

Beaches on Mull and Iona

The islands of Mull and Iona are famed for their natural beauty and wildlife. Farming, fishing and forestry are important ways of life. Please help us keep it that way and ensure your own safety by following these simple guidelines:-

- *Keep a safe distance from any agricultural or forestry operations and watch out for signs warning of particular hazards.*
- *Use stiles and gates where possible and leave gates as you find them.*
- *Avoid disturbing livestock especially at lambing and calving time.*
- *Keep your dog under close control particularly near livestock and breeding birds.*
- *Take your litter home and guard against accidental fire.*
- *Take responsibility for your own actions.*
- *Respect people's privacy and peace of mind.*

DRIVING ON THE ISLE OF MULL

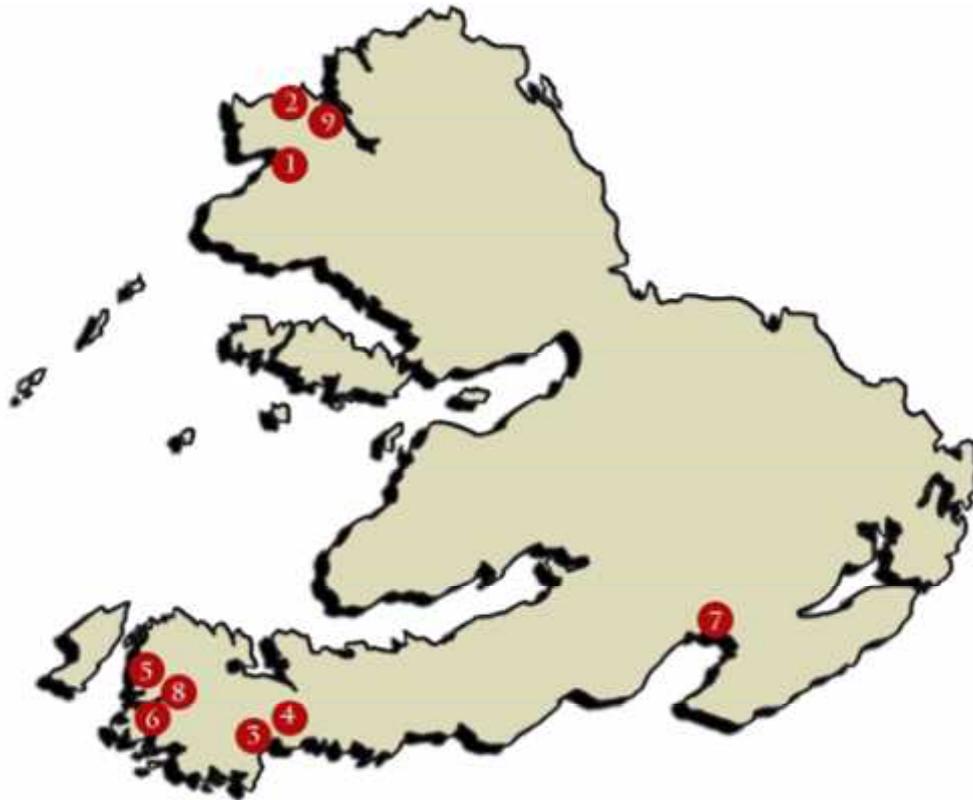
If this is your first visit to Mull it may also be your first encounter with single track roads. They can be a bit daunting at first, but you'll soon get the hang of it if you follow the code.

Passing places occur frequently. Most are marked by a black and white banded pole, although some have the newer diamond shaped reflective sign which is easier to see at night.

Think of passing places as very short stretches of twin-track road, and you'll avoid most of the pitfalls. As per the Highway Code, always KEEP LEFT and stop in a passing place on your left, or opposite a passing place on the right to let approaching vehicles past (do not force your way past other drivers in between passing places - reverse if necessary).

LET THE DRIVER BEHIND PASS! (again stopping on the left). They are probably experienced in driving on single track roads and could be members of the emergency services, or have a ferry to catch. You are welcome to enjoy the scenery at 30mph, but please allow others to get on. Show consideration to cyclists and horse riders. This will prevent frustration on their part and make your time on Mull more pleasurable for all.

BUS SERVICES www.bowmanstours.co.uk for public transport timetables



Many of the beaches are remote – this is part of their attraction!

1. Calgary Beach NM372 513

From Tobermory drive on the B8073 to Dervaig and continue to Calgary.

Parking and public toilets close to beach.

Short stay wild camping area. Short walk to beach.

There is a BUS SERVICE from Tobermory to Calgary.

