

Islands in the Clyde: Calmac's Five Ferries Ticket



Surely Calmac's Five Ferries Island Hopping Adventure was planned with the purpose of showing off Arran's arresting mountainous profile from all angles!
<https://www.calmac.co.uk/things-to-do/island-hopping-adventures/five-ferries-island-hopping-adventure?>

Strictly speaking, this route is an island AND peninsula-hopping adventure, beginning and ending at Ardrossan in North Ayrshire, taking you on a circular journey in which you can do as many detours as you wish. It is suitable for motor vehicles or bikes.

If you begin at Ardrossan in North Ayrshire, the Five Ferries route takes you first to Brodick on Arran from where you make your way to Lochranza and the ferry to Claonaig on the peninsula of Kintyre.

Sailing from Lochranza to Claonaig on Kintyre it's worth remembering to look back as well as forwards: in 1836 author Lord Teignmouth wrote, "*In point of gloomy grandeur no British bay surpasses Lochranza.*" However, if it's pouring, just remember the Battlefield Band's song 'The Arran Convict':

I wish I was back on the Lochranza ferry....

And the days when the rain from Kintyre is a sheet without end.

A short drive or ride then gets you to the pretty village of Tarbert and the ferry to Cowal where you journey around the Kyles of Bute, crossing onto the Isle of Bute by possibly the shortest ferry journey in the world. At Rothesay a boat takes you back to the mainland at Wemyss Bay. In your five voyages you are following in the wakes of the paddle steamers of a century ago.

These islands, peninsulas and sea lochs were, in the seventh and eighth centuries, the chosen abodes of saints who practised their worship in isolation and in harmony with nature. Fast forward a millennium and the waters of the Clyde saw the industrial revolution in its infancy when the River Clyde teemed with ships and the Glasgow shipyards were always busy.

<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/riverside-museum>

<https://www.scottishmaritimemuseum.org>

Nowadays you can look out for dolphins and porpoises from the ferry decks.

Arran COAST (Community of Arran Seabed Trust) has created a protected no-take zone at the south of the island and there is evidence that the biodiversity of this area is increasing: <https://www.arrancoast.com>

TIPS FOR TRAVEL USING THE FIVE FERRIES TICKET:

Don't rush your journey. Do some detours and explore the beautiful countryside.

If you have time at the beginning or end of your journey, visit Portencross Castle in North Ayrshire for a lovely view of Arran: <http://www.portencrosscastle.org.uk/>. Also nearby is the artists' town of West Kilbride <http://www.crafttownscotland.org>

Some of the attractions along your journey:

Arran: Brodick Castle, Arran Heritage Museum, Goat Fell

www.visitarran.com

Kintyre: Tarbert Castle, Skipness Castle

<http://www.visitkintyre.info/>

Cowal: Portavadie Spa, Ostel Bay

<https://www.wildaboutargyll.co.uk/destinations/dunoon-and-cowal/>

Bute: Mount Stuart, Rothesay Castle

<https://www.visitbute.com/>