in Scotland.

Although the heyday of resort towns such as Largs on the Clyde Coast or Rothesay on the isle of Bute is long since past, they remain pleasant, relaxing places to visit. The isle of Arran is sometimes called Scotland in Miniature, because it combines mountains with more pastoral landscapes, offering visitors golf, a castle, and even a distillery. Oban and Inveraray have more in common with the Highlands and Western Islands and may provide substitutes for travelers who can't fully explore the open spaces further north. Argyll has also become the site of several archeological studies because this part of the country appears to be the spot in which the earliest humans to inhabit the land that became Scotland lived.

The top attractions



Argyll Forest Park **Near Arrochar**

This 60,000-acre outdoor attraction offers lowland forest trails to the lofty peaks of the “Arrochar Alps.” The terrain offers walking and hiking options for most skill levels and enough wildlife to please animal lovers as well. The park is home to acres of wildflowers, violets, bluebells, primroses, woodland birds, and even seals in the sea lochs. You can explore on your own or take a seasonal, ranger-led walk or safari. For park information and trail maps, visit the **Arrochar Tourist Information Center** (7 Alexandra Park in Dunoon; ☎ **01369-703-785**) or contact the park office in Arrochar. Allow 2 to 5 hours.

See map p. 287. ☎ 01369-840-666. Admission: free. Open: daily dawn to dusk.



Brodict Castle **Isle of Arran**

This impressive red-sandstone castle, which once belonged to the Dukes of Hamilton, sits by the bay and mountains surrounded by acres of park and gardens. The castle occupies the site of an old Viking fortress, and the oldest parts of the building allegedly date to the 13th century. The stately rooms hold an impressive collection of silver, porcelain, and paintings. Each room has both living expert guides and fun fact sheets (“junior guides”) to make the castle interesting for even easily bored youths. Give yourself time to see the woodland gardens of exotic flowers. The castle also has a playground. Allow about 2 hours.

Burns: Humanitarian, poet, skirt chaser

Robert Burns (1759–1796) continues to hold a sentimental spot in the national consciousness of Scotland. In recent years, Ayrshire has begun to host an annual music and cultural festival “Burns an’ a’ that” (www.burnsfestival.com) in the spring to celebrate his life. Born in Alloway on a night so gusty that part of the cottage came down, Burns was the son of a simple and pious gardener who encouraged the boy to read and seek an education. Burns was, by trade, a hard-working though largely unsuccessful farmer who switched to being a tax collector later in his life.

But the world knows him as the author of poetry, often set to song, such as *Auld Lang Syne*, or narrative masterpieces, such as *Tam o’Shanter*. Other works, such as “A Man’s a Man for a’ That,” show Burns’s humanitarian leanings. Burns was also a prodigious pursuer of women (“Once heartily in love, never out of it”) who fathered numerous children. In his short life, he wrote about 370 poems and songs. He died at 37, rather distinguished but resolutely destitute. His pregnant wife, Jean, is said to have had to beg a shilling from the poet’s brother in order to feed her children on the day of his funeral.

See map p. 287. Brodick, Isle of Arran, 1 mile north of the pier. ☎ **01770-302-202**. Admission: £7.50 (\$14) adults, £6 (\$11) seniors, students, and children under 16. Castle open: Apr–June and Sept–Oct daily 11 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; July–Aug daily 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Gardens open: Apr–Oct daily dawn to sunset. Closed Nov–Mar.

Burns Cottage and Museum Alloway

Although underfunded and basic, this tourist attraction is a must for even the casual Burns fan. Visitors can take a self-guided tour of the cottage, where the family lived for nine years. Decades after they left, it was expanded and used as a pub and inn before the local Burns Society had it restored to the original, more compact size. An audio track explains the various uses for the rooms — one of which held the family *and* their livestock before Burns’s father built an addition. The cottage’s original features include a box bed in the kitchen where the poet was born. The initial room has display cases with first editions of his books as well as many letters that Burns wrote and received. In the larger exhibition hall, a timeline helps place the bard in context with other historic and cultural events of his age. Cases contain various mementos and memorabilia such as the huge family bible. Allow about 1½ hours.

