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# SCOTTISH MTB RIDE GUIDE

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Delivered By



Developing  
Mountain Biking  
in Scotland

In Partnership With

**DECATHLON**  
.co.uk

# WHY MOUNTAIN BIKING IN SCOTLAND?

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We might be biased, but one of the best ways to enjoy Scotland's unbeatable scenery, and remote wilderness, is by bike. Mountain biking is a super fun sport, and here in Scotland, we are spoiled for choice, with trails for all abilities right across the country.



Here are our favourite reasons to hit the trails:

## **It's great fun**

Relive (or experience) your childhood, mucking about in the woods, getting wet and muddy!

## **It's excellent for your well-being**

That feeling of being outside in nature, coupled with the endorphin rush of a speedy downhill run or discovering a hidden beauty spot, will leave you grinning from ear to ear – but be warned, it's addictive!

## **It gets you off the beaten track**

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Scotland's outdoors, whether that's exploring one of our world-famous trail centres or adventuring further afield. If you have the essential skills and equipment, exploring Scotland's wilder side on two wheels is incredible. We have some of the best access rights in Europe, supported by the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) – so get out and enjoy it (responsibly!).

## **Plenty of options to explore**

Holidays in Scotland are fantastic. Take your bike, park your car and get out and about with the family. There are so many adventures to be had.





# GETTING PREPARED FOR THE TRAILS

## Kit List

Having the right kit will keep you safe, comfortable and ensure that you enjoy your ride. These helpful lists from Decathlon will keep you right.

1. Bike
2. Helmet
3. Gloves
4. Shorts
5. Jersey
6. Jacket
7. Glasses

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③



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## Trail Centre/Local Loops Kit List

1. Hydration Pack
2. First Aid Kit
3. Windproof Jacket
4. Bike Repair Kit
5. Inner Tube
6. Trail Snacks

Exploring further? You will  
also need the following:

- Larger Rucksack
- Down Jacket
- Waterproof Jacket
- Compass
- Map
- Shock Pump
- 2 Inner Tubes
- Spare Brake Pads
- Emergency Blanket
- Chain Links
- Safety Whistle
- Tick Removal Tool

①



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All products shown on the kit list are  
available in-store and online.

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# KNOW THE CODE, RIDE RESPONSIBLY & BE NICE

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Mountain biking in Scotland is world-class—with a great network of paths & trails, fantastic purpose-built trail centres, an outstanding natural environment and some of the most progressive access rights in the world.

By equipping yourself with the knowledge and understanding to explore this amazing country in a safe and responsible manner, you are playing your part to respect, protect and enjoy Scotland's outdoors.

Responsible access is a term you have probably heard and is the cornerstone of Scottish access rights. As users of the great outdoors, it is essential that we act responsibly. By respecting others and learning how to share paths and trails, we can promote mountain biking as a responsible and respectful activity.

Guidance on how to behave responsibly is outlined in the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).

The three fundamental principles of the Code are:

- take responsibility for your actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment

**Do The Ride Thing** is a guide that interprets the key points within the Code relevant to mountain biking. It also provides sound advice on behaving in a range of situations that you are likely to face when biking in Scotland's outdoors.

Do the Ride Thing is relevant to mountain biking on local paths and trails, on routes at purpose-built trail centres and natural trails, including those extending into remote countryside areas. The guide is aimed at all-mountain bikers from families and beginners right through to experienced riders, and we recommend that you have a read and familiarise yourself—know before you go!

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**“I used to spend hardly any time route planning, but the more I got into mountain biking, the more I realised that planning my routes to suit the conditions meant I had even more fun out on the trails!”**





© Ross Bell

## Essential things to think about before going for a ride



### Check the weather conditions

In Scotland, the weather can change very quickly, and it is not unusual to encounter rain, sleet, snow, wind and sunshine - sometimes all on the same day! It is important to be prepared for anything on the trail and to check the weather forecast before you go.



### Select a route

Being a responsible mountain biker, it helps to think about the environment you will be riding in. Good planning will increase the likelihood of you enjoying your day's mountain biking. It is helpful to be aware of different land uses and their management needs & activities so you can plan your route accordingly.



### Know your route escape options and have a Plan B

Look at your route and try to work out where you could take an alternative route or head back if:

- the trails are too wet/obstructed, e.g. fallen trees
- there are land management operations that have to be avoided
- the trails are being used for outings/ events
- the weather deteriorates



### Parking

If you are using your car to get to your route, try to decide on an appropriate car parking location before setting off. When you park your vehicle, it is important to follow on-site instructions so you do not cause any damage or create an obstruction.

