



Discover
Robert Burns



On the trail of Scotland's
world-acclaimed poet

WELCOME TO BURNS COUNTRY

These visitor trails take you on journeys to discover more about Robert Burns and his inspirational poetry while enjoying the visitor attractions and incredibly beautiful landscapes of Ayrshire.

The story of Robert Burns, Scotland's greatest bard, loved and celebrated across the world, begins in a simple kitchen. Here he was born in his family cottage in Alloway, Ayrshire, on 25 January 1759.

- A. Alloway Auld Kirk features in Burns' most famous poem, Tam o' Shanter.
- B. Don't miss the attractive walk along Poet's Path from the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum to Burns Cottage.
- C. Burns House Museum, Mauchline.



FOLLOWING BURNS

Legacy

Discover the man behind the poetry.

This itinerary reveals Robert Burns' life through the places he lived and the people he knew. Through picturesque Ayrshire, follow Burns on his journey from son of William and Agnes Burnes to husband, lover, father and national bard.

**There was a lad, was born in Kyle, an'
whatna day, an, whatna style...**

Rantin, Rovin, Robin, Robert Burns, 1785

FACT FILE: 2 DAYS

KEY PLACES

- 1. Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway**
Murdoch's Lone, Alloway, Ayrshire, KA7 4PQ
0844 4932601
www.burnsmuseum.org.uk
- 2. Burns Club Irvine**
'Wellwood' 28 Eglinton Street, Irvine, Ayrshire, KA12 8AS
Easter to September: Mon/Wed/Fri/Sat 2.30pm - 4.30pm
Pre-booked visits are welcome. 01294 274511 / Admission Free
- 3. Bachelors' Club, Tarbolton**
1 Sandgate Street, Tarbolton, Ayrshire KA5 5RB
0844 4932146
www.nts.org.uk/property/bachelors-club

MAUCHLINE

- 4. Mossiel Farm Cairn**
Tarbolton Road, Mauchline, Ayrshire, KA5 5LL
- 5. National Burns Memorial Tower (Inc. Johnston Fine Art Gallery)**
For contact details and opening hours www.johnstonartist.co.uk
- 6. Burns House Museum**
Castle Street, Mauchline, Ayrshire, KA5 5BZ. 01290 550045
www.eastayrshireleisure.com

NATURALLY BURNS

Landscape

Two days of light walking take you into the heart of Burns Country to explore the very land that inspired our poet.

The two walks have completely different settings: the first follows a broad river to explore the richness of earthy woods whereas the second hike reaches the vantage point of Brown Carrick, from where you can survey a coastal panorama. Along the way, you will take in a few Burns attractions and enjoy places to eat and drink.

*I have some favourite plants
in spring, among which are the
mountain daisy, the harebell, the
foxglove, the wild brier rose,
the budding birch and the hoary
hawthorn, that I view and hang
over with particular delight*

Extract from a letter from Burns to Mrs Dunlop on New Year's Day 1789



FACT FILE: 2 DAYS

KEY PLACES

1. Mauchline Parish Church

Loudoun Street, Mauchline, Ayrshire, KA5 5BA
www.mauchlineparish.org.uk

2. Fairburn Hotel

12-14 Loudoun Street, Mauchline, Ayrshire, KA5 5BU
01290 551011
www.fairburnhotel.co.uk

3. Poosie Nansie's

21 Loudoun Street, Mauchline, Ayrshire, KA5 5BA

4. Failford Inn

Failford, Ayrshire, KA5 5TF
01292 540117

5. Minishant

Buses to Minishant are direct from Ayr Bus Station, every 30 minutes, except Sundays every 60 minutes. You can take your dog on the bus.

LENGTH OF WALKS

Day One

Failford to Stair and back - 4 hours walking plus allow time for lunch - 5.4km walk (3.5 miles)

Day Two:

Brown Carrick - 2 hours plus allow picnic time - 8.2km walk (5 miles)

ACCOMMODATION TIPS

Ayrshire Bed and Breakfast Association - quality B&Bs across all of Ayrshire. Book Online at www.ayrshirebandb.com



FOLLOWING BURNS



DAY ONE

Start your trip with a full morning at the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, which has the most significant Burns collection anywhere in the world. Step into Burns' life to see the cottage where he was born and lived in his early years before experiencing a sense of the grown man, his life and work from the main exhibition in the award-winning centre.