See map p. 285. Alloway (3km [2 miles] south of Ayr on B7024). ☎ **01292-443-700**. www.burnsheritagepark.com. Admission: £3 (\$5.50) adults, £1.50 (\$2.75) children and seniors, £9 (\$16.50) per family. Open: Apr–Oct daily 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.; Nov–Mar Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Burns Monument and Gardens **Alloway**

About 1km ($\frac{1}{2}$ mile) from the Burns Cottage, just past the old kirk, this Grecian-classical monument, which was replicated in Edinburgh on Calton Hill, was erected in 1823 in a ceremony attended by the poet's widow, Jean Armour. The gardens overlook the River Doon and its famous arching bridge. Allow about 30 minutes.

See map p. 285. Drive 3km (2 miles) south of Ayr on B7024. ☎ **01292-443-700**. Admission: £1 (\$1.85) tokens from Tam o'Shanter Experience. Open: Apr–Sept daily 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.; Oct–Mar daily 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Culzean Castle and Country Park **South Ayrshire**

Situated on the cliffs above the sea about 20km (12 miles) south of Ayr, Culzean (pronounced *cul-lane*) Castle and Country Park provides one of the more scenic and soothing stops in Ayrshire. Culzean Castle is a fine example of architect William Adam's "castellated" style (that is, built with turrets and ramparts). Notwithstanding its architectural attributes — whether the celebrated round drawing room or the outstanding oval staircase — the pile is of special interest to many Americans because of General Eisenhower's connection. In 1946, the guest apartment was given to the general in thanks for his service as supreme commander of the allied forces. Undoubtedly, Culzean's location near so many outstanding golf courses, such as Turnberry and Troon (see listings in the section "Golfing heavens: Troon and Turnberry"), surely pleased the golf-mad ex-general and U.S. president. Fans of the Scottish cult horror film, *The Wicker Man*, will know that scenes at the home of the devilish character played by Christopher Lee were filmed here. Allow about 1 hour.

See map p. 285. Overlooking the Firth of Clyde. ☎ **01655-884-455**. www.culzean castle.net. Admission (including entrance to the Country Park): £9 (\$14) adults, £6.50 (\$10) seniors and children, £23 (\$37) families of 2 adults and 2 children. Open: Apr–Oct daily 10:30 a.m.–5 p.m. (last admission 30 minutes before closing). Closed Nov–Mar.



Culzean Country Park became, in 1969, the first country park in Scotland. Thanks to the influences of the mild Gulf Stream, the grounds have some exotic plants that one would not expect to see in Scotland. The 228-hectare (565-acre) grounds contain a walled garden, aviary, swan pond, camellia house, orangery, adventure playground, and newly restored 19th-century pagoda, as well as a deer park, kilometers of woodland paths, and beaches. Culzean Country Park has gained an international reputation for its visitor center. The views towards the sea include the rounded rock of an island called Alisa Craig. An area some 16km (10 miles) offshore is a nesting ground and sanctuary for seabirds. Allow about 2 hours.

See map p. 285. On the land surrounding Culzean Castle. ☎ **01655-884-400**. Admission: included in admission to Culzean Castle. Open: daily 9 a.m.–dusk.

Arran: “Scotland in Miniature”

The Isle of Arran, in the Firth of Clyde off the coast of Ayrshire, is often called “Scotland in Miniature” because it combines pasture-filled lowlands with mountainous highland scenery. Indeed, the so-called Highland Boundary Fault Line bisects the island diagonally, just as it does the Scottish mainland. In addition to the geographic and topographic mimicry, Arran offers a castle, half a dozen golf courses (including one with 12 holes), and a whisky distillery. It’s also a popular camping and cycling destination. Various attractions and activities on Arran range from hiking and rock climbing to pony trekking and sailing — plus good stretches of sandy, if wind-swept, beaches.

