

CALEDONIAN CANAL

Region Guide



le boat

		Approx time		No. of locks	
Inverness (Tomnahurich Swing Bridge)	1 hr	5 hr 15 min	1	1	
Lochend	1 hr 15 min		0		
Drumnadrochit	1 hr		0		
Foyers	2 hr		0		
Bottom of Fort Augustus Locks	1 hr	1 hr	5	5	
Top of Fort Augustus Locks	30 min	2 hr 45 min	0	4	
Kytra Lock	1 hr 15 min		2		
Invergarry	1 hr		0		
Laggan Locks (Le Boat)	2 hr 15 min	3 hr 30 min	2	2	
Gairloch	1 hr 10 min		2		
Banavie (for Fort William)					

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Maximum speed allowed on canals in km/h

There are no speed limits while in lochs, although please slow down as you pass moored boats, marinas, fishermen and when near the bank where your wash can cause damage to the bank and wildlife.



Pass oncoming boats on the right-hand side



Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 9 km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks will all affect your progress.

INVERNESS



Inverness Castle

Known as the capital of the Highlands, Inverness has managed to retain its market town feel. Delve into its past on the Inverness Historic Trail, which guides you through the old and new area of town. Take a walk along the river bank and you'll come to Ness Islands, where you can enjoy some peace away from the hustle & bustle of the city. Along the way you'll pass the red-sandstone towers of St Andrew's Cathedral, and Eden Court Theatre – a superb venue featuring opera, ballet and drama performances, plus a cinema. Cross one of the bridges to reach Inverness Botanic Gardens, where you'll find a splendid display of subtropical plants. Inverness Castle, which dates back to 1836, stands on a cliff overlooking the River Ness. Opening in 2017, the North Castle Tower will be used as a viewing platform and stunning panoramic views of Loch Ness, the Caledonian Canal, the Moray Firth and Chanonry Point can be enjoyed. The grounds are also nice to stroll around.

Merkinch Local Nature Reserve is a hidden gem in the heart of Inverness, full of wildlife such as roe deer, owls and herons. The Old High Church dates back to the 18th century, although the site it's built on has been used for worship since Celtic times. It's striking architecture and stained glass windows are very impressive. On the outskirts, Torvean Golf Club is an 18-hole parkland course with an informal feel – excellent for keen golfers and those wishing to give it a try (+44 (0)1463 225651).

Loch Ness

LOCH NESS

The second largest loch in Scotland, but due to its immense depth (700ft) it is by far the biggest in volume. Home to the fabled Loch Ness Monster – keep your eyes peeled!



Recommended restaurant: Rocpool Restaurant, Ness Walk, just off the Ness Bridge.



Amenities: You'll find everything you need here – supermarkets, restaurants, shops and a tourist information centre (+44 (0)8452 255121). Don't miss the Victorian Market, an indoor arcade of over 40 shops and two very nice cafés.

DRUMNADROCHIT



Urquhart Castle

At the centre of Loch Ness, a visit to Drumnadrochit (1.5km from the moorings) wouldn't be complete without a visit to the Loch Ness Centre & Exhibition.

Learn about the many myths and monster hunting facts that surround this ancient mystery. Kids will love

Nessieland with its minigolf, play park and model railway. A further 3km from Drumnadrochit, back towards the loch, but on the otherside of the bay to the moorings, you'll find Urquhart Castle – and well worth a visit. Majestically positioned with sweeping views over Loch Ness, the castle dates back to the 14th century and suffered heavy attacks in later years, leading to its crumbling and ruined appearance. The best way to get there is by taxi from Drumnadrochit, or else it's a 45-60 minute walk (plus the 30 minute walk into Drumnadrochit from the moorings). There are also hiking trails aplenty!



Recommended restaurant: Fiddlers

Highland Restaurant in Drumadrochit or Lewiston Restaurant at the Loch Ness Inn if heading round to Urquhart Castle.



Amenities: There is a café, gift shops, mini markets, a chemist and a tourist information centre (+44 (0)1456 459086).