You could spend the entire day in Alloway, however there are many more Burns attractions and sites to visit associated with his life, work and writing, such as the Burns Club in Irvine, which was founded in 1826 and is now a museum on the poet's life in the town. For details of additional attractions to add to your itinerary then check out the **MORE BURNS** section overleaf.

However you choose to spend the afternoon, make time in Alloway to walk onto the legendary Brig o'Doon and to visit Alloway Auld Kirk, the resting place of Robert's father, William Burnes, and also the eerie place where witches danced to the devil's bagpipes in Burns' most famous work Tam o'Shanter. When Burns wrote the poem, the church had already been abandoned and weather-beaten for 30 years so the roofless sight you see today is similar to that which inspired Burns to create his masterpiece.

Complete your day with a meal at the Tam o'Shanter Inn and Restaurant in Ayr or one of the many fantastic restaurants that Ayr and Alloway have to offer.

DAY TWO

Travel to Tarbolton to locate the quaint, thatched square building of the famous Bachelors' Club, which Burns frequented, aged 18, after his family moved to Loch Lea Farm just north of the town. Here, a young Robert started a debating club, became a Freemason and learned to dance. Restored, the house is now converted into a museum chronicling the poet's formative years.

Continue to Mauchline but keep watch for the stone cairn to the left as you pass Mossgiel Farm. Robert Burns and his brother Gilbert rented Mossgiel following their father's death. Elizabeth Paton, a servant girl who had been employed at Loch Lea farm gave birth to Burns' first child in 1785 but returned to live with her own family, leaving the little girl, Elizabeth, to live at Mossgiel in the care of Burns' mother. While living here Burns met Jean Armour and Mary Campbell – his "Highland Mary". At Mossgiel, Burns had a tremendous outpouring of work, writing some of his most famous poems and songs including, Holy Willie's Prayer, The Jolly Beggars and To a Mouse.

Entering Mauchline, you will spot the impressive National Burns Memorial, constructed a century after Burns died from funds raised through worldwide appeal.

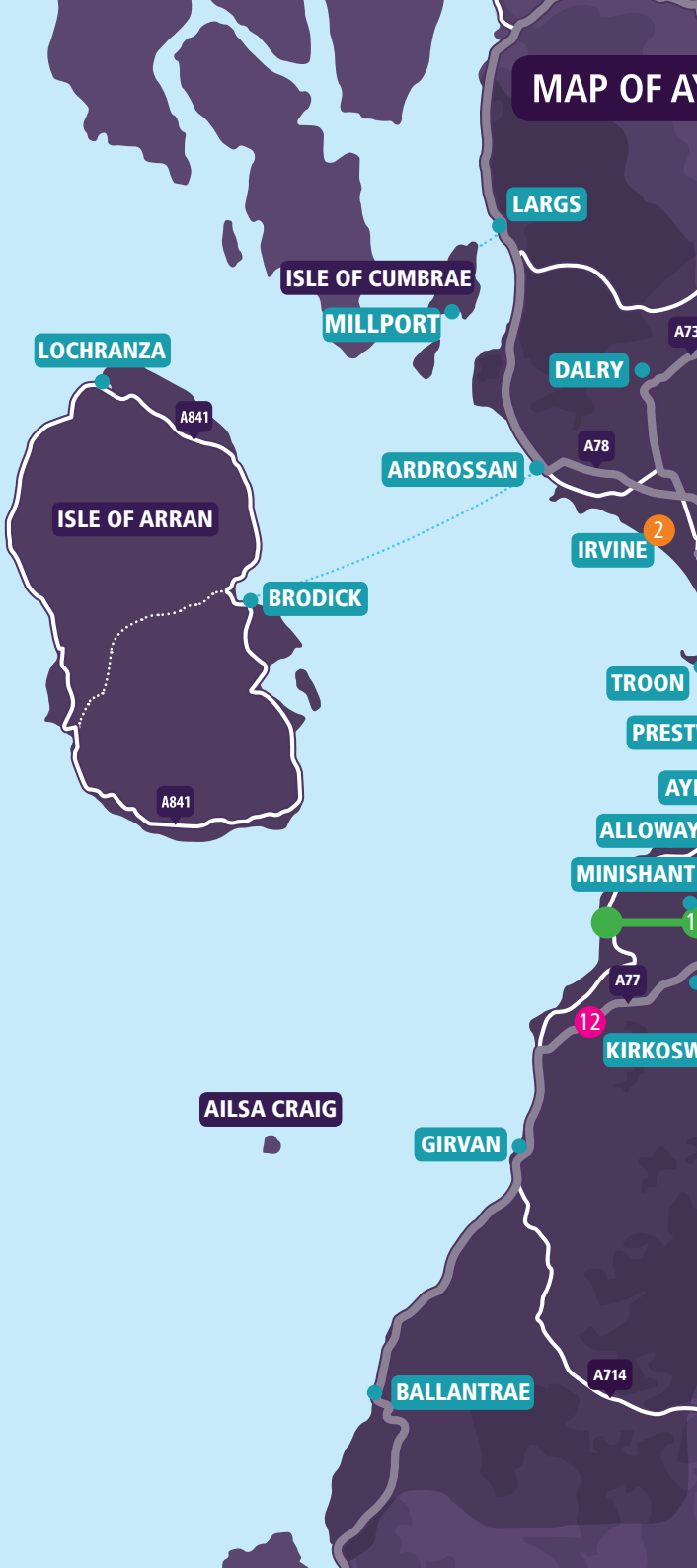
For lunch, seek out the Fairburn Hotel. Built in the early 17th century, the hotel is home to Mauchline Burns Club.

