Greenock Scotland Port Guide

Jim Hughes our private tour guide with GreatScot-Tours playing the bagpipe at our fist stop in Luss Village on Loch Lomond (photo above)
Cruise ships dock at Greenock Ocean Terminal. It's a short walk to the downtown area. You can walk along the seafront for great views, visit McLean Museum (shipbuilding), go to Lyle hill to see panoramic views of the area, the Oak Mall shopping center, the nearby town of Gourock, etc.

You can also visit Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland. We spent the full day on a private tour visiting some of the most beautiful areas of Scotland with lochs, mountains, villages, meadows, moorland, etc. It was one of the most beautiful, relaxing, and enjoyable tours I've been on in any port.

The Regional Government Council for Greenock and six neighboring small towns is called “Inverclyde”. Cruise ships are greeted by the Inverclyde Tourist Group (ITG), a non-profit local volunteer organization to introduce and promote the area around Greenock in a friendly and informal way. Dressed in their distinctive tartan uniforms, these local residents are an outstanding source of information and assistance for visitors. Passengers interested in self-guided touring can learn about places of interest, shopping, public transit, rental cars, taxis, and enjoy 2-hour local tours by ITG in the Greenock and Gourock area.

This is a must visit website = [http://www.inverclydetouristgroup.co.uk](http://www.inverclydetouristgroup.co.uk)

In 2011, Greenock earned the prestigious “Best Shoreside Welcome Award”.

*A large factor in receiving this award is the contribution of the Inverclyde Tourist Group, whose dedication to providing visitors a friendly greeting and helpful information, combined with continued investment by Clydeport and its partners into the Terminal facilities, helps ensure that passengers leave with fond memories of their visit to Greenock.*

The port website is [http://www.cruiseglasgow.com/](http://www.cruiseglasgow.com/)

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map of Greenock Scotland area</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Google and Bing maps to plan your vacation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-guided touring of the Greenock area</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touring “God's Country” from Greenock Port</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luss Conservation Village</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Wool Centre</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrain map of mountain ranges</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loch Achray - Queen Elizabeth Forest Park</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamish the bull steer</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callander</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirling Castle</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Feedback, Copyright Notice, Terms and Conditions for use of Toms Port Guides</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CAVEAT

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Tom Sheridan

Note: I would like to thank Mike Engelberg and Fiona Carmichael for their help on this port guide.
Cruise ships dock at Ocean Terminal. The map above shows Oak Mall, McLean Museum, the Esplanade (a walkway along the sea with great views), the Cross of Lorraine (high on Lyle Hill with panoramic views of the area), and Greenock Cut Cornalees Bridge (walking trails in the moorlands). The map also shows Gourock (a nearby village) and Newark Castle in Port Glasgow which is 23 miles and 35 minutes from Glasgow.
Using Google and Bing Maps to Plan Your Vacation

I use Map Coordinates to describe tourist sites in my port guides. Advantages of map coordinates include:

- They do NOT require a street address and can point to any location whether or not it is on a public road,
- The arrow accurately points to within 50 feet of the location, and
- Map coordinates are a simple set of numbers, not dependent on common names or language.

In Google Maps, the location of the map coordinates is shown by a down pointing green arrow with a red balloon at the nearest street address. In Bing Maps, the map coordinates appear as a blue dot.

An easy way to use map coordinates in my port guides is:

- Open the port guide in a window on your computer and size the window to less than half of the screen.
- Open a second window on your computer with Google or Bing Maps. Copy and paste the map coordinates from the port guide into the map. Use the “Get Directions” function to plot either a driving or walking route between the points of interest.
- Move the little yellow man icon onto the map and move it around near the map coordinates to see a street view of the area to “preview” you visit to that site. When you see blue dots on the Google Map, move the yellow man icon onto the blue dot to see photos taken by other tourists at that site.
- Experiment with satellite and “Birdseye” views of the tourist site in Google and Bing Maps. View the area at different magnifications to become familiar with the area before your vacation.