FORT AUGUSTUS AND INVERMORISTON



Caledonian Canal at Fort Augustus

Fort Augustus, is possibly one of the most picturesque towns along the canal and there is plenty to do here. The flight of five locks, at its southern approach, takes about one hour to negotiate, so ensure you allow plenty of time and arrive well in advance. Near the bottom of the flight of locks, pop into Iceberg Glass for some great souvenirs and you can also watch them being made. The Caledonian Canal Heritage Centre is a great stop if you want to learn more about the history of this 200 year old canal, while The Clansman Centre is one of the most unique attractions in Fort Augustus. Here you'll experience live demonstrations by actors in traditional highland dress and gain an insight into what life was like in 18th century Scotland. They also have a great Celtic craft shop. The town is a haven for walkers and cyclists with many trails around the area, the most popular being the Great Glen Way.

Boots 'n Paddles (+44 (0)333 6006008) are based here, offering Canadian canoeing, air rifle shooting, archery and gorge walking, while Monster Activities (contact Ian on +44 (0)7710 540 398) offer white water rafting, abseiling and guided walks. Finally, golfers shouldn't miss the chance for a round at Fort Augustus Golf Club – a traditional heathland course and widely regarded as the most challenging 9-hole course in Scotland (+44 (0) 1320 366660).

A 10 minute bus ride away is Invermoriston. It is located on the shores of Loch Ness, but there are no moorings to access the village by boat. The town bridge, built by renowned engineer Thomas Telford in 1813, is the star of this pretty village. Take a short busride to see it for yourself. St Columba's Well is said to have been blessed by the Irish Saint in AD565, and was believed by locals to have healing properties and small offerings are left beside the spring in gratitude. The Clog & Craft Shop is the perfect place to pick up some souvenirs.



Thomas Telford Bridge, Invermoriston

KYTRA LOCK

This is probably one of the prettiest locks on the canal and a perfectly tranquil spot to moor up, appreciate the surroundings and a enjoy a good night's sleep.



Recommended restaurant: The Lock Inn, next to Fort Augustus Locks, or for something special, The Boathouse – in the grounds of the 300 year old St. Benedict's Abbey. To book, call +44 (0)1320 366682.



Market: In Fort Augustus there's a minimarket, plenty of shops, restaurants, cafés, a butcher, and pharmacy.

LOCH OICH AND INVERGARRY



Invergarry Castle

The prettiest and most sheltered loch on the Caledonian and the highest part to the canal. At its southern end, the Great Glen Water Park (+44 (0)1809 501459) has a restaurant, sauna and children's play area. This is also where 'Active Highs' is based, an outdoor adventure company who will take you to the nearby River Garry for canoeing, white-water rafting, canyoning or, for those with younger children, a river rafting safari trip. Situated at the foot of Glengarry, Invergarry is a popular destination for walking enthusiasts. In the grounds of The Glengarry Castle Hotel you'll find the ruins of Invergarry Castle, once the seat of the MacDonnell Clan, offering lovely views over Loch Oich. The hotel, a Scottish country house, is highly recommended for breakfast, morning coffee, lunch, afternoon teas and evening meals.

Canoeing with 'Active Highs' on Loch Oich



Recommended restaurant: Glengarry Castle Hotel, 5 minutes walk from the moorings at Invergarry Castle ruins. Booking in advance is advised (+44 (0) 1809 501 254).



Market: There is a small shop in the petrol station behind the hotel.

