



Cycling



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CYCLING IN AYRSHIRE & ARRAN

Welcome to this beautiful part of Scotland.

Opportunities to explore and experience Ayrshire's great outdoors are vast and varied and what better way to do it than on 2 wheels! With stunning scenery, coastal towns, rolling countryside and a rich heritage to discover en route, Ayrshire in south west Scotland really does offer exciting cycling opportunities whatever your interests and ability. Add to this unique island adventures on Arran and Great Cumbrae and you'll quickly realise that you are spoiled for choice when deciding which route to follow.

The diverse landscapes of Ayrshire, Arran and Great Cumbrae provide cycling opportunities covering country roads, waterside paths, forest tracks and coastal routes. The region is home to some challenging and rewarding cycling routes for the true enthusiast and just as many options for a more leisurely cycle for a family day out and for those that don't fancy an uphill struggle!

As you explore the many miles of Ayrshire & Arran by pedal power you can cover just as many years of the region's rich history at the array of magnificent castles, intriguing museums, inspiring country houses and historical sites.

Wherever you go you can be sure to enjoy some fantastic places to stop off relax and enjoy something to eat and a refreshing drink. Almost every town, village and visitor attraction you explore will have a café, inn or tearoom tempting you in to sample their delicious local produce. Or you might choose to take a picnic and enjoy the views whilst eating your lunch. The choice is yours.

The routes we have chosen are intended to give a taste of the variety of cycling this area has to offer - from islands, coastal routes, inland lochs, urban centres and rural villages. We hope this booklet will inspire you to get out there and enjoy this special part of Scotland.

Extensive efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, however it is recommended that visitors contact venues.

GRADING

The grades that are shown for each route in this guide are based on a simple three-grade system: Easy – Moderate – Hard.

That's not to say that everyone will find our Easy routes easy or Hard routes hard. Everything is relative. In general the Hard routes are harder than the Moderate routes, and the Moderate routes are harder than the Easy ones.

Steepness was the main factor in awarding a harder grade to a route, but conditions on the day could have an even greater influence. A route graded Easy could be incredibly hard on a windy day for instance.

As with any grading system, the grade is just to give an indication of the relative difficulty compared to the other routes in the guide.

The times given in this guide are intended as a rough estimate of how long it might take a rider to cycle the route with the occasional stop to look at the views and take a rest. Someone sprinting round the route on a racing cycle might take less than half the estimated time, whilst someone on a mountain bike who stops to look at every point of interest along the way might take two or three times longer.

OS LANDRANGER MAP REFERENCES

The route descriptions also include the relevant OS Landranger map number. This refers to the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map series. This is the most commonly used map for most outdoor activities in the UK and is ideal for navigating the cycle routes in this guide. The routes in this guide are covered by map numbers: 63, 69, 70, 71, 76 and 77.

CYCLE HIRE

This guide gives details of places close to the start of the route where you might hire a cycle. There may well be other hire outlets available, and some hotels and Bed & Breakfasts may have cycles that residents can use.

ROUTE 1

GREAT CUMBRAE - A LAP OF THE ISLAND

Distance: 10.5 miles / 17 kilometres

Grade: Easy

Terrain: Flat, quiet road. Stays at sea level

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 63

Start/Finish: Millport

THE ROUTE

They call Great Cumbrae the Island of 1,000 Bicycles. Once you've been there you will see why. This beautiful little island in the Firth of Clyde really is a fantastic place to go for a cycle ride and the good news is you don't need to take your own cycle, there are several cycle hire shops on the island, so hiring couldn't be easier.

The lap of the island is one cycle route where you really can't get lost. Keep the sea on your right-hand-side, follow the road in front of you and stop when you've completed a full circuit of the island. Simple!

Your biggest decision is going to be whether you go clockwise or anti-clockwise around the island. The route described here goes anti-clockwise, but it's just as easy to go the other way.

If you take your own cycle to Great Cumbrae then you will start and finish your lap of the island from the ferry terminal, whereas anyone hiring a cycle from Millport will start and finish from the hire shop's front door. The route described here starts and finishes in Millport.

Take a moment as you cycle along the Millport seafront to stop and admire the view out into Millport Bay. A mile or so beyond the bay you will see the neighbouring island of Little Cumbrae, affectionately known as Wee Cumbrae. Unlike the green and fertile Great Cumbrae, Little Cumbrae is a rough and rocky island bearing more of a resemblance to a wild Hebridean island.

