

# STIRLING & THE FORTH VALLEY – OUTDOORS & ACTIVITIES



Q The Kelpies, Falkirk

Q Callendar House, Falkirk

Q The National Wallace Monument, Stirling

Q Dollar Glen, Clackmannanshire

From miles of canals, to deep glens, unspoilt landscapes and a city steeped in history, Stirling & The Forth Valley has an impressive mix of things to see and do. The region's central location is within easy reach of both Edinburgh and Glasgow airports, with excellent train connections and road network.

The region includes much of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, packed with an array of outdoor activities boasting stunning backdrops, and the city of Stirling is less than 30 minutes away by road. The city itself is ideal to explore on foot or by bike and offers the perfect mix of history and modernity. Nearby Clackmannanshire is home to the imposing Ochil Hills which dominate the landscape, while Falkirk is where you will find the magnificent Kelpies and an extensive canal network.

**Stirling** is a city which has witnessed some of the most dramatic events in Scottish history. Today, you can step back in time where ancient tales are brought back to life, all within a vibrant city.

The historic city of Stirling is surrounded by spectacular scenery which can be admired from Stirling Castle's esplanade, high above the city. Wander the cobbled streets of the Old Town, from the castle down to the city centre, where you will find an impressive food & drink offering, from a wee dram at a whisky bar to local produce at the monthly farmers' market. Nearby, savour local beers at Allanwater Brewhouse in Bridge of Allan or warming whisky at Deanston Distillery in Doune, before exploring one of the many walking routes such as Allan Water. Browse

independent boutiques in The Stirling Arcade as well as Bridge of Allan for the perfect gift to take home.

**Falkirk** is perhaps best known as the home of The Kelpies, housed in Helix Park. These 30 m high equestrian sculptures are a spectacular sight, both day and night, and are surrounded by cycle and walkways, including The Kelpies Trail. But there are many more reasons to visit the town of Falkirk and its surrounding area too!

Discover parts of the Antonine Wall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, at the Rough Castle Fort site or in the grounds of the impressive 14th century Callendar House, which has exhibitions of the Roman Empire and is free to enter. The cycle and path network in the area are excellent and connect many of the attractions in the area as well as the canal towpaths, which are widely accessible.

**Clackmannanshire** is close to the City of Stirling and although it is the smallest county in Scotland, it really packs a punch when it comes to outdoor adventure, thanks mainly to the dramatic and imposing Ochil Hills. They can be seen for miles around and are peppered with impressive gorges and waterfalls, all making for some impressive walks such as Dollar Glen. Climb the summit of Dumyat for spectacular views towards Stirling including the castle and National Wallace Monument. Explore wildlife havens including Gartmorn Dam and Black Devon Wetlands, where you can spot an array of birds in unspoilt landscapes.

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## DAY 1 - BEYOND STIRLING



**1**  
**Port of Menteith** – 15 miles from Stirling, this village started life in 1457 as a barony created by King James III, today it is popular with anglers due to its location by the Lake of Menteith. Take the ferry to the peaceful, ruined island priory of Inchmahome to experience Scotland's only lake.  
**01877 385294**  
[www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/inchmahome-priory](http://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/inchmahome-priory)



**2**  
**Lodge Forest Visitor Centre** – some say the café here has one of the best views in Scotland. This visitor centre is a great base for walks, such as the Waterfall Trail for all abilities, or you can admire red squirrels and osprey thanks to a live CCTV feed. Also onsite you will find Go Ape! where you can literally swing through the trees.  
**01877 382258**  
[thelodge@forestry.gov.uk](mailto:thelodge@forestry.gov.uk)  
[www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.forestry.gov.uk)



**3**  
**Loch Venachar** – 19 miles from Stirling, this fresh water loch stretches from Callander to Brig o' Turk and is an excellent fishing spot with the pristine waters populated by stocks of trout and pike. Sailing is also popular with the Loch Venachar Sailing Club hosting regular races and events from the end of March until October.  
**www.lochlomond-trossachs.org**



**4**  
**Ben A'an** – between Loch Katrine and Loch Achray, Ben A'an boasts spectacular views. The hill provides an easy walk and is therefore popular with families. From the top, see if you can spot the majestic Steamship Sir Walter Scott sailing on Loch Katrine below.  
**www.lochlomond-trossachs.org**



**5**  
**Callander** – 16 miles from Stirling this bustling tourist town is situated on the River Teith and is often described as the gateway to the Highlands. There are a number of popular walks in the area for visitors to explore. The beautiful Bracklinn Falls and the River Keltie have mesmerised people for generations, and to the west, footpaths and cycle tracks follow the old Callander to Oban railway line.

## DAY 2 - CITY OF STIRLING



**1**  
**Blair Drummond Safari and Adventure Park** – a short distance from Stirling, follow the safari drive to discover rhinos, lions and monkeys to name a few. Marvel at the bird of prey display as they swoop low above your head or the impressive sea lion display. Take a boat trip around Chimp Island or get up close to animals at the pets' farm.  
**01786 841456**  
[enquiries@blairdrummond.com](mailto:enquiries@blairdrummond.com)  
[www.blairdrummond.com](http://www.blairdrummond.com)



**2**  
**The Back Walk** – winding from the city centre, this path was built between 1724 and 1791 and is the oldest publicly maintained road in Scotland. Following the old city walls up to Stirling Castle, you will be rewarded with panoramic views in the shadows of the castle towering above, with plenty places to stop on the way up.  
**www.yourstirling.com/the-back-walk/**