Inveraray Castle Inveraray

This almost picture-perfect pile with fairy-tale spires and riveted roofs sits near Loch Fyne, just outside the town of Inveraray. From the impressive Armoury Hall to the fine collection of French tapestries and furniture, the building holds much over which to marvel. Belonging to the clan Campbell, the castle is home to the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. The grounds are particularly lovely in the fall when the leaves change color. Check out the small Combined Operations Museum in the stables, which covers the history of Inveraray’s role in preparing troops for the D-Day invasion. Allow about 2 hours.

See map p. 287. On the A83 Trunk Road, 1km (¾ mile) northeast of Inveraray on Loch Fyne. ☎ 01499-302-203. www.inveraray-castle.com. Admission: £6 (\$11) adults, £5 (\$9.25) seniors and students, £4 (\$7.50) children under 16, £15 (\$27.75) family of 2 adults, 2 kids. Open: June–Sept Mon–Sat 10 a.m.–5:45 p.m., Sun 1–5:45 p.m.; April–May and Oct Mon–Thurs and Sat 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 2–5:45 p.m., Sun 1–5:45 p.m., closed Fri closed Nov–Mar.

Kilchurn Castle Loch Awe

These stunning ruins, which date to the 16th century, are as much fun to get to as they are to explore — you can either walk up a steep path from the car park or hop on the steamboat ferry for the short ride from the Loch Awe pier. The castle, on the head of Loch Awe, has great views and is a popular place to take pictures, so don’t leave your camera in the car. Built by Sir Colin Campbell, Kilchurn was one of the strongholds of this area that was controlled by Clan Campbell at one time. Allow about 2 hours.

See map p. 287. Car park: Hwy. A85 east of Loch Awe. Ferry: ☎ 01838-200-440. Admission: free. Ferry: £4 (\$5.80) adults, £3 (\$4.35) children under 16. Open: Apr–Nov daily dawn–dusk; call ahead at beginning and end of season. Closed Dec–Mar.

Kilmartin House Museum **Kilmartin**

Kilmartin House Museum preserves the history and culture of Scotland's early civilizations. An audiovisual presentation on the significance and sights of the Kilmartin Valley is interesting and artistically done, and the museum is full of fine artifacts from the early settlements of the area. You'll discover several items of interest in this scattered museum, from a replica of St. Columba's boat to a workshop where you can see old skills in action. This historically significant valley was where travelers coming from Ireland first settled on Scottish soil. The museum cafe offers fine regional food, traditional Scottish drinks, and coffee. Alas, as this book goes to press, the museum is threatened with closure because of funding shortfalls, so check if it's open before venturing out. Allow about 2 hours.

See map p. 287. Hwy. A816 between Lochgilphead and Oban, Kilmartin, Argyll. ☎ **01546-51-0278**. www.kilmartin.org. Admission: £5 (\$9.25) adults, £4 (\$7.50) seniors and students, £2 (\$3.70) children under 16, £10 (\$18.50) family. Open: daily 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Laphroaig Distillery **Islay**

Laphroaig (pronounced La *Froig*) is the home of a whisky that most people either love or loathe. It has a distinctive peaty flavor with a whiff of sea air (some say they can even taste a little seaweed). Even if you aren't a fan of the whisky, the distillery merits a visit. To visit the distillery and get a tour full of good anecdotes and information, you need to make an appointment. Allow about 1½ hours.

See map p. 287. Near Port Ellen, on the road to Ardbeg. ☎ **01496-302-418**. Admission: free. Open: by appointment only.