Also, keep an eye out for a crocodile as you cycle around Millport Bay. No, not a real one, but the famous "crocodile rock". A form of face painting on a rock!

As you leave Millport behind, you will pass the Marine Station on your left-hand-side. The centre houses a museum and aquarium that are well



worth a visit. From there you will head up the east coast of the island with views across to the Scottish mainland, including an impressive view across the water to Largs.

A short distance before reaching the ferry terminal you will pass SportScotland national centre for watersports. Take a few minutes to watch the boats out on the water as you pass by.

After rounding the north end of the island you will head south down the west coast with fine views across to the Isle of Bute and jagged mountains of Arran. Take some time out to enjoy one of the beaches on the west coast or wander along the path to view the Gowk Stone above Fintry Bay. This is one of several such stones in Scotland, with the name meaning "stone of the cuckoo or fool" in Scots.

The road eventually loops around the south west corner of the island and back into Millport to your journey's end. You can sprint round Great Cumbrae in an hour or take half a day over a relaxing cycle ride with a number of interesting stops. The choice is yours.

SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Find out more about life on the island at the Museum of the Cumbraes within Garrison House on the Millport seafront between Clifton Street and College Street. **T. 01475 531 381**
www.garrisonhousecumbrae.org.uk

Something else to do as you cycle round the island is to follow the Sensory Trail.

www.cumbraesensorytrail.com Visit the five Sensory Point Markers and learn more about the island and its wildlife.

Did you know that Millport is home to Britain's smallest cathedral? Take a detour up College Street in Millport to see the Cathedral of the Isles.

TRANSPORT

Largs railway station is about 200 metres from the ferry terminal.

The Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Largs to Cumbrae takes about 10 minutes.

Local bus 320 from the ferry terminal to Millport.

CYCLE HIRE

Bremner's. **T. 01475 530 309**

Mapes. **T. 01475 530 444**

www.mapesmillport.co.uk

On Your Bike. **T. 01475 530 300**

www.onyourbikemillport.com

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

Take to the roads through the middle of the island to create an extra loop.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

Take the B896 out of Millport as if you are going to cycle round the island in an anti-clockwise direction, but instead of going all the way to the ferry terminal, turn left onto the B899 near Cumbrae the SportScotland national centre for watersports and cut back to Millport.

ROUTE 2

ARRAN - LAMLASH AND WHITING BAY LOOP

Distance: 11 miles / 17.5 kilometres

Grade: Hard

Terrain: Mixture of forest roads and tracks, with a section on the main road round the island

Time: 2 hours 45 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 69

Start/Finish: New Pier car park in Lamlash

THE ROUTE

From the New Pier car park cycle along the Lamlash seafront with the sea on your left-hand-side. After about 1500 metres you will reach a sharp left hand bend on the main road. Take the minor road into Monamore Glen which goes straight on at a signpost showing Slidderly via Ross 8.

Follow the Ross road for less than 800 metres then turn left into the Forestry Commission's Dyemill car park. Cross the bridge and then climb steeply up the main forest road. Ignore any turn offs and stay on the main forest road until you eventually emerge onto the high level road heading south eastwards at a height of just under 150 metres. Recent felling has opened up the views on this section and on a good day you should clearly see Holy Island and the coast of mainland Ayrshire to your left.

The forest road undulates along this section and presents some very pleasant riding, but beware of one particular steep section that might take you by surprise.

Occasional cycle signs are placed along this forest road to waymark the main route through the forest, but you will eventually pick up on signs for Whiting Bay, your target destination when you leave the forest. The second sign for Whiting Bay takes you down a narrower forest track, so you will need to concentrate and keep hold of your brakes as you start to descend.

A sign pointing to the right leads to Glenashdale Falls, which are well worth a visit, so build in time to make this slight detour.

Just before reaching Whiting Bay there are some very tight bends on a steep section of road, so be very careful at this point. This is no place for soggy brakes!

Turn left onto the Whiting Bay seafront and pass the various shops along the way. After leaving the village the A841 climbs back up to a height of about 80 metres before dropping back to the Monamore Glen junction, where you turn right and head back into Lamlash.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

The ferry to Holy Island leaves from the pier beside the start and finish point for this cycle route. Tel: 01770 601 100 www.holyisland.org/index/getting-here This ferry service runs from April to the end of October and is tide and weather dependent, so may not run on certain days.