Between the road and the beach there's a wide area of machair, one of the rarest coastal grassland habitats in Europe, which is found only in north and west Scotland and western Ireland. It occurs where shell sand has been blown inland from beaches and dunes and has mixed with the soil to form herb-rich grasslands. Careful management and rotation creates spectacular displays of flowers as well as providing the environment to support populations of breeding birds. Please respect this amazing natural environment.



The Calgary beach has amazing white sand and safe bathing. As the tide falls a small river meanders across the sand.

Surrounded by low, partially wooded hills, the beach is close to the village of scattered houses and Calgary Art in Nature with a visitor centre, woodland sculpture walk and a tea room.

At the north end of the beach a path leads to a ruined stone pier originally built to allow puffers, small steam driven cargo boats, to bring supplies to and from the area. Just up the hill from the pier the deserted village of Inivea remains as roofless stone ruins, an atmospheric relic of the Highland clearances.

The bay is overlooked by Calgary Castle; visited in 1876 by Colonel James Macleod of the Canadian Mounties. He was so entranced by the area that, when he returned to Canada, he changed the name of Fort Macleod to Calgary!

2. Langamull NM283 540

From Tobermory drive on the B8073 to Dervaig and continue for about 3 miles to the parking area at the North West Mull Community Woodland Ltd car park.

The nearest public toilets are at Calgary.

There is a BUS SERVICE from Tobermory to Calgary; you can get off the bus at the parking area.

From the car park the entire walk is about 2.5 km (1 ½ miles.) The first part of the walk is through the woods (keep left at junction), then through a gate onto more open land on the edge of the wood. The beach is about 1.5 km down this track. About a third of the way down this track is another track taking you off to Kildavie one of Mull's forgotten settlements, now the subject of an archaeological dig. This is an interesting side trip on the way up or down. After the Kildavie turning bear left, away from the farm buildings and make your way down to the shore.

The beach itself is split into two distinct parts by rocks and has many rock pools for exploring as well as a lovely stretch of white sand. Great views over to Ardnamurchan, Rhum, Eigg and Canna. Skye is usually visible and on a clear day you may see the Uists. This is a must for beach lovers.

3. Ardalanish NM375 188

From Craignure drive on the A849 towards Fionnphort. After about 30 miles take a left turn in the village of Bunessan signposted Uisken and Ardalanish Weaving Mill. Take the next turn left for Uisken and turn right after about 1 ½ miles following signs for the Weaving Mill. The parking area is about ¾ mile on the left.

Parking area.

Public toilets in Bunessan.

There is a BUS SERVICE to Bunessan from Craignure.

Follow the track down through the gate and walk through the croftland of Ardalanish Farm. There are stunning views to the south; the isles of Colonsay, Jura and Islay. On a very clear day the coast of Northern Ireland is visible!

The track crosses the machair before it reaches the beach. Machair is one of the rarest coastal grassland habitats in Europe, which is found only in north and west Scotland and western Ireland. It occurs where shell sand has been

blown inland from beaches and dunes and has mixed with the soil to form herb-rich grasslands. Careful management and rotation creates spectacular displays of flowers as well as providing the environment to support populations of breeding birds. Please respect this amazing natural environment.

This one kilometre long beach has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest ; the rocks around Ardalanish are Precambrian formed 800-1000 million years ago. There are interesting rock formations; the beach is popular with geologists. When the sun is shining the mica in the sand glitters.



Around the bay there are several Bronze Age burial cists and the remains of an Iron Age dun or fort overlook the west shore.

Ardalanish Bay offers a long, enticing beach – perfect for those wishing to meander and rocky outcrops and rock pools to explore.

4. Uisken NM390 187

From Craignure drive on the A849 towards Fionnphort. After about 30 miles take a left turn in the village of Buessan signposted Uisken and Ardanish Weaving Mill. Take the next turn left for Uisken and continue on this road until it reaches the small village of Uisken.

Parking area very close to the beach.

Public toilets in Buessan.

There is a BUS SERVICE to Buessan from Craignure.

The road joining Buessan to Uisken was constructed during 1847/48 under the Famine Relief Scheme instituted by the government and implemented by the landowner, The Duke of Argyll. It was planned to open a fishing station at Uisken and the road was built so that the fishermen could bring their catch to Buessan by cart.

The beach is easily accessible at both high and low tides. It is an ideal beach for those who are less mobile as there's parking very close to the beach.

Uisken beach is famous for its Beach Games in August when local folk and holidaymakers have fun in the sun!