The photo at right shows the Cross of Lorraine on top of Lyle Hill. I dragged the little yellow man icon onto the Google Map to see a street level view to create this photo.

Map coordinates for sites in the Greenock Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Cruise terminal</td>
<td>55.954711,-4.76148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenock West train station</td>
<td>55.94795,-4.76765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenock Central train station</td>
<td>55.945595,-4.75263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenock Oak Mall</td>
<td>55.94944,-4.759239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean Museum</td>
<td>55.950864,-4.766416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross of Lorraine, Lyle Hill road</td>
<td>55.954078,-4.795299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenock Cut Cornalees Bridge</td>
<td>55.910042,-4.806316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newark Castle</td>
<td>55.934539,-4.677908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are planning a self-guided tour in the Greenock area:

Your first stop should be with the Inverclyde Tourist Group at the Ocean Cruise Terminal. They will provide highly detailed information with all the maps and other materials you need.

If you are interested in walking tours, there are many possibilities. Some people walk up Lyle Hill for the panoramic views of the area. That's not for me. If I went there, I'd hire a cab or take public transit.

Some people walk along the Esplanade for views of the sea. You can walk around the town and visit museums or go to the library and review the records of families that left Scotland for America from Greenock. You might also explore the history of James Watt who invented the steam engine.

There is a huge moorland area with multiple parks, visitor centers with exhibits, and walking and cycling trails to explore the area west and south of Greenock. To see an interactive map of the area, visit [http://www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk/park-sites/](http://www.clydemuirshiel.co.uk/park-sites/)
Comments by Mike Engelberg

**Ocean Terminal** is shaped roughly like a square. In one corner is the entrance to the building, as well as the security setup for going back to the ship. Think of this corner as lower left. There is an information booth roughly in the middle. There are seats in the lower right corner, as well as the desk where the Inverclyde Tourist Group handles their tour customers. This is where to pick up prearranged tickets, to sign up for available tours, and to get on the waiting list for a later tour that day. The tours depart close by, just outside the building.

The entire opposite side (upper left to upper right) has vendors. This is not just any typical vendor setup at cruise ports. The stuff on sale in the Greenock port building seemed to be of decent quality at decent prices. When we were there, the vendors were quite busy, doing brisk business.

I also recall someone handing out free samples of Scotch whiskey. I'm not sure whether that was inside the building or at the bottom of the exit ramp from the ship.

**The Inverclyde sponsored Gourock group tour** goes up Lyle Hill to the Lorraine Cross for a 15 minute stop. After that, the tour comes down the hill and turns right on A78. Then it goes past IBM.

The tour takes A78 as far as Inverkip. Next, it retraces as far as A770, the road along the shore to Gourock. There are gorgeous views along A770 before reaching Gourock.

We had about 30 minutes in Gourock. In fact, in Gourock, the van driver let us off at the west end of the downtown area and told us he would pick us up at the east end, where the train station is. That enabled us to stroll through the town, perhaps a quarter mile.

Returning from Gourock to the ship, the tour travels along A770 through some beautiful residential areas, including Esplanade street along the coast.

All told, our tourist group's Gourock tour lasted about 2.5 hours.

**The train timetable** is titled Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Stranraer. It displays several routes from Glasgow west and south. Greenock is on the route that ends in Gourock. Train trips into Glasgow take about 45 minutes each way. See [http://www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

Bus service is furnished by McGill's, [http://www.megillsbuses.co.uk](http://www.megillsbuses.co.uk) Routes 901, 906, 907 and 908 run between Greenock Kilblain St. and the Buchanan Bus Station in Glasgow. Bus trips take ~ an hour each way.