There are many art galleries and craft workshops around the island, including Arran Art Gallery in Lamlash. T. 01770 700 250 www.arranartgallery.com

If you arrive on Arran at Brodick then you may want to visit Brodick Castle, Garden and Country Park. It is unique in being the only island country park in Britain. The castle offers 800 years of history, a fabulous collection of valuable artefacts, and stunning views over Brodick Bay to the Ayrshire coast.

T 0844 493 2152 / www.nts.org.uk/Property/Brodick-Castle-Garden-and-Country-Park/

TRANSPORT

Ardrossan Harbour railway station.

Caledonian MacBrayne ferry from Ardrossan to Brodick. There are also ferry services to Lochranza on Arran from Claonaig and Tarbert.

Local bus 323 from Brodick to Lamlash.

CYCLE HIRE

Cycle hire is available in Brodick from:

Arran Bike Hire T. 01770 302 377

www.arranbikehire.com

Arran Adventure T. 01770 302 234

www.auchrannie.co.uk/pamper-play/mountainbikehire.html

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

At the second signpost for Whiting Bay, where the descent on the narrower track begins, it is possible to go straight on and follow signs for Kilmory. There are two road routes for the return from Kilmory, one via the A841 (coast road) and the other over The Ross (inland road to Lamlash). These routes will add another 12 to 14 miles or 19 to 22.5 kilometres onto the described route.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

Starting and finishing from the Dyemill car park will take about 3 kilometres off the length of this route, but it will mean starting on a steep climb without any warm-up. Alternatively, go as far as you want along the top forest road then turn back and return by your outward route. This will avoid returning on the A841.

OTHER ROUTES

The Arran Bike Club website has a list of routes on Arran www.arranbikeclub.com/routes and the Visitor Information Centre in Brodick has further useful information including suggested cycle routes.

ROUTE 3

DALRY – RURAL ROADS TO THE SOUTH OF DALRY

Distance: 7.5 miles / 12 kilometres

Grade: Moderate

Terrain: Through Dalry then quiet country roads

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 69

Start/Finish: Dalry railway station

THE ROUTE

The route described here starts and finishes at Dalry railway station.

Turn left onto the road as you leave Dalry station and head downhill to cross the bridge over the River Garnock. This brings you to a junction with the main A737 road where you turn left to head into Dalry.

Turn left at the traffic lights and leave the centre of Dalry on Townend Street. Pass the Lidl supermarket on the right, then turn right at a signpost for Saltcoats 6. After a set of traffic lights for a narrow bridge, the road climbs steeply for about a mile.

Near the top of the hill take an unmarked left turn at a roadside farm and small sign in the hedge saying Tower. The next section of road is quiet, bumpy, rutted, undulating, and at times steep. All of this rural riding and eye jiggling sensation is worth the effort when you reach the viewpoint at the top of the hill. Time to take a breather and promise yourself that you must get fitter!

As you head downhill you reach a left-right jiggle in the road, followed by a left turn at a row of cottages – Smithstone Terrace.

When you reach the main A737, turn right and after about 100 metres turn left at the sign for Dalgarnen Mill. The mill is well worth a visit (see Somewhere to visit).

As you leave the mill, turn left and continue along this road for about a kilometre then turn sharp left at a junction and pass underneath a disused railway bridge.

You are now on a very pleasant road that is designated as part of the National Cycle Network Route 7. Follow this road for 3 kilometres of very enjoyable cycling. It really is a joy to ride.

Immediately after a small bridge there is an unmarked turn off to the left. Take this left turn and after 400 metres pass Stoophill Farm on your left. The road then drops into Dalry and the railway station is on the left.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

The Museum of Ayrshire Country Life and Costume at Dalgarven Mill is at the halfway point on this route, so makes a very interesting and pleasant break in the journey. T. 01294 552 448
www.dalgarvenmill.org.uk

TRANSPORT

Train to Dalry station.