Nearby is the Burns House Museum in a cobbled back street which is relatively unchanged since Burns lived and worked here in 1784-1788. You can also pick up a Robert Burns Blue Plaque Guide which is a walking tour in Mauchline with visits to homes of his friends and places where he spent most time, as well as leading to the statue of his great love, Jean Armour and her home.

**Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is brow:
There's beauty and fortune to get with Miss Morton,
But Armour's the jewel for me o'them a'.**

The Belles of Mauchline, Robert Burns, 1784

MAP OF A



LOCHRANZA

A841

ISLE OF ARRAN

A841

ISLE OF CUMBRAE

MILLPORT

ARDROSSAN

DALRY

IRVINE

2

A78

TROON

PREST

AY

ALLOWAY

MINISHANT

KIRKOSW

A77

12

AILSA CRAIG

GIRVAN

BALLANTRAE

A714

A73

1

YRSHIRE

GLASGOW

KILMARNOCK

MAUCHLINE

MUIRKIRK

TARBOLTON

FAILFORD

CUMNOCK

WICK

MAYBOLE

DALMELLINGTON

KEY PLACES

● Following Burns ● Naturally Burns ● More Burns

1. Robert Burns Birthplace Museum
2. Burns Club
3. Bachelors' Club
4. Mossgiel Farm Cairn
5. National Burns Memorial
6. Burns House Museum
7. Mauchline Parish Church
8. Fairburn Hotel
9. Poosie Nansie's
10. Failford Inn
11. Minishant
12. Souter Johnnie's Cottage
13. Rozelle House
14. The Dick Institute

NATURALLY BURNS



DAY ONE

Start in Mauchline. Get a sense of the man and his social life from a visit to the grounds of Mauchline Parish Church in town centre. Here many Burns' friends and family, including his brother and four children, were laid to rest.

For morning coffee, stop at the small Fairburn Hotel within a few minutes' walk of the church where Robert Burns attended the Reading Club in 1796. Or take a break at Poesie Nansie's: the pub looks much as it would have done in Burns' day from the outside. Named after its owner, the tavern had a poor reputation and it's goings-on inspired Burns to write *The Jolly Beggars*. Locals say Burns was often seen peering in the window at the gable end.

Drive to Failford. Just 100 yards along from the Failford Inn, the other side of the bridge over the Fail Water Burn, is the Ayr Gorge Woodlands Wildlife Reserve – a beautiful walk following the quiet wooded banks of the River Ayr, which undoubtedly inspired Burns.



My way is: - I walk out, sit down and now and then.
look out for objects in nature around me that are in
unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy
and workings of my bosom, humming every now and
then the air with the verses I have frames.

Robert Burns

Birds, plants, bats and fungi occupy the ancient woodlands which have remained relatively undisturbed for centuries. Oak, ash and larch crowd the ravine but walking has been made easier under the care of the Scottish Wildlife Trust which has created hand-railed footpaths in places. This 5.4km walk (3.5 miles) from Failford to the hamlet of Stair is part of the River Ayr Way. Keen walkers may prefer to keep hiking but the length of this walk fits perfectly with enjoying a great lunch in Stair and then walking back to Failford (where you have left the car).

One of the walk's highlights is Peden's Cove. These steps were cut into the soft sandstone of the gorge by covenanters in the mid – 17th century so that outlawed minister, Alexander Peden, could preach to his followers who congregated on the opposite bank of the river.