# PLACES TO RIDE

# INTRO TO TRAIL

# CENTRES

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If you're new to mountain biking, it's best to start at a trail centre, where you'll often find toilets, showers, changing facilities, bike wash and a welcoming café. Some even have an on-site bike shop for last-minute spares and bike hire. Trail centres are purpose-built facilities, paths and trails which have been specifically designed and managed for mountain biking.

Most centres have graded trails that follow a standard UK trail grading system. If you're

just starting out, stay on the easy (green), and moderate (blue) graded trails. You'll be ready for the red, black and orange-graded trails as your skills improve.

At trail centres, you will encounter lots of fun features (berms, drops, jumps, skinnies) designed to put a smile on your face and test your balance and skill. Types and difficulty of features will differ depending on the grade of the trail.





## Things to think about when riding trail centres—other users



### Walkers

Access rights and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code still apply on purpose-built trails. The promotion and management of purpose-built mountain bike trail centres mean that walkers should be aware of the presence of bikers and be ready to give way on these trails. You should, however, still be in control, and if approaching walkers (and their dogs) you should:

1. Slow down
2. Make sure they have seen you (give a friendly 'Hello')
3. If safe to do so, continue on your way
4. If not, wait for them to move out of the way and then carry on
5. Keep smiling



### Other Mountain Bikers

When you encounter other mountain bikers on the trail, you should:

1. Be in control
2. When approaching a slower rider, keep your distance until they are aware of you. Call left or right to let them know which side you are overtaking and overtake when it is safe to do so
3. When a faster rider comes up behind you, don't be intimidated. Relax and look for a convenient spot where you can move to the side of the trail, and they can overtake. Listen for a shout of left or right, which lets you know what side they are overtaking on.

## Other things to consider at trail centres



### Land Management Operations

Remember that trail centres are often working environments (e.g. commercial forests). It is important to respect all reasonable advice/signage—you may want to alter your route and check relevant websites beforehand for land management operations.



### Skidding

Locking up your brake means more trail maintenance, and more maintenance means less money for improved trails—what would you prefer?



### Litter

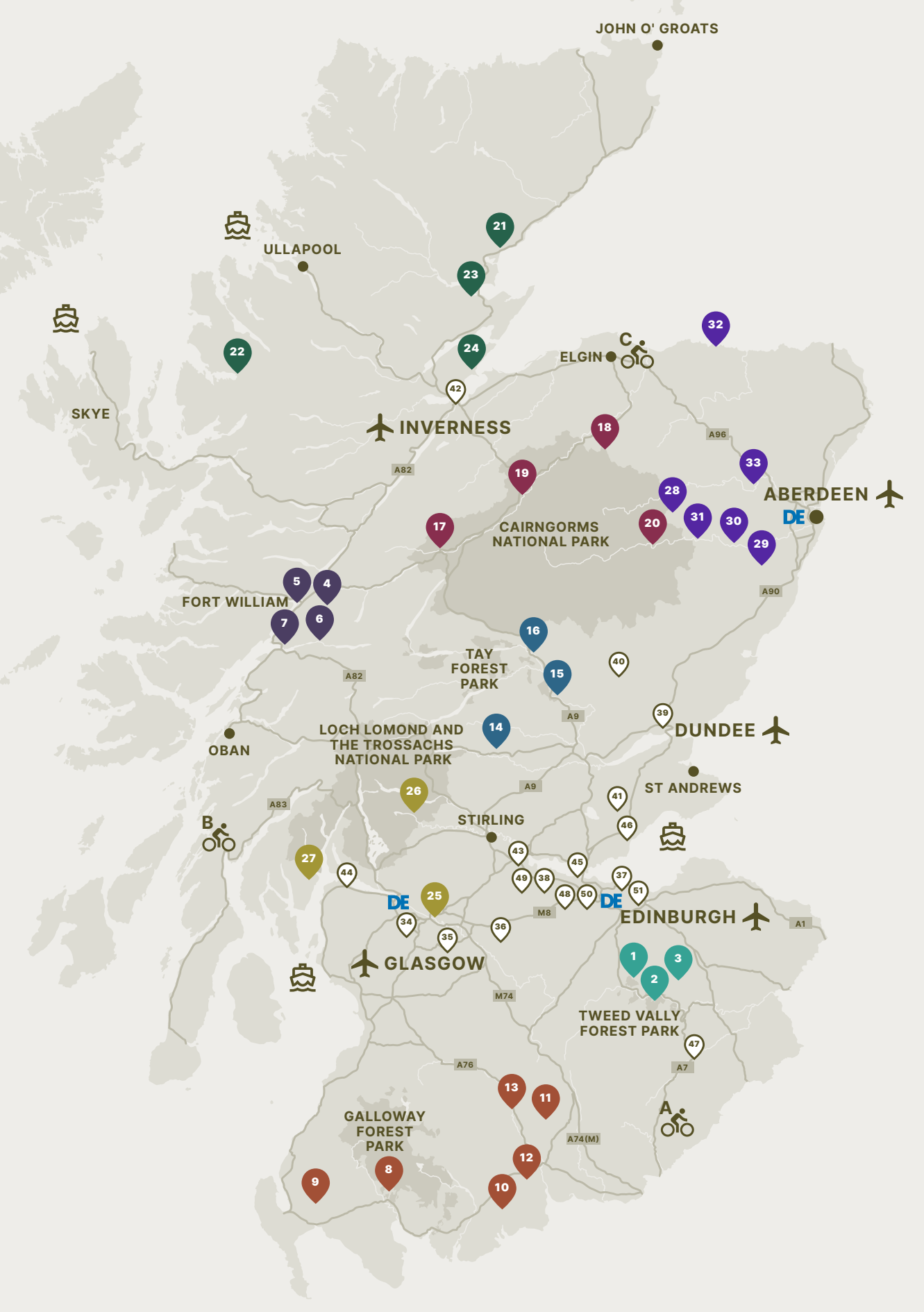
Take your litter away with you—let's face it, rubbish really does make us and our trails look, well, rubbish!