LAGGAN

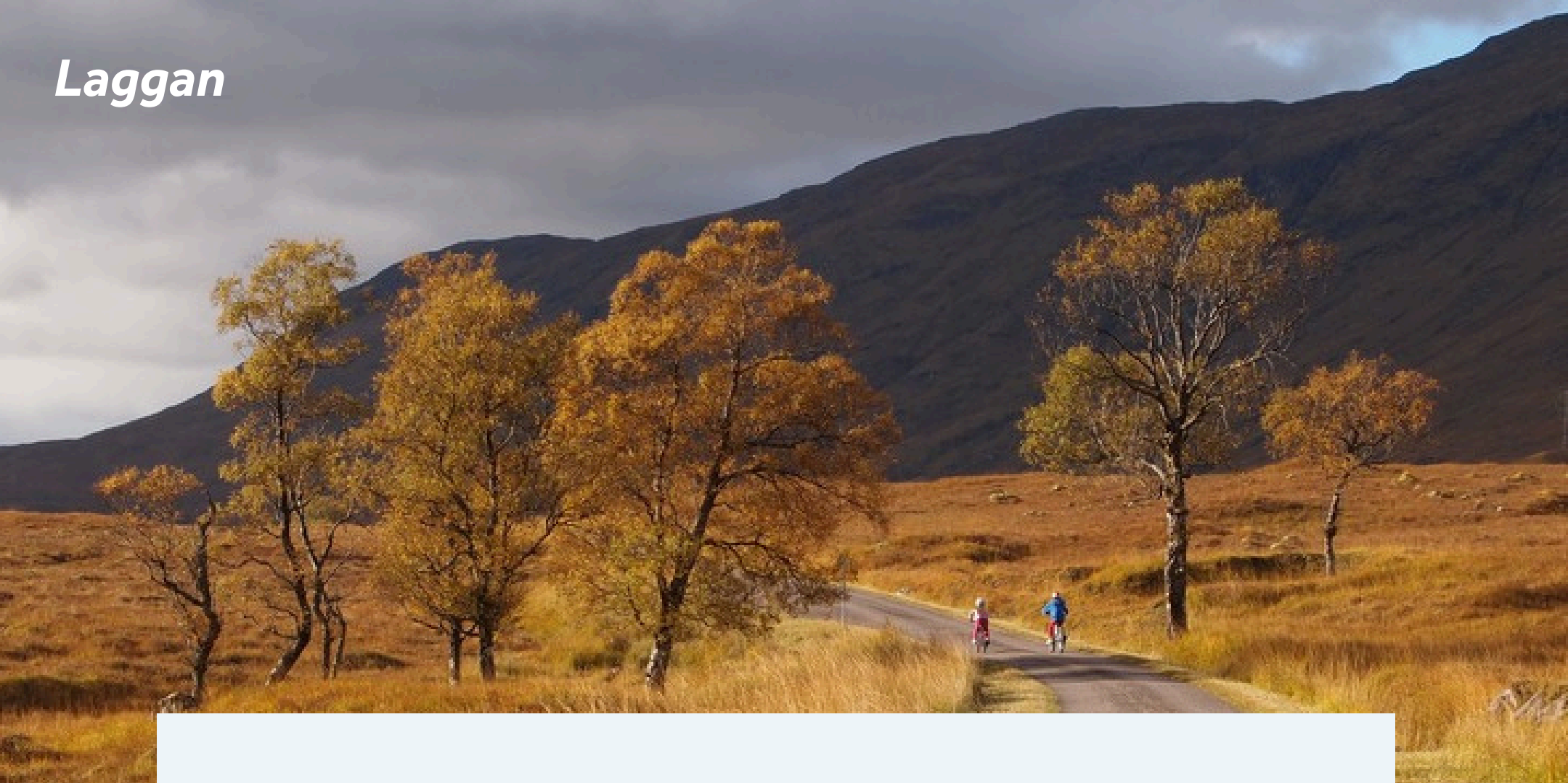


Laggan

There are several walks starting from Laggan and from the nearby Great Glen Hostel (1.4km). Great Glen Adeventures offer guided walks, rock climbing and abseiling (Contact Liz on +44 (0)1809 501430). The Laggan base has a few bikes and paddleboards for hire.



Recommended restaurant: The Eagle Barge Inn, next to Laggan locks. A converted armoured Dutch barge fitted out to be the only floating pub on the Caledonian Canal. Book in advance (+44 (0) 7789 858 567).



LOCH LOCKY

The third deepest loch in Scotland and an excellent location for fishing for wild Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and Pike. Try to spot deer on the banks and Ospreys, which nest near Achnacarry (at the loch's southern end), can be seen in the summer. Keep your eye's out for Lizzie, a plesiosaur-like creature that is fabled to live in these waters!