Loch Lomond **Argyll**

Loch Lomond, the largest inland body of water in all of Great Britain, is about a 30-minute drive or train ride from the Glasgow city limits. At the loch's southern edge, in the otherwise unremarkable if pleasant town of Balloch, is **Loch Lomond Shores** (www.lochlomondshores.com). The activity complex includes an information center (open daily from 10 a.m.–5p.m.; ☎ **01389-722-199**) on the adjacent national park — Scotland's first — that extends up the eastern shores of the loch. At the north end of Loch Lomond is the eccentric pub at the Drover's Inn, always worth a stop on the ride up (or down) the loch.

If you're a hiker, the trails up the eastern shore of the loch are preferable; this is the route that the West Highland Way (see the sidebar "Hiking the West Highland Way") follows. If you're a canoeing or kayaking enthusiast, the Loch Lomond Shores' visitor center has rentals (☎ **01389-602-576**; www.canyouexperience.com) for around £15 (\$28) per hour. Up the western shores, before the notoriously winding road at Tarbet (where the train

from Glasgow to Oban stops), visitors can take a cruise. Golfers usually are attracted to the Loch Lomond country club, near Luss, which has hosted the annual Barclays Scottish Open professional golf championships in past years (☎ **0141-887-2992**; barclaysscottishopen.co.uk).

McCaig's Tower **Oban**

The distinguished landmark above Oban cityscape is this Classical structure, which seems out of place. Local banker John McCaig commissioned it around 1900 in order to employ three stonemasons who were out of work. Though never completed, the arches were intended to house statues of McCaig's family. You're free to walk through the monument and enjoy the city's best view of the town, bay, and surrounding area, especially at sunset. Floodlights illuminate the tower at night. Allow about 1 hour.

See map p. 289. Oban, between Duncraggan and Laurel roads. Admission: free. Open: daily 24 hours.

Mount Stuart **Bute**

This mansion belongs to the Marquess of Bute's family, but it's open to the public for much of the year. Construction of the red-sandstone pile began around the early 1880s for the third Marquess. The interiors display certain eccentricities and interests of the man, such as a ceiling in an upstairs room that is covered in stars and constellations because of his interest in astrology. The garden dates back to the early 18th century, when the second earl of Bute moved the family here from the port town of Rothesay.

Hiking the West Highland Way

One of Scotland's best-known long-distance footpaths is the **West Highland Way**, established in the 1980s. The trail begins rather uneventfully northwest of Glasgow in the affluent suburb of Milngavie (pronounced mill-guy). But as the trail winds some 153km (95 miles) north along the eastern shore of Loch Lomond, through the desolate and almost pre-historic looking Rannoch Moor, along the breathtaking and historic Glen Coe, and ending finally in Fort William, it just gets better and better. At the northern terminus, you're at the foot of Ben Nevis, Scotland's highest mountain.

Trains run frequently throughout the day from the Queen's Street railway station in central Glasgow to Milngavie, the starting point of the walk. The 25-minute trip costs £2.15 (\$4) one-way. In Fort William, you can catch the First ScotRail train back to Glasgow. Hikers can backpack and camp along the way or stay at inns conveniently dotted along the trail. Tour companies are available to haul your luggage from stop to stop along the way. For details on the West Highland Way, contact the National Park, Gateway Centre, Loch Lomond Shores, Ben Lomond Way, Balloch, G83 8QL; ☎ **01389-722-199** — or log onto www.west-highland-way.co.uk.

The grounds have a woodlands park, a huge walled area — the so-called “wee garden” — and a working vegetable plot, too. The garden is open from May to mid-October. Allow about 2 hours.

See map p. 287. A844 near Scoulag, south of Rothesay. Ferries (30-minute ride) to Rothesay from the mainland (Wemyss Bay) depart frequently. Trains to Wemyss Bay leave Glasgow Central. ☎ **01700-503-877**. www.mountstuart.com. Admission: house and grounds £7 (\$13) adults, £3 (\$5.50) children; grounds only £3.50 (\$6.50) adult, £2 (\$3.75) children. Open: house May–Sept 30 Wed and Fri–Mon 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; gardens May–Sept 30 10 a.m.–6 p.m., also open Sat–Sun in April.