### Parking

On many sites, a parking charge may be the only income source available to reinvest in trail maintenance and development. Visiting a trail centre is good value, so do your bit by sticking a few pounds in the machines.

**“I grew up riding the trail centres of Innerleithen and Glentress, working my way up from the easy (green) to the extreme (orange). Every stage was as enjoyable as the next, and I would recommend them to anyone!”**



JOHN O' GROATS



ULLAPOOL

21

23

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SKYE



ELGIN

24



INVERNESS

42

A82

A96

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK

18

19

ABERDEEN

DE



A90

FORT WILLIAM

5

4

7

6

16

TAY FOREST PARK

15

40

LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK

14

OBAN

DUNDEE



39

A9

A9

ST ANDREWS



A83

27

44

STIRLING

43

49

38

45

48

50

37

51

DE

34

35

36

M8

DE

EDINBURGH



A1

GLASGOW



M74

TWEED VALLY FOREST PARK

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2

3

47

A7



GALLOWAY FOREST PARK

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11

12

10

9

8

A74(M)



# A WORLD-CLASS TRAIL NETWORK

Key

-  Airport
-  Decathlon Store
-  Port

Tweed Valley

- 1 Glentress
- 2 Innerleithen DH
- 3 Enduro zones

Fort William & Lochaber

- 4 Nevis Range
- 5 World Cup DH
- 6 Kinlochleven
- 7 Glencoe

Dumfries & Galloway

- 8 Kirroughtree
- 9 Glentrool
- 10 Dalbeattie
- 11 Ae
- 12 Mabie
- 13 Drumlanrig Castle

Perthshire

- 14 Comrie Croft
- 15 Dunkeld & Birnam
- 16 Pitlochry

Cairngorms

- 17 Laggan Wolftrax
- 18 Glenlivet
- 19 Strathspey
- 20 Ballater

North Highlands

- 21 Golspie
- 22 Torridon
- 23 Balblair
- 24 Learnie Red Rock

Glasgow, Loch Lomond & Trossachs

- 25 Cathkin Braes
- 26 Aberfoyle
- 27 Dunoon

Aberdeenshire

- 28 Tarland
- 29 Durris
- 30 Banchory
- 31 Aboyne
- 32 DHFarm (Portsoy)
- 33 Pitfichie

Outlying Trail Centres

- A Newcastleton
- B Firetower Trails, Lochgilphead
- C Moray Monster Trails

Urban Trails

- 34 Pollok Park
- 35 Whitelee
- 36 Wishaw
- 37 SKELF
- 38 Beecraigs
- 39 Dundee
- 40 Alyth
- 41 Lochore Meadows
- 42 Inverness
- 43 Larbert High
- 44 Rankin Park (Greenock)
- 45 Bo'ness
- 46 Middleden MTB & Gallatown, Kirkcaldy
- 47 Hawick
- 48 Craigs Park (Livingston)
- 49 Bridgend Park
- 50 Fraser Park (Pumpherston)
- 51 Jack Kane Sports Centre

# RIDE HIGHLIGHTS SOUTH OF SCOTLAND

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## 📍 Tweed Valley—Glentress

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Regarded by many as one of Europe's best trail centres, Glentress is the jewel in the 7stanes crown and only an hour by car south of Edinburgh. You'll find a great range of green and blue-graded trails here. Family tuition is great value, and you can book a full or half-day. Private tuition and tailored group sessions can also be arranged.

