

Family values

The summer holidays will be upon us in the blink of an eye, so if you're looking to head off with your brood and make memories while the sun shines you might just be inspired by these family-friendly breaks



Balnagore



Plockton Inn

BY THE BOOTLAND FAMILY FROM ROSLIN

Sitting in the farmhouse garden at Balnagore with only the sound of ewes and their lambs calling each other for company, gazing down the long gorse-lined driveway across the sea to Kintyre it's easy to feel at peace until the dog and son come barrelling outside to enjoy the garden.

Balnagore is a charming 19th-century farmhouse. Sleeping up to 11 guests, there's plenty of space for extended families. The garden is secure for duggs and bairns, allowing us parents to relax and unwind. The house has two sitting rooms, both with open fireplaces. One takes in that stunning view and the other is where the WiFi router is situated so perfect for teens. We loved the fact that this house retains shedloads of traditional charm despite being incredibly well-equipped and comfy. It felt a little like visiting your dear old granny's house in the country.

Situated on the west coast of Arran, by Machrie Moor, we took an evening walk to the atmospheric standing stones. Machrie Bay is a five-minute stroll from the house and is the perfect spot to watch the sunset. We explored the island and visited the lovely beach at Sannox and took a wander and a dip in beautiful Glen Rosa before enjoying delicious pizza and ice cream from The Parlour in Brodick.

This was our family's first visit to Arran and in the wake of the ferry crisis I had had doubts about whether we'd reach our destination. But our journey went smoothly and we will be eternally grateful for the memories we made at Balnagore.

BY THE BROWN FAMILY FROM ALFORD

On the few occasions we have time off we like to enjoy somewhere with great accommodation, food and staff, a change of scenery and something to do. Plockton Inn certainly fulfilled our wishes. Plockton, just off the NC500, is well placed for trips to Skye and the Outer Hebrides.

The inn consists of three separate buildings, all within a stone's throw of each other. Sleeping in Sorley's House, having breakfast in The Haven and dinner in the inn provided adventure for the grandchildren. We particularly like visiting such places off season, but there is something magical about Plockton all year round.

Special ales were on tap in the dog-friendly bar however we enjoyed the attention to ensuring that children were catered for in the dining room. There were colouring activities and word searches while head chef, Karl Sutton prepared the most amazing dishes with fresh, local produce with lots for seafood connoisseurs.

There are 25 rooms at the inn, some are pet-friendly making it the ideal centre for walking, cycling, pony treks, boat trips, visiting Eilean Donan, The Croft Cafe, folk evenings and spotting Highland cattle. Paul Arcari is at the helm of the inn and engaged with everyone visiting in a friendly manner. He suggested we try travelling to Plockton from Inverness by train and we have already booked our next visit when we will board the train for an even more relaxing and scenic journey with the family.



ARRAN HOLIDAY COTTAGES, BALNAGORE MOSS ESTATE, ARRAN KA27 8DY
www.arran-holidaycottages.co.uk
 From £650 a week.



INNES STREET, PLOCKTON IV52 8TW
plocktoninn.co.uk
 From £175 B&B for two people sharing a room.



Pitlochry Hydro Hotel

BY THE RUSSELL/GELTSTHORPE FAMILY FROM ALLOA
 Our recent stay at the Pitlochry Hydro Hotel situated in the picturesque town of Pitlochry was a delightful experience. The hotel exudes a charm that appeals to adults and children, making it an excellent choice for families. The family room was spacious with a double and queen bed, a seating area with table, large TV and ensuite which included a bathtub. Cots were available on request. One of the highlights of our stay was the variety of activities. A swimming pool with a sauna and jacuzzi, a pool room and a selection of games. The lounge and garden were perfect for unwinding after a day of exploring. The hotel's proximity to attractions like the salmon ladder, Pitlochry Festival Theatre, local independent shops, the Highland Wildlife Park and surrounding mountains meant we were not short of things to do. In fact we need to book another stay to see more of them.

The hotel restaurant offered diverse menus including an à la carte, table d'hôtel and kid's menu, which our son loved, all at an affordable price. Breakfast was a treat for the whole family. Our son was thrilled by the selection of cereals, fresh fruit and pastries while we enjoyed the traditional Scottish breakfast including haggis. The staff were exceptional and made us feel welcomed from arrival. With its excellent amenities, friendly staff, and a wealth of activities the hotel ensures a memorable stay for families.



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Cobleland Campsite Safari Tent

BY THE STRATHDEE CONNACHAN FAMILY FROM EDINBURGH

Cobleland Campsite is two miles south of Aberfoyle in the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. Our family and dogs arrived to a warm welcome from the owner, who explained that the safari tents are new this season. They are located in the woodland area, nestled amongst the native trees offering a peaceful setting.

On approach the safari tents look very impressive with large balconies with seating, a fire pit and a great outdoor cooking area which included everything you could possibly need: mini fridge, kettle, toaster, electric hob, crockery and pans. On entering the tent the first impression was that it was spacious. There was a triple bunk, king-size bed, sofa and storage. Very close by were the exceptionally clean and modern toilet and shower facilities.

Additions that made the campsite unique were the 'Coull Beans' coffee caravan. There was also 'The Stirling Pizza Company' that arrives on a Saturday evening offering a range of delicious pizza, including gluten-free bases.

From the campsite there are a multitude of walking and cycle trails, we chose the one following the river into Aberfoyle. Located close by is the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park or for the more adventurous there is a tree top aerial adventure course with dual zip line. Cobleland Campsite safari tents are the ideal getaway for families, looking to spend some quality time together in a beautiful setting.



**STATION ROAD,
 COBLELAND,
 GARTMORE
 FK8 3RR
 www.cobleland
 campsite.co.uk**
 From £125 per
 night.

Location



- 1 **Arran Holiday Cottages - Balnagore**
Tel: 07887 638069 / 01763 284034
- 2 **Plockton Inn**
Tel: 01796 472666
- 3 **Pitlochry Hydro Hotel**
Tel: 01796 472666
- 4 **Cobleland Campsite Safari Tents**
Tel: 01877 382392



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