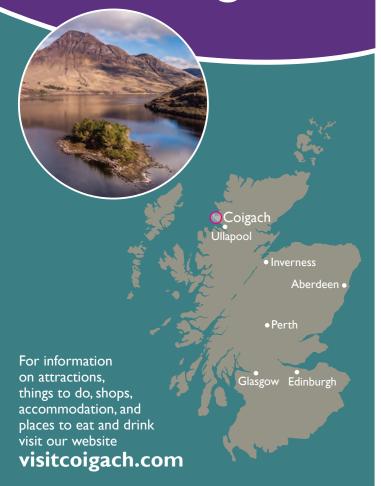
Visit Coigach



Emergency numbers

Assynt Medical Practice Ullapool Medical Practice Vets, Conanvet, Conan Bridge

01571 844755 01854 612015 01349 861203

With thanks to VisitCoigach members who made this publication possible.



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Mountains

The distinctive mountains of Stac Pollaidh (Stac Polly 613m below right), Cul Beg (769m), Sgurr an Fhidhleir (The Fiddler, 703m) and Ben More Coigaich (743m) rise steeply from the landscape appearing like solitary islands. Their ancient rock formations of Lewisian gneiss and Torridonian sandstone have influenced flora and fauna. Look out for mossy cyphel, dwarf cornel, cloudberry (below left), arctic bearberry and ancient fir clubmoss.

See map inside for mountain locations

It is no wonder that this incredible landscape is the only place in Scotland to hold two UNESCO designations. Not only is Coigach part of the North West Highlands Geopark that stretches north to Durness, it is also part of the Wester Ross Biosphere which extends down to Glen Elg and Kyle of Lochalsh.

Further information is available online at wrb.scot and nwhgeopark.com.



Beaches

Coigach and the Summer Isles are fringed with beautiful beaches. Some, including those around freshwater lochs are only revealed when exploring whilst others are clearly visible and accessible from the roadside.

Acheninver (below right), Badentarbet, Altandu, Reiff, Garvie Bay and Badenscallie are often combined with a coastal walk. Achnahaird (below left) with its wide expanse of sand, craggy rock pools and undulating dunes is the largest.



See map inside for beach locations

lust back from the shore amongst the dunes is the precious 'machair'. Grazing animals are removed from these sandy grasslands at the crucial time to allow flowers to bloom. In some places up to eight species of orchid can be found, with poetic names including 'lovely fragrant orchid', 'twayblade' and 'frog orchid'.



Coastal and hill walking routes offer a voyage of discovery for all tastes and abilities. There are coastal paths, circular walks, high level walks and climbing routes to explore.



See map inside for walk locations

The Coigach Geotrail is an award-winning trail which takes you on a series of geologically focused excursions around the peninsula.

Full details of the Geotrail and other walks are available online at visitcoigach.com.

You can also purchase a copy of the Walker's Guide to Coigach and Assynt in our local shops or online at nwhgeopark.com/shop.



Respect

Coigach is a vibrant living landscape, and we are proud to share it with you. As a visitor in Scotland, you are welcome to explore the land but please familiarise yourself with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code first online at outdooraccess-scotland.scot.

SCOTTISH OUTDOOR **ACCESS CODE**





In particular we ask that you keep motorised vehicles to constructed roads and ensure that dogs are kept under control around the livestock which graze freely across the peninsula.

Although we are part of the mainland, it can feel very much like an island here as there's just one road in and out. This road is our lifeline, and we use it for travelling to hospital appointments, work, school, you name it! If you see another vehicle coming up behind you, please pull into the next nearest passing place and give a wave. You're likely to be met with a grateful smile.

#Respect #Protect #Enjoy

Accommodation

Where ever you stay in Coigach you will enjoy coastal or mountain views. Whether you are there for a flying visit or extended period there is something for everyone. Luxury hotel and self-catering accommodation, glamping pods, lodges, cosy stone cottages and hostel facilities are all available to book. Combine with an area renowned for fresh local seafood and artisanal foods and crafts and you are on to a winner!





An Island of the Mainland

Welcome to the Coigach Peninsula

The Coigach Peninsula has a wild, wonderful, rich and diverse landscape.

It has one of the lowest population densities of Western Europe and yet you will feel a connection; with the landscape, elements, nature and community.