There's plenty of parking and an Alpine Bikes shop with bike hire. Call into the Peel Café for some home-baking, or why not make a weekend of it? There's plenty of bike-friendly accommodation next to the centre and nearby in Peebles.



## 📍 Dumfries & Galloway—Kirkcubright

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Another of the world-class 7stanes sites spread across the south of Scotland, Kirkcubright is the gateway centre to Galloway Forest Park—the UK's largest forest park.

Located around an hour west of Dumfries, 15 minutes away from the beautiful Solway Coast, and 10 mins outside Newton Stewart, the trails here include a skills area ideal for building confidence. The green-graded Bargaly Wood trail and the blue-graded trail (with options of a shorter or longer route) are both perfect for beginners and families.

There's a full range of facilities here to ensure you have a great day out.



# RIDE HIGHLIGHTS

## CENTRAL SCOTLAND



### 📍 Glasgow, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park—Aberfoyle

In the heart of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, you will find Aberfoyle. The home of Gravelfoyle. Visitors are treated to way-marked trails, stunning scenery, bike shops and cafés, and a vibrant riding scene.

Within a 12 mile radius of the village, you will be treated to 200km of perfect forest roads and trails for all abilities, making this destination one of the best places in the UK for gravel bike riding.

There are so many other options within the National Park too. With something for everyone, you will not be disappointed and will want to return to explore further.



### 📍 Perthshire—Comrie Croft

Comrie Croft, in west Perthshire, is a great option for beginners and easy to access from the central belt. All the facilities you'll need for a short mountain biking break, including accommodation, are right here. The kids will love it, too, as they can hit the Skills Park before breakfast and stay all day if they want!

Book an overnight stay in one of their glamping Kåtas, toast some marshmallows on an open fire and don't miss the home baking in the Tea Garden.

# RIDE HIGHLIGHTS

# NORTH SCOTLAND

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## 📍 Lochaber—Nevis Range

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A round of the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup has taken place here since 2002, but Nevis Range is not just for gravity-fuelled downhillers!

Head for the Witch's Trails and warm up on the skills loop before trying the Cats Eyes green-graded trail—a nice wide route with easy, roll-over features and wide berms. After that, it's on to the Broomstick Blue, Voodoo and Blue Adder blue-graded routes. This summer, the Nevis Range will be opening the longest blue-graded trail in the country! Visit Outdoor Capital UK for information on other areas to ride and activities.



## 📍 The Cairngorms National Park—Badenoch and Strathspey

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Around the communities of Badenoch and Strathspey, there is a whole host of family-friendly riding options available. Right from Laggan through Aviemore up to Granttown-on-Spey, the pine forests and beautiful winding tracks of the area provide an opportunity to immerse yourself in nature as you meander through ancient woodlands on two wheels. There are also excellent bike-friendly facilities and businesses that are well used to visiting cyclists.

Want a step up from the forest trails? A visit to Laggan Wolftrax or Glenlivet Mountain Bike Trail Centres is an absolute must. Family-friendly, both centres include fantastic cafés and trails for steady progression if required.



# RIDE HIGHLIGHTS

## NORTH SCOTLAND



© Scotty Laughland

### ◆ Aberdeenshire

Throughout the Dee and Don River Valleys there is an abundance of riding opportunities to suit all abilities. Ancient woodlands and stunning hillsides provide the backdrop to an extensive network of mixed use paths and tracks which open up opportunities to explore the stunning landscape and catch sight of some of Scotland's unique wildlife.

Tarland Trails and Aboyne Bike Park, easily linked by the Tarland Way cycle route, are purpose-built, family-friendly facilities with graded trails to develop skills and have a fun day out.

Those looking to push themselves further can head to Pitfichie Trail Centre which contains a mix of machine-built and hand-built enduro trails and the legendary granite-filled DH tracks.



© 57 Media

### ◆ The North Highlands—Learnie Red Rock

The north of Scotland has some great mountain biking on offer. Learnie Red Rock near Inverness is a fantastic family-friendly trail centre with fun trails for a range of abilities. Hailed as a hidden gem, it has 16km of high quality trails and spectacular views. With forest roads, green, blue and black-graded single-track trails, as well as orange-graded bike park and dirt jump areas, a visit to Learnie will not disappoint.





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**Developing  
Mountain Biking  
in Scotland**



SHOP OVER 70 SPORTS IN-STORE & ONLINE