**3**  
**The Peak** – this indoor sports complex is at the heart of the Stirling Sports Village and boasts a pool, ice rink and climbing wall as well as a gym and other facilities. The Peak also attracts international teams using the facility to train for world class competitions. Why not test your head for heights on the 11 metre climbing wall or take a leisurely swim?  
**01786 273555**  
[bookings@activestirling.org.uk](mailto:bookings@activestirling.org.uk)  
[www.the-peak-stirling.org.uk](http://www.the-peak-stirling.org.uk)



**4**  
**King's Park** – historically this park was used as the hunting ground for the Royal Court at Stirling. With the castle as a backdrop, today the park is becoming one of the city's most stunning events venues so make sure you check to see what is on. Or why not just relax in the 'Peace of Mind' garden, explore the pathways or simply admire the views of the city skyline and Ochil Hills.  
**www.my.stirling.gov.uk**



**5**  
**Cycle hire** – a great way to explore the area is by bike and there are cycle hire options across the region. In Stirling, start at the cycling hub at the railway station for useful tips and you can hire the shared-use Nextbikes found across the city. In Falkirk, use Bike&Go based at Falkirk High Railway Station where you could cycle from Falkirk to Linlithgow and leave the bike at the station there.

## DAY 3 - CLACKMANNANSHIRE AND FALKIRK AREA



**1**  
**Gartmorn Dam** – designated as a nationally important site of special scientific interest thanks to its rare pondweeds as well as migratory birds, this country park is a hidden gem for cycling, walking, horse riding, and bird watching. Make sure you keep your eyes peeled for otters or take a picnic to fully embrace the peaceful surroundings.  
**www.clacks.gov.uk/culture/gartmordam**



**2**  
**Alva Glen** – the Ochil Hills are peppered with impressive gorges and waterfalls which offer spectacular walks and with a little extra rain, are all the more impressive. Alva Glen boasts five waterfalls, including a hidden waterfall cascading into Smugglers' Cave. The glen was the centre of the region's historic textile industry and today you can still see remnants of an old dam and workshops.  
**www.walkhighlands.co.uk/fife-stirling/alva-glen.shtml**



**3**  
**Black Devon Wetlands** – this RSPB reserve gives you the chance to step into some unspoilt landscapes in an area of untouched wet grassland and wetland habitat. There is no visitor centre here, adding to the conserved landscape, but you can follow the nature trail to the viewing mound. Or follow the boardwalk to a distinctive viewing screen, all ensuring you get as close as possible, without disturbing the locals.  
**www.rspb.org.uk**



**4**  
**Helix Park** – located 14 miles from Stirling, the park is home to the magnificent Kelpies, two magnificent 30 m high horse head sculptures, designed by Andy Scott, are a true feat of engineering. Enjoy The Kelpie Experience with a guided tour or pop in to browse the gift shop and sample some tasty home baking or lunch, before exploring the miles of cycle and walking paths.  
**01324 590600**  
**www.thehelix.co.uk**



**5**  
**Wellsfield** – two miles south of Stirling is the adventure-packed Wellsfield Farm. There is plenty to experience from a farm park the kids (and big kids) will enjoy, to an equestrian centre and trout fishery, all on site. There is also a farm coffee shop serving delicious food, and of course tea and cake.  
**01324 822800**  
[enquiries@wellsfield.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wellsfield.co.uk)  
[www.wellsfield.co.uk](http://www.wellsfield.co.uk)

## DAY 4 - FALKIRK AREA



**1**  
**Scottish Segway Centre** – based at the Falkirk Wheel, hire a Segway to explore the towpaths along the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals, a little further and you will be rewarded with some great panoramic views. A guide will show you the best routes and secret paths to make the most of your adventure. On selected dates you can also find Segways at Helix Park where you can explore solo.  
**01324 430033**  
[www.scottishsegway.com](http://www.scottishsegway.com)



**2**  
**Callendar Estate** – within easy reach of Falkirk Town Centre, find an impressive network of walking, cycling and horse riding tracks. Mountain bikers are in for a treat with easy family routes like the Canada Trail or more challenging ones like the Auchengean Trail. Prefer to explore by foot? Follow in the footsteps of Bonnie Prince Charlie round Canada Field, also accessible by wheelchair.  
**01324 624236**  
[www.callendarestate.co.uk](http://www.callendarestate.co.uk)



**3**  
**John Muir Way** – this coast to coast route stretches 134 miles between Helensburgh in the west to Dunbar in the east and Muir's birthplace. The central sections of the route pass through Falkirk and the Antonine Wall, the north-western frontier of the Roman Empire. Rough Castle is not to be missed as it features the best-preserved fort and the tallest surviving portion of the Antonine Wall rampart.  
**www.antoninewall.org**



**4**  
**Canals** – the Forth & Clyde and Union canals are the most accessible in Scotland and a great place to explore, especially in the Year of Coast and Waters 2020. Book a canal holiday and sail past The Kelpies and experience the heights of the Falkirk Wheel, the world's only rotating boat lift, then explore the rest of the canal network taking you west towards Glasgow or east towards Edinburgh.  
**www.visitfalkirk.com**



**5**  
**Cloybank Estate** – this estate, eight miles from Falkirk, offers a wide variety of country sports including fishing, golf and one of the UK's top airgun ranges. Enjoy a break in the friendly café and the farm shop is filled with delicious local produce often sourced on site, such as fruit and vegetables as well as honey from their own beehive.  
**01324 841707**  
[www.cloybank.com](http://www.cloybank.com)

Please note some attractions have seasonal opening hours. Please check opening times with the attraction.

For more ideas and contacts go to [www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com](http://www.visitscotlandtraveltrade.com) or email [traveltrade@visitscotland.com](mailto:traveltrade@visitscotland.com)