Oban Seal & Marine Centre **Barcaldine**

This seal sanctuary is a nursery and hospital for stray, sick, and injured seal pups. The center isn't elaborate, but it takes care of the cute creatures before releasing them back into the wild. Highlights of the animal rescue center include daily lectures and feedings. The marine center has exhibits on the natural habitats of sea creatures, including sharks. The setting, among tall, shady pine trees by the water's edge, is reminiscent of northern California. Allow about 2½ hours.

See map p. 287. A828, north of Oban, on the shores of Loch Creran. ☎ **01631-720-386**. Admission: £6.50 (\$12) adults, £5 (\$9.25) seniors and students, £4 (\$7.50) children under 16. Open: daily 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Souter Johnnie's Cottage **Kirkoswald**

Some 13 miles south of Ayr, this cottage was the home of Burns's pal, the cobbler John Davidson. Davidson became the inspiration for the character “Souter Johnnie” in Burns's tale of Tam o'Shanter. The cottage contains Burnsiana and contemporary cobbler's tools, and in the churchyard are the graves of the real life Tam o'Shanter (Douglas Graham) and Souter Johnnie. Allow about 1 hour.

See map p. 285. Main Road, A77, Kirkoswald (6¼km (4 miles) west of Maybole on A77). ☎ **01655-760-603**. www.nts.org.uk. Admission: £3 (\$5.50) adults, £2 (\$3.75) children and seniors. Open: Apr 1–Sept 30 Fri–Tues 11:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Golfing heavens: Troon and Turnberry

For links-style golf, which emphasizes sandy dunes and rolling golf courses, you can hardly do better than the Ayrshire coastline. While there are a host of options for the avid golfer, the two best-known courses are Troon and Turnberry.

Troon

The resort town of **Troon**, 11km (7 miles) north of Ayr and 50km (31 miles) southwest of Glasgow, looks out across the Firth of Clyde toward the Isle of Arran. Troon takes its name from the curiously hook-shaped

promontory jutting out into the sea: the “trone” or nose. From this port, a SeaCat ferry (☎ **08705-523-523**; www.steam-packet.com) sails daily to and from Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Troon and its environs offer several sandy links courses, most prominently the **Royal Troon Golf Club** (☎ **01292-311-555**; www.royal-troon.co.uk). Royal Troon boasts two courses. The Old Course is a 7,150-yard (4-mile) seaside course that often hosts the prestigious Open Championship, which was played here as recently as summer 2004. Dignified Georgian and Victorian buildings and the Isle of Arran are visible from the fairways, which seem deliberately designed to steer your golf balls into danger. Hole 8, the famous “Postage Stamp,” is only 123 yards in distance, but depending upon the wind, you may need a long iron to reach the green. The 6,289-yard (3.5-mile) Portland Course, is even more challenging, by some estimates, than the Old Course.



If you're in the mood to play both courses, a one-day fee — a whopping £200 (\$370) — includes morning coffee, a buffet lunch, and two rounds: one on the Old Course and one on the Portland.

A much less expensive and still gratifying option is to play one of the municipal courses, such as Darnley or Lochgreen, run by the South Ayrshire Council; Darnley and Lochgreen run parallel to Royal Troon at spots. The clubhouse for the municipal courses is right across from the Troon Railway Station. Fees on the weekend range from £16 to £25 (\$30–\$46). Another option is a six-round, seven-day golf pass from the council for £72 (\$133). For more information, log onto www.golfsouthayrshire.com or call the South Ayrshire Golf information hotline at ☎ **01292-616-255**.

Non-golfing visitors will find plenty of room to relax on Troon's 3km (2 miles) of **sandy beaches** stretching along both sides of the harbor; the broad sands and shallow waters make it a safe haven for beach bums. From here you can take boat trips to Arran or the narrow strait north of Bute known as the Kyles of Bute.