CYCLE HIRE

RT Cycles and Fishing, Glengarnock.
T. 01505 682 191 / www.cyclerepairman.co.uk

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

The area around Dalry has a network of quiet roads, so there are ample options for making up your own routes. A good alternative to consider is going straight on at Tower, cycling another 4 kilometres before turning left and zig-zagging across country back to Smithstone Terrace.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

A possible shorter route would be turning right out of the railway station, heading up to Stoophill Farm and down to the junction with the minor road that is part of National Cycle Network Route 7 and turning right. Cycle as far as the railway bridge, then return by the same route.

ROUTE 4

KILMARNOCK – TO MOSCOW AND BACK

Distance: 12 miles / 19 kilometres

Grade: Moderate

Terrain: Through a country park then out onto quiet country roads

Time: 2 hours

Map: OS Landranger 70

Start/Finish: Dean Castle Country Park



THE ROUTE

Start from the main car park at Dean Castle Country Park and head up the side of the river that flows through the park. To begin with, the river will be on your right-hand-side but after 200 metres follow a Cycle Route sign across the river and continue following the river upstream.

When the path reaches a country road turn right and cycle up the hill. Pass a riding centre on the left-hand-side and then cycle along a straight road for 600 metres. At the end of the straight turn right and drop down to Assloss Farm on your right then cycle under the A77.

Your minor road then runs through a ford, so make sure your mobile phone is somewhere safe and inspect the water before cycling through it. There is a bridge if you don't want to risk getting too wet!

The road then climbs up to a T-junction where you are going to turn left. Remember this junction because you are going to return to it later in the ride.

Having turned left onto this quiet country road you follow it for about 4 kilometres, at which point you reach the A719 and go straight across at the crossroads. Take care crossing this busy main road.

Continue for another 600 metres then turn right at the sign for Raithmuir, follow the road for another 800 metres then turn right again. Although there is



no village sign to announce your arrival, when you reach some houses you are in Moscow. In the centre of Moscow, re-cross the A719 and continue on the quiet country road.

After another 5 kilometres you will emerge alongside the A77 and come to a roundabout where you go straight on, and then a T-junction where you should turn right.

Don't take the first left turn to East Wardlaw, but do take the second turn to the left at the junction that you should recognise from earlier in the ride. From here drop down to the ford, pass under the A77 and retrace your cycle tracks to Dean Castle Country Park and your start/finish point.

SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Dean Castle Country Park. Woodland walks, adventure playground, urban farm and visitor centre. **T. 01563 554 734**

www.eastayrshireleisure.com/countryside/dean-castle-country-park

Craufurdland Estate. A range of outdoor activities, including 10 kilometres of mountain bike trails.

www.craufurdland.co.uk

TRANSPORT

Train to Kilmarnock station.

CYCLE HIRE

Walkers Cycling. **T. 01563 544 488**

www.walkerscycling.co.uk

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

An extra loop can be built into this route by heading northwards to Laigh Fenwick, but you may have to cycle a section of the A719 to return to the described route. The road towards Laigh Fenwick can be used to access Craufurdland Estate and its network of mountain bike trails (see Somewhere to visit).

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

5 kilometres can be taken off this route by taking a turn off to the right signposted *Sunnyside Cottage Garden Nurseries*. After 2 kilometres, turn right at a T-junction and you are back onto the described route. This shortcut will result in not going as far as the A719 and Moscow.

SOMEWHERE TO VISIT ON YOUR ROUTE



ATTRACTIONS

- A. Crocodile Rock
- B. Brodick Castle
- C. The Museum of Ayrshire Country Life and Costume
- D. Dean Castle Country Park
- E. Sorn Castle
- F. Scottish Dark Sky Observatory
- G. Souter Johnnie's Cottage
- H. Crossraguel Abbey
- I. Burns Cottage

LOCHRANZA

ISLE OF CUM

MILL

ISLE OF ARRAN

A841

BRODICK

2

A841

AILSA CRAIG

BALLANTRAE



GLASGOW

LARGS

OBAN

1

DALRY

3

A737

M77

PORT

A78

KILMARNOCK

4

A719

A71

ARDROSSAN

IRVINE

A71

A77

MUIRKIRK

TROON

PRESTWICK

5

B743

CATRINE

AYR

9

A70

CUMNOCK

A76

A77

A713

MAYBOLE

8

DALMELLINGTON

GIRVAN

DAILLY

7

6

MAP OF AYRSHIRE

A714

A712

ROUTE 5



SORN AND CATRINE – A RIDE ROUND

TWO PICTURESQUE VILLAGES

Distance: 7.5 miles / 12 kilometres

Grade: Moderate

Terrain: Quiet country roads

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 70 and 71

Start/Finish: Sorn Village Hall

THE ROUTE

Sorn is a delightful village beside the River Ayr and a great base for cycling and walking. Indeed, Sorn is a key stopping-off point on the 66 kilometre River Ayr Way walking route.