5. Fidden Beaches NM300 215

From Craignure drive on the A849 to Fionnphort. Turn left out of Fionnphort past the main car park and continue about 2 miles to Fidden, following signs for Fidden Farm and the Farm Campsite.

Parking.

Public toilets in Fionnphort.

There is a BUS SERVICE to Fionnphort from Craignure.

The beaches at Fidden are easily accessible. Ideal havens for wading birds and seals, the beaches encourage visitors to spend time exploring and observing. Popular with canoeists, there are many coves to enjoy. The white beaches are dotted with pink Mull granite outcrops.

A short distance from the shore at Fidden is the Isle of Erraid with its distinctive row of lighthouse keepers' cottages. The island was chosen as the quarry site and shore station for the building of the Dubh Artach lighthouse, 15 miles south of Iona. The Stevenson brothers, Thomas and David, oversaw the building of the lighthouse between 1867 and 1872. Robert Louis Stevenson, son of Thomas, took inspiration from Erraid for this novel 'Kidnapped.'

6. Knockvologan NM307 198

From Craignure drive on the A849 to Fionnphort. Turn left out of Fionnphort past the main car park and drive through Fidden Farm towards Knockvologan.

There's a parking area on the left about 100 metres from the farm gate or you may be able to park nearer the farm.

Public Toilets in Fionnphort.

Follow the farm track down the hill towards the sea. It is quite rocky and rough.

Close to the end of the track two large iron hooks protrude from the sand – part of a lifeboat from the Arandora Star – a luxury cruise ship converted to a prison ship during the Second World War. The ship was torpedoed in 1940 off Malin Head on its first deportation run with internees and prisoners of war to Newfoundland. The lifeboat was discovered drifting towards the southern coast of Mull and was towed ashore by local men and beached at Knockvologan.

More details can be read at:

www.blackhouse.demon.co.uk/arandora_star.htm



Once on the beach there are walks to the left and right.

Turn right and it is possible, depending on the tides, to access the Isle of Erraid (see Fidden Beaches for more information)

To the left climb the grassy hill and continue over the ridge to another amazing beach; sheltered and picturesque. The beaches at Knockvologan are great for beach combing and watching wildlife – seals, ravens, heron and oystercatchers are likely

7. Laggan Sands, Lochbuie NM621 244

From Craignure drive on the A849 towards Fionnphort for about 7 miles. Turn left signposted Lochbuie and Croggan. The narrow road follows the shore of Loch Spelve and Loch Uisg and continues to Lochbuie.

Parking.

Public Toilets in Craignure.

Park close to the shore and head off towards Moy Castle and Laggan Sands beyond. The beach is great for exploring and watching out for wildlife. Sea eagles, golden eagles and seals can be seen here.

8. Kilvickeon NM410 187

From Craignure take the A849 to Bunessan. Take a left turn before going down the hill into Bunessan village, signposted Scoor. The road is tarmac to start with and then becomes gravel; drive with care. The parking and turning area is on the left where vehicular access becomes restricted. Looking towards Loch Assapol you can see the medieval chapel ruins and cemetery.

Parking.

Public Toilets in Bunessan.

Take the track marked with an arrow to Kilvickeon beach. The track crosses open croftland where there are likely to be cattle and sheep grazing. During the early summer the access track is edged with yellow iris.

Once on the beach there are lots of sandy coves to explore and the chance to see seals and numerous sea birds. Sand martins have been known to nest here.

Garbh Eilean is a tidal island on the stunning beach at Kilvickeon, connected by a sand bar - a geological feature called a tombolo.

A great place, too, for a family picnic.



Port na Ba NM391 549

Drive from Dervaig towards Calgary and take the first right turn after about 2 miles for Croig.

Park at the pier where the road is wider.

Public Toilets in Tobermory or Calgary

There is a BUS SERVICE from Tobermory to Calgary, you can get off at Am Birlinn restaurant.

Continue on foot over the cattle grid and along the track for around 1.5 km (there's a left and a sharp right turn). A patch of relatively flat and open land appears on your right (you may notice a small stone with "port na ba" painted on it, or matting which allows a vehicle to scramble over the grass). Walk over the grass and down to the beach. If you miss this turn, it matters not – continue to the end of the track, then make your way down to the shore on your right and find your way back along the coast, turning back inland and up the hill once you reach the sands. Keep your eye out for a seal in the bay, come to check you out. The track is an ancient drove road – cattle would be swum over from Coll and Tiree to Croig, then walked across Mull and swum again from Grasspoint to Kerrera and then Oban, on their way to mainland markets.