Trains from Glasgow's Central Station arrive at the Troon station several times daily (trip time about 40 min.; £5 (\$9.25) one-way ticket). Call ☎ **08457-484-950** for information. Trains and buses also connect Ayr with Troon, which is about a 10-minute ride.

Turnberry

The coastal settlement of Turnberry, 81km (50 miles) south of Glasgow on the A77, was once part of the Culzean Estate. It began to flourish early in the 20th century when rail service was developed, and a recognized golfing center with a first-class resort hotel was established. However, unlike Troon, which is a reasonably-sized port town/village, there isn't much to Turnberry except for the hotel and golf course.

From the original pair of 13-hole golf courses, the complex has developed into the two championship level courses, Ailsa and Kintyre, known worldwide as the **Turnberry Hotel Golf Courses**. Ailsa's 18 holes have been the scene of Open tournaments and other professional golfing events. Guests of the Westin Turnberry hotel get priority access, especially on the Ailsa course. The fees to play vary. Hotel residents pay between £45 and £105 (\$83–\$194) depending on the course and the season. If you're not staying at Westin Turnberry, rates range from £60 to £175 (\$111–\$324). Log onto www.turnberry.co.uk or call ☎ **01655-334-032** for details.

Other cool things to see and do

- ✔ **Inveraray Jail**, Church Square, Inveraray (☎ **01499-302-381**). This is a somewhat implausibly eerie but fun museum that takes on the history of Scottish crime and punishment. Wax figures and recorded voices attempt to re-create life in the old jail cells. A historic courtroom is straight out of the 1820s; from there you get a glimpse of torture and death — from hot-iron branding and public whipping to (gulp) “ear nailing.” The murderers and madmen aren't real, but little ones may find the prison section more frightening than fun.
- ✔ **Kilchurn Castle**, A85 east of Loch Awe (☎ **01838-200-440**). This castle offers well-maintained ruins that date to the 16th century. They're as much fun to get to as they are to explore — you can either walk up a steep path from the car park or hop on the steamboat ferry for the short ride from the Loch Awe pier.
- ✔ **Museum of Islay Life**, Port Charlotte, Islay (☎ **01496-850-358**). This interesting little museum is housed in an old church. The museum focuses on the history of the island and island life, as well as the whisky-making process. It may seem a bit thrown-together, but it gives context to your visit to Islay.
- ✔ **Oban Distillery**, Stafford Street (☎ **01631-572-004**). Oban Distillery may not be the largest or most distinguished distillery in Scotland, but it's conveniently located in the heart of Oban and offers an informative tour of one of the oldest malt whisky makers in the country.
- ✔ **Tam o'Shanter Experience**, Murdoch's Lane, Alloway (☎ **01292-443-700**). This museum is adjacent to the gardens of the Burns Monument. Here you can watch a video on Burns's life and poetry — as well as one that depicts the Tam o'Shanter. The visitor center also has a well-stocked gift shop and a tearoom.

Shopping for Local Treasures

Although none of the towns in the region have extraordinary shopping opportunities, Ayr, Brodick, and Oban are nevertheless market towns. Many of the attractions listed in the section “The top attractions” have gift shops, and the Burns Museum in Alloway (see the detailed listing earlier in this chapter) is particularly good for souvenirs about the

Scottish bard. Along the shores of Loch Lomond, you can find a few galleries with local art. In addition, here are a few specialty shops.