Comments by Fiona Carmichael. She is a native Scot familiar with this area

There are strong links between this area of Scotland and the USA, especially so in Greenock, Gourock and Dunoon. From Lyle Hill in Greenock and Tower Hill in Gourock, on a clear day you can see the short distance across the water to the Holy Loch and Dunoon, where many of the Americans based at the Holy Loch Naval Base were resident. In the early years of the naval base, the car ferries which ran between Dunoon and the Greenock/Gourock area used to bring with them some American cars. They were a colourful sight in the area and at the time caused some excitement when spotted. They were of course much too large for wee Scottish roads, because at that time American cars were all big! At a time when few ordinary people could afford to travel to the USA, it was a real life glimpse of a country otherwise known only to us through movies and TV programmes. Here in this wee corner of Scotland, we had real live Americans complete with American accents (of course!) and real American cars!

As their service period in the US Navy came to an end and when the base closed in 1992, some Americans decided to remain in the area and sought work locally, others retired here. By this time of course, lots of them had married local girls and had put down roots. Going in the opposite direction, many of the local girls who married Americans went with their husbands to live in the USA. It was definitely a two way road!

**Holy Loch** was the site of the **United States Navy's** FBM Refit Site ... It was the home base of Submarine Squadron (SUBRON) 14. If you have any interest, or if you served in the US Navy submarines, you may be interested to read [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Loch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Loch)
The street names are easier to read on this map. I have added locations of ATM machines because you will need some local currency (pounds).
Touring “God’s Country” from Greenock Port

Our private tour was pre-arranged with Gordon Ross of GreatScot-Tours [http://www.greatscot-tours.com/](http://www.greatscot-tours.com/) contact = info@greatscot-tours.com. It was fantastic! There were 18 of us on a bus with a driver and Jim Hughes, wearing a kilt and playing a bagpipe as our guide. We visited gorgeous areas and had a great time!

Here are the map coordinates for our tour:

- Greenock Cruise Terminal = 55.954711, -4.76148
- Luss Conservation Village = 56.101989, -4.637095
- Scottish Wool Centre = 56.178169, -4.381317
- Loch Achray - Queen Elizabeth Forest Park = 56.231997, -4.402183
- Hamish, the huge bull steer = 56.24645, -4.240472
- Callander = 56.244447, -4.21704
- Stirling Castle = 56.122902, -3.945962

The map below shows our tour route. Driving time was about 3 and 1/2 hours covering 144 miles for the full day tour. It was a comfortable and scenic ride through the countryside. We had adequate time at each stop and had a lovely lunch in Callander.
**Luss** (map coordinates = 56.101989,-4.637095)

Luss is a “Conservation Village” with restored homes built in the 18th to 19th centuries. There is a church, a few stores and a pier for boats on the beautiful Loch Lomond. The village was featured in a TV series, “Take the High Road” It's a “must visit”, quiet, peaceful, gorgeous area with many opportunities for postcard photos. It's a 32 mile, one hour ride from Greenock dock.

Cottages with hills in the background (photo above)

Post Office Letter Box, animal skins, and posters (photo above)

Launching fishing boats on Loch Lomond. (Photo left)

Wish I had time to join them.

For more guides, see [www.TomsPortGuides.com](http://www.TomsPortGuides.com)
Scottish Wool Centre  (map coordinates = 56.178169,-4.381317)  http://www.scottishwoolcentre.co.uk/  

It is “billed” as a 4-star attraction in the heart of Scotland's beautiful Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park in Aberfoyle.  

I would rate it 5-star; I loved it!  

In addition to a wide range of wool products and souvenirs, they sell fine foods, whiskies, liqueurs, wines and locally brewed beers and ales. There are samples for tasting. We bought some of the foods. I spent most of my time outside viewing the wild birds, farm animals, and watching demonstrations with sheep dogs.  

I've never been so close to such beautiful wild birds with an unobstructed view and could photograph them from only a few feet away. (Photo left)  

The farmer demonstrated herding ducks with his sheep dog and then asked for volunteers to herd the ducks while the farmer and dog watched (Photo below) .  