From the centre of Sorn cycle to the Muirkirk end of the village. The river should be on your right-hand-side. As you leave the village, turn sharp left opposite the Dalgain Farm road end. A steep climb takes you up to Blindburn Farm where the road swings to the right. A T-junction is then reached and you turn left and head towards Blairmulloch and Dykeneuk Farms, both on your right.

You eventually arrive at the B7037 Galston to Sorn road and turn left towards Sorn. After about 700 metres you will arrive at the T-junction with the B743 and you will see the entrance to Sorn Castle across the road in front of you. Turn right here and after about 250 metres turn left onto an unclassified road.

This road brings you out above the village of Catrine, so pause a moment to look down onto Catrine and have a look at the impressive war memorial. The road then descends steeply and you turn left onto the main street through the village.

The road out of Catrine climbs steeply and you take the left turn signposted to Sorn. Follow this road for about 1500 metres and when you reach a crossroads with Sorn signposted straight on and Auchinleck to the right, take the unmarked turn to the left.

You then drop steeply into Sorn and cross the River Ayr via the wonderful old bridge with its impressive arches and narrow stone walls. This really is a superb way to return to the village.

You then turn right onto the main street through the village and in no time at all are back at your starting point.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Sorn is a great little place for walking, so as well as going there for a cycle ride, it is also worth picking up a walks leaflet and exploring a section of the River Ayr Way or taking a short walk around Spooky Woods. An interpretation board in the village also provides information on these walking routes.

Sorn Castle is worth a visit, although has limited public opening times. www.sorncastle.com For a breathtaking view of Sorn Castle follow the River Ayr Way over the old bridge and onto the off-road section to the west of Sorn. For a longer walk in this direction, continue along the River Ayr Way for 2 kilometres to get to Catrine.

Further afield, you may like to visit Dumfries House in Cumnock whilst in this area. This 18th century house is set in a stunning 2,000 acre estate and houses a unique collection of Chippendale furniture.

T. 01290 429 900 / www.dumfries-house.org.uk

TRANSPORT

Sorn is on the X50 bus route from Cumnock to Kilmarnock.

CYCLE HIRE

There are no cycle hire outlets in the immediate local area. The nearest hire shops will be those mentioned in some of the other route descriptions, for example in Irvine, Kilmarnock and Girvan.

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

After Dykeneuk Farm turn right onto the B7037 and take any one of a number of left turns to eventually bring you back to Catrine.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

The loop out to Catrine can be dropped by turning left when you get to Sorn Castle. This would miss out the second half of the described route. Alternatively, leave Sorn in the Mauchline direction (westwards) and ride the Catrine loop, thereby missing out the first half of the described route.

ROUTE 6

LOCH DOON – A SCENIC RIDE IN A REMOTE CORNER OF AYRSHIRE

Distance: 14.5 miles / 23 kilometres

Grade: Moderate

Terrain: Quiet country roads

Time: 2 hours 30 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 77

Start/Finish: Forestry Commission car park beside the A713

THE ROUTE

This is a simple out-and-back cycle route running the length of Loch Doon.

Starting from the Forestry Commission car park, cycle along the Galloway Forest Drive, and after 3 kilometres you will cross a dam and emerge on the west side of Loch Doon. The length of the loch stretches out in front of you and the quiet lochside road is your route to the remote southern end of the loch.

Navigation is simple. Follow the road and keep the loch on your left-hand-side.

The end point of the described route is Loch Doon Castle which you may like to explore before turning to cycle back to your start point.

The second half of the ride is easy to navigate as you will be retracing your tyre tracks back to your start point.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Loch Doon Castle is located by the roadside and is free to enter.

You will pass the end of the forest road to the Scottish Dark Sky Observatory (SDSO) about 2 kilometres after you leave the car park. Look out for the sign saying SDSO. Regular events are held at the observatory, mainly after dark, so check the website for details and information on making a booking. **T. 01292 551 118**
www.scottishdarkskyobservatory.co.uk

The 3 kilometre Ness Glen walk starts and finishes beside the Roundhouse Café and offers stunning views of this steep-sided rocky gorge. Ness Glen is described as one of the finest examples of a true rock gorge in Britain.