- ✓ **Caithness Glass**, Railway Pier, Oban (☎ **01631-563-386**). This world-famous glass shop is a great place to find a unique memento. The colorful menagerie of items never disappoints and maintains the highest level of quality — no piece with even the slightest imperfection leaves the factory. Caithness Glass is open March through October, Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., plus Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. from April through October; November to February, Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ✓ **Crafty Kitchen**, Ardfern, midway between Oban and Lochgilphead (☎ **01852-500-303** or 01852-500-689). Part craft shop, part cafe, part art gallery, and part post office, Crafty Kitchen is one of the most memorable stores you'll find in the country. The crafts are unique and thoroughly Scottish, the cafe serves delicious vegetarian fare, and the gallery features Scottish artists and craftspeople. The shop is open April through October, Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; November and December, Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ✓ **Inveraray Woolen Mill**, The Anvil, Front Street, Inveraray (☎ **01499-302-166**). A self-described “Pandora’s box” of Scottish gifts, the mill has a great variety of items — more of a smorgasbord, I’d say. Among the quality gifts: Edinburgh crystal, cashmere, knitwear, woolly hats and gloves, and gourmet edibles. The architect who did much of Edinburgh’s New Town designed the whitewashed building. Call for hours.

Doing the Pub Crawl

You’ll find no shortage of pubs in Ayr and Oban, the largest towns in this area. In less-visited areas such as East Ayrshire, the Kintyre Peninsula, and the islands, most pubs are basic watering holes catering to the locals. In some small towns, in fact, the hotel pub is the only place to grab a dram of whisky or a pint. Many of the restaurants and hotels listed earlier in this chapter have public house licenses and welcome non-residents. In addition, consider the following:

- ✓ **Brodick Bar**, Brodick, Arran, just off Shore Road near the post office (☎ **01770-302-169**). This all-wood pub pours delicious ale and has a reputation for serving excellent pub grub — especially uniquely topped pizzas. During the day, you can get a light lunch; in the evening, the kitchen serves bistro food to accompany Scottish-brewed beer. Brodick Bar is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to midnight.
- ✓ **Oban Inn**, Stafford Street, Oban (☎ **01631-562-484**). This classic whitewashed pub, near the water just off the town’s main street, has a warm, old-fashioned elegance. The upstairs bar is a little quieter

than downstairs, but the downstairs room, with flags and exposed wooden beams, is a better place to meet people. The pub has an excellent selection of whisky and decent pub grub. Oban Inn is open daily from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.

- ✓ **Rabbie's Bar**, Burns Statue Square, Ayr (☎ 01292-262-112). The bar has walls covered with the pithy verses of Robert Burns and his portrait. However, don't come here expecting poetry readings in a quiet corner. The crowd, although not particularly literary, is talkative. Rabbie's Bar is open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.; on Sunday, it's open from noon to midnight.

Fast Facts: Ayrshire and Argyll

Area Codes

The area code for Arran is **01770**, Ayr is **01292**, Bute is **01700**, Campbeltown is **01586**, Inveraray is **01499**, Oban is **01631**, and Tarbert is **01880**. You need to dial the area code only if you're calling from outside the city you want to reach.

ATMs

Cash points at banks in bigger towns are common, but don't expect all or even any to be linked internationally.

Emergencies

Dial ☎ **999** for police, fire, or ambulance.

Hospitals

The most convenient hospital is Argyll & the Isles Hospital, off Soroba Road, at the south end of town in Oban (☎ 01631-567-500).

Information

Ayr tourist office is at 22 Sandgate, Ayr (☎ 01292-678-100). It's open from Easter to August, Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (in July and August, it's also open Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) and

September to Easter, Monday through Saturday from 9:15 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Oban, the tourist office is in the Old Church, Argyll Square, (☎ 01631-563-122). April to mid-June and mid-September to October, it's open Monday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 10 to 4 p.m.; mid-June through mid-September, hours are Monday to Saturday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and November through March, it's open Monday to Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m. If you prefer to gather tourist information online, visit www.visitscotland.com.

Internet Access

Cafe na Lusan, 9 Craigard Rd., Oban (☎ 01631-567-268), is open Tuesday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 7 p.m. The charge is £1 (\$1.45) for 15 minutes.

Post Office

The nearest main post offices are Corran Esplanade, Oban (☎ 01631-562-430), and Main Street South, Inveraray (☎ 01499-302-062).