

WHERE TO GO

SCOTLAND

Scotland's majestic scenery is a major draw for holidaying families, and, of course it's magnificent. However there's more to the country; fabulous, relatively uncrowded beaches, mysterious islands to explore, lots of outdoor activities, and exciting museums and art galleries.



RING OF BRODGAR - ORKNEY

PLAY

If you're a family of keen nature spotters, head to Glen Affric. Deep in the Highlands, it combines forests, lochs and mountains to spectacular effect. It's a wonderful place for walks. Leave your car behind, and tramp into

the countryside – it's like stepping into an oil painting. This is an area rich in wildlife; keep an eye out for deer, pine martens and otters frolicking in the lochs, and be sure to have a pair of binoculars handy to spot capercaillie, Scottish Crossbills, ospreys and buzzards. Perhaps you might get lucky, and spot a magnificent golden eagle.



GLEN AFFRIC



ROB ROY'S BATHTUB

Swimming in cold, fresh water is an experience that every child should have – a plunge into an outdoor pool, loch or stream is cooling, and immerses you in nature. Under Scotland's Outdoor Access code, as long as you follow basic, responsible guidelines, you are allowed free access to all inland waters. The Falls of Falloch, or

'Rob Roy's Bathtub' are a wonderful place to start your splashy adventures. The 9m-high falls tumble into a near-perfect plunge pond, great for older kids to jump into. For gentler swims, try Soldier's Leap near Pitlochry, or Cambus O' May, on the River Dee. Find many more suggestions for places to plunge at wildswimming.co.uk.

The third largest stone circle in Britain, the Ring of Brodgar, is situated on the largest Orkney Island, the Mainland (visitorkney.com). It's stunningly atmospheric, and part of a really magical landscape. Unlike Stonehenge, visitors can walk around the stones, touch them and explore. Orkney is a welcoming, quiet place, great for wildlife spotting (look for puffins and seals), and with a feeling of calm. The islands have some of the most spectacular beaches in Scotland; stay on Mainland to visit Sandwick, Scapa Bay and Stromness, or take a ferry to Sanday to take in its white-sanded, unspoilt bays. Wild camping is legal in Scotland; why not stay where the whim takes you?