I have never seen anything so funny and thought I would die laughing. Five adults can't match one sheep dog!
Loch Achray - Queen Elizabeth Forest Park  (map coordinates = 56.231997,-4.402183)

Queen Elizabeth Park is 50,000 acres of some of the best scenery in Scotland with woodlands, rivers, lochs, moorland and mountains. There are 60 miles of walking trails, roads, cycle trails, picnic and play areas including zip lines through the forest and many water based activities. We enjoyed the leisurely bus ride through the park especially the area from the Scottish Wool Center to Loch Achray (photo below).

Photo above – view across Loch Achray

As our bus drove through the park from the Scottish Wool Centre to Loch Achray, the scenery changed from bare mountain tops to forests, lochs, and grassy meadows. It's beautiful. (Photos above)
Other possible stops in the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park area

David Marshall Lodge for photo opportunities - STUNNING views and telescopes on the terrace.  SEE
http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/wildwoods.nsf/LUWebDocsByKey/ScotlandStirlingQueenElizabethForestParkAchrayForestDavidMarshallLodgeVisitorCentre
http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/aberfoyle/davidmarshalllodge/index.html
http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/uk/aberfoyle-ospreys.html#cr

Loch Katrine.  Great scenery and if the boat is in dock, it too, is a pretty picture.  SEE
http://www.lochkatrine.com/
http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/historicplaces/ll-historicplace2.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loch_Katrine
Images Of Loch Katrine  http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/visiting/historicplaces/ll-historicplace2.htm

Hamish, the huge bull steer  (map coordinates = 56.24645,-4.240472)

Cattle in Scotland are like Texas longhorns but they have very long coats. These are big animals; you wouldn't want to walk near them in an open field. The Trossachs Woolen Mill is a favorite stop for buses. You can shop, enjoy refreshments, and see Hamish, the huge bull steer next to the parking lot. We stopped for 15 minutes to take some photos and visit the mill (Photo left).

Hamish, the most photographed steer in Scotland (Photo below)
Callander (map coordinates = 56.244447,-4.21704)

Callander is a small town on the edge of the mountains described as “Gateway to the Highlands” as it is on the entrance road to Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. We stopped for lunch and some shopping, Mary and I went to a pub. The food and service were great.

It is a picturesque town with many inviting stores.

View of the Mountains from Callander (Photo below)

Bistro (Photo above)  
Woollen Mill (Photo above)
Stirling Castle  (map coordinates =  56.122902,-3.945962

One of Scotland’s grandest castles due to its imposing position and impressive architecture, Stirling Castle commands the countryside for many miles around. It towers over some of the most important battlefields of Scotland’s past including Stirling Bridge, the site of William Wallace’s victory over the English in 1297, and Bannockburn where Robert the Bruce defeated the same foe in the summer of 1314. (Source = website)
Visit the Stirling Castle website www.stirlingcastle.gov.uk to plan your visit and buy admission tickets. Opening Hours 1 April - 30 September 9:30am to 6.00pm  Adult: £13.00 (age 16-59)

It is free to visit the outside of the Castle, the main courtyard, and tourist gift shop. Admission is required to visit the interior of the castle. We didn't have much time as it was late in the day, but this appears to be a great site to explore. See this website for an excellent description of the castle with photos, maps, and history, http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/stirling/stirlingcastle/palace.html

Google Aerial Photo Below
The Hall of Heroes within the William Wallace monument commemorates several famous Scots but the monument is only dedicated to William Wallace in memory of the Wars of Scottish Indepe

pendence.  SEE http://nationalwallacemonument.com/.  Robert the Bruce was the King of Scotland and a famous warrior who led the Wars of Scottish Independence and reclaimed the Scottish throne from England.

From the grassy area in front of the castle, you have great views of the mountains and the city of Stirling below.
Front of the Castle (Photo below)

Defensive walls at the front of the castle (Photo above)

Entrance to the castle from the parking lot (Photo above)
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend www.CruiseCritic.com; it's free to join.

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Fortunately, a friend of mine on that ship complained to the purser and the ship stopped violating my copyright.

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Tom Sheridan