DAY TWO

Start in Minishant for a great walk up Brown Carrick.

(See Fact File for Buses)

Before you leave the village, there's a wee shop in the main street for picnic provisions. Walk south and turn right into School Road. Follow the road through fields and light woods until the crossroad at Culroy. Turn left, then immediate right, following signs for the Carrick Hills.



Follow the road past arable fields. At the crossroads past Knockdon turn right and follow the road over the rolling hills before you begin the ascent. The gradual climb takes you over the streams and brooks, past quaint cottages, along a road virtually untouched for centuries bordered by shrubs, grasses and thistles. Corridors of green shade and lush woods give way to the open hillside revealing tremendous views across the region.

At the summit, a cairn indicates the best viewpoint. The 360-degree panorama takes in rolling hills with the grazing livestock to the built up coastline of Irvine and Ayr as well as stunning scenes over the Firth of Clyde to Arran. The only whisky distillery on the Isle of Arran is a patron of the Robert Burns World Federation, and it created a Robert Burns Single Malt and Robert Burns blended whisky.

**Blyth hae I been on yon hill, As the lambs before me;
Careless ilke thought and free as the breeze flew o'er
me...**

Blythe hae I been on yon hill, Robert Burns, 1793

Begin your decent by continuing on the single track road through more tranquil farmland with traditional buildings. Look out for wildlife – it's easy to spot hovering kestrels hunting for dinner.

**Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field!
The bitter little that of life remains:
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield**

On Seeing a Wounded Hare, Robert Burns, 1788

At the crossroads at the bottom of the hill, turn left and continue walking to the two-way bus stop on the left hand side of the road. You can catch the bus back to Ayr. Ayr is crammed with good places to eat and drink. Make sure you sample one of those Robert Burns whiskies from the Arran Distillery!



MORE BURNS

If you are seeking more Burns then the suggestions below are definitely worth visiting. These are also ideal as wet weather alternatives or if you don't fancy two consecutive walking days in Burns Country.

12. Souter Johnnie's Cottage

Kirkoswald Main Road, Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, KA19 8HY
0844 493 2147 / www.nts.org.uk / Seasonal opening hours

Visit Souter Johnnie's Cottage where Scottish literature comes to life in an 18th century thatched cottage in the heart of Kirkoswald. This was the home of cobbler (or souter) John Davidson, the real-life Souter Johnnie immortalised in the poem Tam o' Shanter.



13. Rozelle House

Rozelle House, Rozelle Park, Monument Rd, Ayr, Ayrshire, KA7 4NQ
01292 445447 / www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/galleries/rozellehouse
Monday to Saturday: 10am-5pm / Sunday: 12-5pm

Rozelle House was built in the 18th century as a classical mansion but it was remodelled in the early 19th century to a more fashionable style. In 1968 the house, with none of its historic interior remaining, was gifted to the Royal Burgh of Ayr leading to its establishment as a Museum and Art Gallery. Here you can view its significant collection of 54 paintings in the Tam o' Shanter series by Alexander Goudie.

14. The Dick Institute

Elmbank Avenue, Kilmarnock KA1 3BU. 01563 554300
www.eastayrshireleisure.com

The Dick Institute displays a replica of John Wilson's printing press, which printed the first book of Robert Burns' poems commonly known as the Kilmarnock Edition. Original Burns manuscripts are also on display including The Twa Dogs and the Cottar's Saturday Night.

USEFUL TRAVEL CONTACTS

National Rail Enquiries

08457 484950

www.nationalrail.co.uk

Stagecoach Travel Information

www.stagecoachbus.com

Sustrans

Sustainable transport charity

www.sustrans.org.uk

Traveline Scotland

Timetables and journey planner for public transport

0871 2002233

www.travelinescotland.com

Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries

0800 0665000

www.calmac.co.uk

P&O Ferries

0871 6642121

www.poferries.com

Stena Line Ferries

08447 707070

www.stenaline.co.uk

Prestwick Airport

0871 2230700

www.glasgowprestwick.com

Ayr Information Centre

22 Sandgate, Ayr, KA7 1BW

01292 290300

Brodick Information Centre

The Pier, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8AU

01770 303774/776

Extensive efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, however it is recommended that you contact attractions and plan your route in advance.



LoveAyrshire

Ayrshire & Arran Tourism
Burns House, Burns Statue Square
Ayr, Scotland KA7 1UT
www.ayrshire-arran.org/visit



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath



East Ayrshire
COUNCIL