The Doon Valley Museum in Dalmellington is about 3 kilometres from the Forestry Commission car park and is well worth a look when you are passing the village. The museum is housed in one of the oldest buildings in Dalmellington and tells the story of the rich social and industrial history of the coal mines and ironworks in the local area. **T. 01292 550 633.**

Visit www.eastayrshireleisure.com/museums/doon-valley-museum

TRANSPORT

The 520 bus service from Ayr to Castle Douglas stops in Dalmellington.

CYCLE HIRE

There are no cycle hire outlets in the immediate local area. There is cycle hire at the Adventure Centre for Education in Girvan. **T. 07920 406 982**
www.adventurecentreforeducation.com

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

Continue riding into Carrick Forest when you reach the road-end just beyond Loch Doon Castle. If you want a 30 mile / 48 kilometre ride you could continue through Carrick Forest to Stinchar Bridge, head north to Straiton, then follow the B741 east to Dalmellington and A713 back to your start point.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

An alternative starting point for this ride is the Roundhouse Cafe. Starting there brings the return distance to Loch Doon Castle down to 9.5 miles or 15 kilometres.

ROUTE 7

DAILY – A MAGNIFICENT VIEW OF

AILSA CRAIG

Distance: 10.5 miles / 17 kilometres

Grade: Hard

Terrain: Quiet country roads

Time: 2 hours

Map: OS Landranger 76

Start/Finish: War memorial at east end of Main Street in Daily

THE ROUTE

Start with the war memorial on your left-hand-side and cycle along Main Street to a crossroads. Turn right and cross the bridge over the Water of Girvan. Follow this road for about a kilometre, at which point you reach a T-junction and turn left.

Follow the B741 for about 300 metres then take an unsigned and shallow-angled right turn, and climb a steep, rough road. This road is very rough and potholed, so despite being on-road, it is definitely a route for a mountain bike, preferably with suspension.

Follow this road for about 7 kilometres, always taking the straight-on option at all the junctions. Once you have climbed the initial steep hill there is some nice undulating cycling and the highlight of the route is the view to the left looking across the sea to Ailsa Craig. Take some time out of the saddle to have a rest and enjoy this fantastic view.

Eventually you will arrive at a junction with a signpost that points straight on to Kirkoswald 1½ and right to Wallacetown 2½. This route takes the right turn to Wallacetown, but if you want to extend your journey and visit some of the local attractions (see Somewhere to visit) then take the Kirkoswald road.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Brunston Castle Golf Club on the edge of Dailly has a golf driving range. **T. 01465 811 471**
www.brunstoncastle.co.uk

Take the short route out to Kirkoswald to visit Souter Johnnie's Cottage. This will add about 5 kilometres to the described route. See Scottish literature come to life in the thatched home of Souter Johnnie who was immortalised in Robert Burns' poem, Tam o'Shanter.

From Kirkoswald it is possible to cycle out to the coast to visit the National Trust for Scotland's Culzean Castle and Country Park. With its dramatic clifftop position, Robert Adam architecture, fascinating history and beautiful surroundings, it is one of Scotland's most popular visitor attractions
T. 0844 493 2149 / www.nts.org.uk/property/culzean-castle-and-country-park

TRANSPORT

The 58 and 358 bus services from Ayr to Girvan stop in Dailly.

CYCLE HIRE

Adventure Centre for Education in Girvan.

T. 07920 406 982

www.adventurecentreforeducation.com

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

At the right turn signposted Wallacetown 2½ continue straight on, which is signposted Kirkoswald 1½. From Kirkoswald you can loop round to the left to come back onto the described route, or continue across the A77 towards Culzean Castle and Country Park.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

Turn right at a crossroad junction signposted North Threave and follow the road past North Threave and East Threave. This will cut over 2 kilometres off the described route.

Follow this quiet road for another 4 kilometres to a T-junction at Wallacetown. Turn right here and after about 1500 metres turn left and retrace your outward route back to Dailly.

Take a look at the interpretive board showing walks around Dailly when you get back to your starting point. As well as being a good area for cycling there are also some interesting local walks that might be of interest. The board is just to the left of the war memorial as you look towards the Greenhead Hotel.