GAIRLOCHY

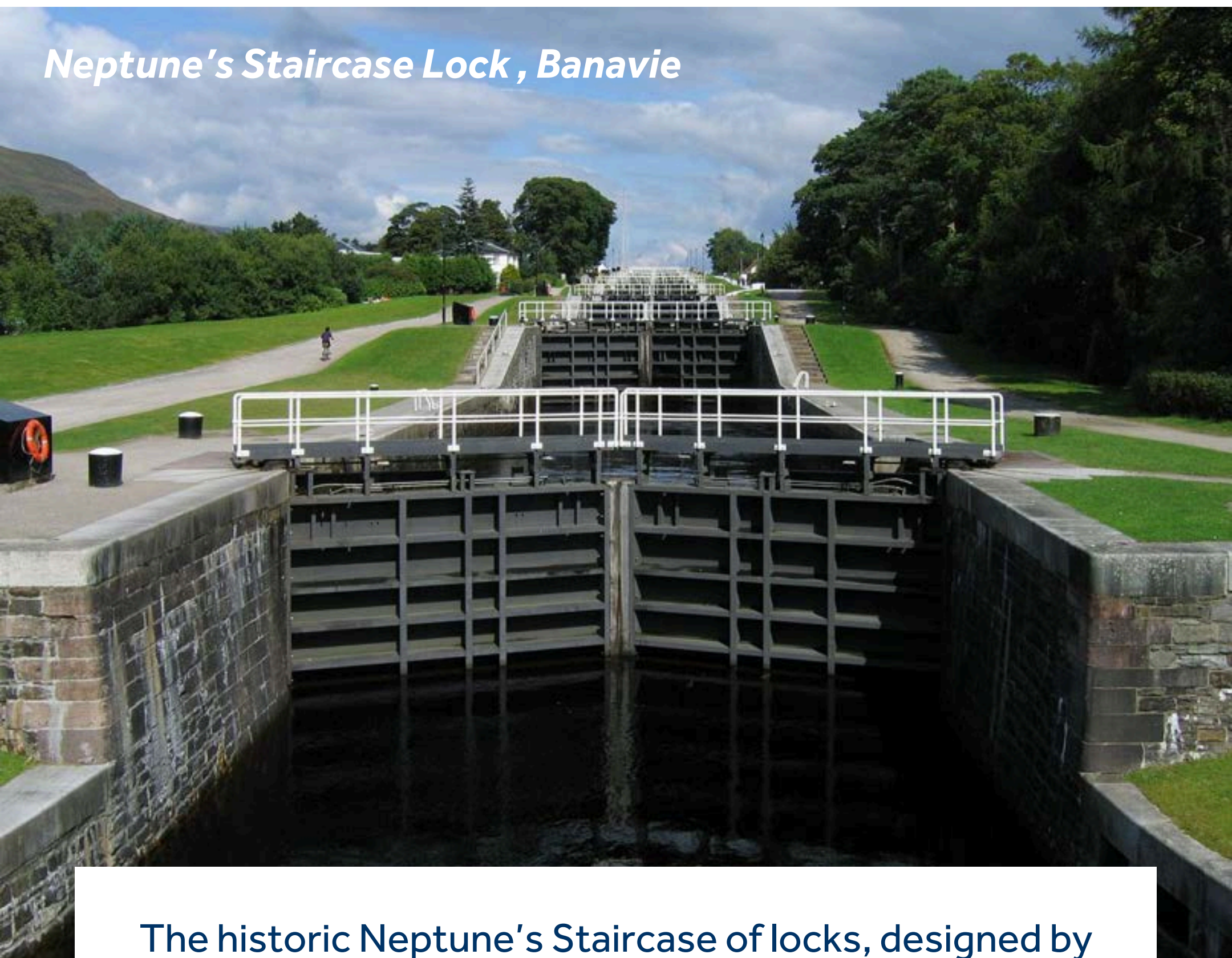
It's worth stopping in Gairloch to visit the Clan Cameron Museum in Achnacarry – a former training centre for Commandos during WWII. The museum is inside an old cottage. Go over the canal bridge, bear right and after a two miles turn left through the gates. The museum is quarter of a mile further on. Across the opposite side of the canal about a 3km walk uphill, you can see the famous Commando Memorial – three bronze figures in battle dress looking across the Great Glen.



Recommended restaurant: The Old Pines restaurant, 3.5km south east along the B8004. They also offer a 'pick up' service.