The area inspires a sense of space and freedom. Immense skies full of weather roll over the island-speckled sea and ancient hills. The sun and clouds play on the water and bare rocks with black gneiss, soft pink sandstone, white quartzite and lemony limestone creating a myriad of moods. The light and colours of sea and landscape change constantly throughout the day and with the seasons.

Deep dark lochs line the base of glacier-sculpted glens and when mirror-calm, reflect the majestic peaks around them. Amongst the hills and hummocks smaller freshwater lochans freckle the landscape and are lined with reeds and water lilies. The hillsides are full of micro-delights including ruby-and-emerald sphagnum moss; sundew, butterwort, bog asphodel and the nodding heads of cotton grass.

Everyone is welcome here to enjoy a wild adventure, be it with a local professional to guide you or to enjoy at your leisure. Gentle walks on well-made paths, thigh-burning hill climbs, fishing, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, paddle-boarding, sailing, kite-surfing, wild swimming, craft and geology trails are just some of the activities that await. Explore with binoculars, a camera lens, paint brush or sit peacefully; take time to breathe and be captivated by the surroundings of the Coigach Penninsula. There is nowhere else quite like it!



Coigach looks so distinctive thanks to its underlying rocks.

Our mountains, including Stac Pollaidh are all carved from Torridonian sandstone. A rock formed 1.2 billion years ago from river and lake sediments washed down from a long gone mountain chain. Once we were connected to North America, but when the Atlantic Ocean formed, we began to drift apart. Glaciers painted the Summer Isles and scoured 3-billion-year-old-gneiss smooth.

Today Coigach is part of the North West Highlands UNESCO Global Geopark. This status is awarded for geological heritage important to the world, but also because the local community manages this heritage for sustainable development. Visit Coigach has produced a geotrail to explore the peninsula's astonishing geology.

More information available online at **nwhgeopark.com**.





A glacially transported boulder known locally as the 'Piggy Rock'.

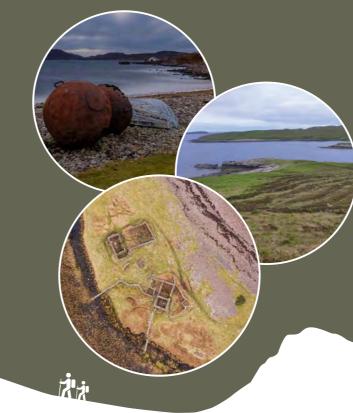
Can you see why?

An example of the communities sense of fun!

Archaeology

A rich and precious history is there to be discovered.

Dotted amongst the landscape, evidence that people have been living along the Coigach Penninsula for millennia. Pre-historic hut circles are abundant and an Iron Age Broch is sited at Achlochan. The area around Badentarbat features extensive lazy-beds used for arable cultivation with the remains of over 30 buildings and fanks left unpopulated since the Highland Clearances. Along the coast remnants of old fishing boats and salmon bothies hint at the previous occupants who once made a living from land and sea.



Night Sky

There are few darker night skies than in Coigach.

During the winter is the best time to gaze at an unimaginable canopy of stars, marvel at the northern lights or go for a walk in the moonlight.

In high summer the night sky resembles day, and you may have to remind yourself to go to bed!

The Wester Ross Biosphere arranges dark sky events each autumn. Book online at wrb.scot/sustainable-development/dark-skies-festival.



Social History

The people of Coigach are welcoming, entrepreneurial, creative and resilient.

The Coigach Community Hall and Achiltibuie Stores are at the heart of our community. The store is a hub for local information and the hall hosts an eclectic programme of events.

Fishing is still an important occupation along with other traditional crofting activities including livestock and vegetable production. Many also run and work in small scale tourism, off-croft activities and creative roles.

Gaelic, whilst not spoken as part of the everyday language, is still culturally embedded through music, song and place names.

It wasn't too long ago that the population of the area was five times what it is today; but emigration, the Highland Clearances and World Wars took their toll.

During those clearances in the 1800s a group of Coigach women successfully led a resistance movement disarming sheriff officers in order to prevent further evictions.

Find out more about our thriving social history online at candatrail.com/coigach.

There is also a free audio guide mobile phone app. You can download it at nwhgeopark.com/local-guide-to-coigachand-assynt/.