ROUTE 8

KIRKMICHAEL – LEFT, LEFT, LEFT, LEFT

AND RIGHT AT THE END

Distance: 7 miles / 11 kilometres

Grade: Easy

Terrain: Quiet country roads

Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 70

Start/Finish: McCosh Hall in Kirkmichael

THE ROUTE

This is a nice easy circuit on quiet country roads with a start and finish point in an interesting wee village.

The village sign as you enter Kirkmichael announces that it is the "Guitar Village". This is because of the connection with famous jazz guitarist Martin Taylor who used to live in Kirkmichael. The village hosts an annual a Cake and Ale Festival in the autumn, so watch out for information on that and you could take your cycle so that you earn your cake and ale the energetic way!

The described route starts outside the McCosh Hall on Patna Road in Kirkmichael. Follow the road towards Patna and perform a quick left-right jiggle when you reach the church at the end of the village.

As you head out into the countryside the road twists and turns for over 4 kilometres before reaching a left turn signposted to Dalrymple 3½. Take this left

turn and within 300 metres you reach an unsigned junction. Take the left turn at this junction and start to climb to a higher level. The return journey to Kirkmichael takes you across higher ground than the outward route you have just cycled.

The next road junction, this time a T-junction, is again unmarked and again you turn left. About 500 metres after this junction you will reach the high point of the route and your descent to Kirkmichael begins. When you reach a fork in the road, you guessed it, you take the left fork!

Another 2 kilometres and you are back on Patna Road in Kirkmichael. Turn left if you want to go round the route again; however if you want to get back to your start and finish point, then turn right for a change.

This is a pleasant and quiet circuit that should appeal to those wanting a short and easy route.



SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

Take a look at Kirkmichael church and graveyard as you pass by.

Check out the Cake and Ale Festival and consider combining a cycling trip to Kirkmichael with this festival. **T. 01655 750 200**

www.kirkmichaelarms.co.uk

Alternatively, whilst you are in the area, the 13th century Crossraguel Abbey is about five miles away to the west of Maybole. The remains of this abbey include the church, cloister, chapter house and domestic premises. **T. 01655 882 113**. Further information on the Historic Scotland website at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/places then search Crossraguel.

TRANSPORT

The 358 bus service from Ayr to Girvan stops in Kirkmichael.

CYCLE HIRE

AMG Cycles in Ayr. **T. 01292 287 580**

www.irvincycles.co.uk

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

There are several options for extending this route.

An obvious one would be to turn right at the second junction instead of taking the unmarked left turn.

This would point you over the hill towards Dalrymple. When you emerge at a T-junction, just south of Dalrymple, you turn left and rejoin the described route at the next junction. This option would add another 5 kilometres to the route. Alternatively, you can take an earlier right turn towards the B7034 and follow this road through Dalrymple. A good look at the map will help you see these alternative routes.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

This route is already quite short, but if you want to shorten it further and avoid the hillier return leg, you could cycle out to the first left junction and return via the same route.

ROUTE 9

AYR TO ALLOWAY 'N' BACK

Distance: 8 miles / 12.5 kilometres

Grade: Easy

Terrain: Town roads, cycle paths and esplanade

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Map: OS Landranger 70

Start/Finish: Wellington Square, Ayr

THE ROUTE

No trip to Ayrshire is complete without a visit to Alloway to see Burns Cottage and the various sites associated with Robert Burns. Here is a route that will show you the Burns' sites from your cycle.

The described route starts and finishes from Wellington Square, close to Ayr's esplanade, but it is possible to start from a range of parking places along the esplanade, or from Ayr railway station if you arrive on the train with your cycle.

From Wellington Square cycle along Pavilion Road and turn left onto the esplanade. Follow this seafront road for just over a kilometre until you reach the Ayr India Restaurant on your left-hand-side.

At this point turn left and cycle inland along Seaford Road to the first set of traffic lights. Turn right at the lights onto Doonfoot Road and follow this for about

1600 metres until you reach a mini roundabout, take 1st exit onto Greenfield Avenue and follow it to a T-junction.

Turn left at this junction and Burns Cottage is about 100 metres away on your left-hand-side. After visiting the cottage, turn around and retrace the last 100 metres of your route, passing the end of Greenfield Avenue, then at the end of the wall on your left, cut through onto Poet's Path. Wander along here and have your photograph taken with a wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie!