BANAVIE

Neptune's Staircase Lock, Banavie



The historic Neptune's Staircase of locks, designed by Thomas Telford, comprises eight locks and takes boats roughly 90 minutes to travel up the 64 feet to the top. It is the longest staircase lock in the UK. You cannot go any further south from here, so you should not attempt to pass through. There are plenty of moorings and Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, just a few miles south of the canal.

Harry Potter fans will love the Jacobite steam train, used as the Hogwarts Express in the film series. It runs along the West Highlands Railway to Mallaig and back, taking in breath taking scenery on an 135km round trip. It is advisable to book in advance though – this service can get very busy during the season! For an alternative option, book the same journey on the diesel train which starts its route at Bavanie (more information can be found at www.westcoastrailways.co.uk).



West Highland Railway from Banavie to Mallaig



Recommended restaurant: The Moorings Hotel, situated next to the lock. The Lochy Bar & Restaurant, 0.6 miles Kilmallie Road.



Amenities: There is a minimarket, shops, restaurants, cafés, butcher and pharmacy.

FORT WILLIAM



Fort William and Ben Nevis

A 10 minute bus journey from Banavie is Fort William, buses run every 15 minutes during the day. Renowned as the outdoor capital of the UK, Fort William offers all the outdoor activities you could dream of, starting with the tallest mountain in the UK – Ben Nevis. If the thought of walking up is too daunting (recommended for fit and active walkers only – appropriate clothing and footwear is essential), you can take a gondola up nearby Aonach Mor, the 8th highest mountain in Britain, in just under 15 minutes. From there you'll experience breathtaking views of Ben Nevis, the Great Glen and the surrounding Scottish Highlands. The operators of the gondola, the Nevis Range, offer many other activities too, including a high wire tree top course, a 40m 'Zoom Trax' slide, paragliding, forest walks and mountain biking – to name but a few.



Back in town, the Nevis Centre (+ 44 01397 700707) offers a childrens’ play area, ten pin bowling and go karting, or you can find out more about this fascinating region at the West Highland Museum. Make a stop at the Lochaber Leisure Centre if a climbing wall, followed by a swim and sauna is more your speed. Round off your trip to Scotland with a stop

at the Ben Nevis Distillery where you can join a guided tour of the production areas, finished off with a complimentary tasting.



Recommended restaurants: The Grog and Gruel, for authentic Scottish food, or Crannof Seafood Restuarant – a must-try!



Amenities: You’ll find everything you need in Fort William – supermarkets (Lidl & Tesco), shops, restaurants, cafés, bakery and pharmacy.

LOCKS AND SWING BRIDGES

All of the locks (and swing bridges) on the Caledonian Canal are electric and are operated by a lock keeper. You and your crew should stay on board as you enter locks, looping your lines over the bollards (never tie them) and holding firmly to steady the boat as it ascends/descends. The locks on the Caledonian are large and can hold many boats at once. Stay well back from the upper gate if possible, since this is where most turbulence is created. Once inside, and your crew have your boat under control, you must turn off your engine. When passing through the flight of five locks at Fort Augustus, you may ‘walk the boat’ from lock to lock by stepping onto the lock side and pulling the boat along with your lines. Please refer to the onboard Boat and Navigation Manual for more information about how to operate and pass through locks.

OPENING HOURS

Locks and swing bridges are passable seven days a week at the following times:

25th March - 26th May	8.30 am – 5.30pm
27th May - 1st September	8am – 6pm
2nd September - 3rd November	8.30am – 5.30pm

MOORING

The banks along the Caledonian Canal are rocky, so don't get too close. You should only moor on designated moorings pontoons and jetties – please consult your onboard waterway map for exact locations. Pontoons that are private will be clearly signposted. Do not moor at waiting pontoons on either side of a lock (unless you are waiting for the lock). Moorings are free along the Caledonian Canal. Electricity points are available at some moorings, for a charge of £3 - £4 per night. Please consult your waterways map to find the locations of waterside facilities such as showers and, toilets (free), as well as electricity points.

WATER

You will need to fill up your water tank two or three times during the course of a week. Most mooring pontoons and locks have water points, which you can use for free. Consult your onboard waterway map for exact locations



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