You will soon see the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in front of you, so cross Murdoch's Lone and park your cycle in the car park. As well as an opportunity to visit the museum, you should find the useful map board near the museum entrance and navigate yourself to the Brig o'Doon, Burns Monument and Auld Kirk.



When you return to the cycle route, cross back to the other side of Murdoch's Lone and drop down to the cycle path. Turn left and follow signs for Doonfoot. A 2-kilometre ride brings you to the A719 and a marked crossing for cyclists. Cross the main road and turn right onto a cycle path that quickly leads to a path junction where you turn left and head towards the coast. This section of cycle path is well signed, so follow the signs under a height barrier, then a right turn and eventually onto the edge of a housing estate. The signed route soon brings you to a Sustrans bridge over the River Doon. Cross this bridge, turn left and follow the esplanade back to your start point.

SOMEWHERE TO VISIT

There are several must-visit sites around Alloway. Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

T. 0844 493 2601 www.burnsmuseum.org.uk
This impressive modern museum houses the most important Burns collection in the world.

Burns Cottage is about a 600 metre walk, or cycle ride, from the museum.

Poet's Path is a pleasant parkland walk between the museum and cottage.

Brig o'Doon is behind the museum and for those who haven't worked it out yet, it's the bridge over the River Doon that is immortalised in Burns' poem Tam o'Shanter.

TRANSPORT

Train to Ayr station.

Bus services 60, 361 and X77 run from Ayr and stop near Burns Cottage.

CYCLE HIRE

AMG Cycles in Ayr. **T. 01292 287 580**
www.irvinecycles.co.uk

WANT TO GO A BIT FURTHER?

Anyone wishing to start from Ayr railway station should make their way across town from the station to the esplanade.

Anyone wishing to get out into the countryside to the south of Ayr could take the A719 for 2.5 kilometres beyond the Doonfoot junction. Take a left turn towards Maybole and follow National Cycle Network Route 7 over Brown Carrick Hill and down to a junction with the B7024. Turn left onto this road, follow it through Culroy and eventually into Alloway. After crossing the ring road you can pick up the cycle path, on your left, back to the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum.

PREFER A SHORTER ROUTE?

Some may prefer to start and finish a short ride from the museum, in which case you can follow the route to the Sustrans bridge via the described route. Once you have crossed the bridge, turn right and follow the path to the junction near the Honda garage. Head straight across Doonfoot Road and onto Greenfield Avenue. At this point you can follow the described route to Burns Cottage, Poet's Path and back to the museum.

If you want to avoid cycling on the road it is possible to use the cycle path in both directions from the esplanade to the museum and back.

USEFUL WEBLINKS TO CYCLING ROUTES AND CLUBS

If you are keen to find other routes in Ayrshire and Arran, or want to get in touch with local clubs, then the following weblinks may be of interest.

Ayr Cycling Trails	www.mapmyride.com/gb/ayr-sct/
Ayrshire Alps	www.ayrshirealps.org
Ayrshire Burners	www.ayrburners.org
Ayrshire Coast Cycleway	www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map/route/ayrshire-coast-cycleway
Ayrshire Paths	www.ayrshirepaths.org.uk/cyclepaths.htm
Carrick Forest Mountain Bike Trail	www.carrickayrshire.com/listings/253
North Ayrshire Cycling and Cycle Paths	www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/resident/leisure-parks-and-events/outdoor-activities/cycling-and-cycle-paths.aspx
South Ayrshire Cycling	www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/outdooraccess/walking-cycling.aspx
East Ayrshire Cycle Route Planner	www.cycle-route.com/routes/East_Ayrshire-Routes-8.html
North Ayrshire Cycle Route Planner	www.cycle-route.com/routes/North_Ayrshire-Routes-20.html
South Ayrshire Cycle Route Planner	www.cycle-route.com/routes/South_Ayrshire-Routes-27.html
Visit Scotland	www.visitscotland.com/see-do/activities/cycling/ayrshire-arran

USEFUL TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Train	www.scotrail.co.uk
Bus	www.stagecoachbus.com
Ferry	www.calmac.co.uk





LoveAyrshire

Ayrshire & Arran Tourism
Burns House, Burns Statue Square
Ayr, Scotland KA7 1UT
www.ayrshire-arran.org/visit

