



## 40 fascinating facts about Kintyre

1. Kintyre means *head of land* from Scots Gaelic.
2. Geographically, the Kintyre peninsula is long and narrow, at no point more than 11 miles (18 km) from west coast to east coast. The central spine of the peninsula is mostly hilly moorland, but the coastal areas and hinterland are rich and fertile and it has extensive access to sea fruits!
3. Ready sources of food has ensured Kintyre has long been a prized area for settlers, from the early Scots who migrated from Ulster to western Scotland and the Vikings or Norsemen who conquered and settled the area just before the start of the second millennium. Changes in settlement has left diverse relics for the visitor to enjoy.
4. RAF Machrihanish is now the civil airfield, Campbeltown Airport. It is still available to the Royal Air Force and is used as a temporary training ground for military units.
5. Saddell is home to the ruins of a Cistercian Abbey. This was founded around 1160 by Somerled, and completed by his son, whose descendants became the Clan MacDonald and eventual Lords of the Isles.
6. The long peninsula of Kintyre provides ferry service access to the islands of Arran, Islay, Gigha, Colonsay and Sanda and also provides a short cut to the southern tip of the neighbouring Cowal peninsula.
7. The grounds at Saddell Abbey, now a cemetery, are home to some fine examples of carved medieval grave slabs. Relief carvings on the stones show warriors in their armour, clerics, ships, huntsmen with stags, large swords and Celtic knot work designs. Most were carved at Saddell Abbey but some are more typical of the Iona school of stone carving.
8. Campbeltown was originally known as Kinlochkilkerran, *the head of the loch by the kirk of St Kieran*, which is still the form used in Gaelic.
9. Springbank Distillery, Campbeltown is unique. It is the oldest independent family owned distillery in Scotland. Founded in 1828 on the site of Archibald Mitchell's illicit still, the Springbank Distillery is now in the hands of his great great grand son, Hedley G. Wright. It is the only distillery in Scotland to carry out the full production process on the one site. 100% of the traditional floor malting, maturation and bottling is done at the distillery.
10. Kintyre whisky drinkers eagerly await the bottling of the first Hazelburn single malt 10 year old bottling in 2007. Hazelburn is the third of three distinct distillations that come from Springbank Distillery.
11. Sir William McTaggart (1835 - 1910) was a Scottish landscape painter who was influenced by Impressionism. The son of a crofter, McTaggart was born in the small village of Aros in Kintyre. Kintyre coasts featured in his dramatic seascapes.
12. The well-known folk song titled *Campbeltown Loch, I wish you were whisky* is based on the town's history in the whisky industry. There were at one time more than 30 distilleries in the town.
13. A unique experience can be found at Torrisdale Castle Tannery. It is organic and odour-free, no chemicals are used and all tanning is done by hand. Specialising in natural coloured sheepskins and deerskins, this ancient tanning method produces a superior skin--earning itself the accolade "the best sheepskins in Scotland".
14. Gigha was owned at one time by Sir James Horlicks, of the patent drink fame. He laid out Achamore Gardens in 1949.
15. The waters around the Kintyre peninsula make great sailing and the Bell Lawrie Scottish Series (locally known as Tarbert Boat Race) is the premier sailing event in Scotland and it is

the second largest sailing series in the United Kingdom. This year's Scottish Series will be hosted on May 25 - 28, 2007.

16. A crag near the chapel of Keil and St. Columba's Well, between Dunaverty Bay and Carskey in Kintyre, has two footprints carved at a place where St. Columba is reputed to have first set foot in Dalriada, an old name for this part of Scotland.
17. Naomi Margaret Mitchison, novelist and poet, with more than 90 books to her credit retired to Carradale House with her husband. She lived there 'til her death in 1999 at the age of 101!
18. Davaar Island is located at the mouth of Campbeltown Loch off the east coast of Kintyre. It is a tidal island, linked to the mainland by a natural shingle causeway called the Dhorlin near Campbeltown at low tide. The crossing can be made in around 40 minutes.
19. The name Tarbert comes from Old Norse and means *narrow neck of land*. There are a number of places of this name in Scotland and they typically occur where Norse settlement occurred.
20. The cape of the peninsula is known as the Mull of Kintyre. This was immortalised by a Paul McCartney song of the same name.
21. Carradale thrived in the 1800s with the growth of herring fishing resulting in a pier being constructed, which allowed pleasure steam ships to come in from Glasgow with holidaymakers.
22. Aqualibrium sited in Campbeltown is a modern development renewing the old swimming pool and library in a single location! The building meets high environmental standards, with substantial insulation, a biomass-based heating system running on locally sourced wood chips and the collection of rainwater for flushing toilets.
23. The islanders of Gigha made history on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2002 when they managed, with help from grants from the National Lottery and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, to purchase the island for £4 million and they now own it through a development trust called the Isle of Gigha Heritage Trust.
24. Tarbert salutes its heritage as a fishing port with its annual Seafood Festival, set around the natural harbour at the top of Kintyre. A main annual event it is held on the first Saturday and Sunday in July.
25. The Gigha Heritage Trust set up Gigha Renewable Energy Ltd. to buy and operate three Vestas V27 wind turbines, known locally as The Dancing Ladies or Creideas, Dòchas and Carthannas (Gaelic for Faith, Hope and Charity). The trust controls all the profits and generates revenue by selling power to the national grid.
26. Tarbert Castle overlooks the harbour and although pre-14th Century in construction, the tower dates from 1494 and the visit of James IV to the Western Highlands.
27. The Kintyre Way is a long distance walking route that criss-crosses the Kintyre Peninsula on the West Coast of the Scottish Mainland, the Kintyre Way extends for 89 miles (142 km) from Tarbert to Dunaverty. In 9 sections ranging from 2.5 miles to 15 miles, the way covers forest and private land with some sections on roads. Spectacular views over the areas seascapes reward the walker and opportunities for wildlife watching include roe deer, grouse, red squirrels, hen harriers and golden eagles.
28. Danish owned Vesta Celtic Wind Technology have manufacturing premises at Machrihanish and have produced turbines for a number of local wind farms.
29. The Mull of Kintyre Music Festival is centred in Campbeltown and runs from 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August 2007. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> festival, which promises an eclectic mix of song, music and dance in formal and spontaneous form. Dougie Maclean returns this year.
30. Glenbarr Abbey, an 18<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic house unconnected with any abbey houses a Clan Macalister Centre and is the seat of the Macalister Clan Chief.
31. Creag Bhan, at 329 feet is the highest point on Gigha and gives superb views, which extend to Northern Ireland on a clear day.
32. Machrihanish's championship golf course is considered to have the world's finest first hole and was described by golfing legend Tom Morris as *specifically designed by the almighty for playing golf!*

33. Stonefield Castle Hotel is a Scottish Baronial House built by WH Playfair of classical Edinburgh's fame. The castle has gardens, which are open to all.
34. According to legend, it was across the narrow isthmus between West and East Loch Tarbert, which connects Tarbert with West Tarbert, that Magnus Barelegs, son of King Olaf of Norway, had his men drag his ship in 1098, to claim that Kintyre was an island and therefore a Viking possession.
35. Torrisdale Castle was built in 1815 and extended in the early 1900s. Surrounded by magnificent trees it looks across the sea to the island of Arran. Still a family home, some of the castle has been converted to self-catering accommodation.
36. The highest point on Kintyre is Beinn an Tuirc to the west of Carradale at 454m (1491 feet).
37. If you enjoy a taste of living on the edge the former lighthouse keepers' cottages at the Mull of Kintyre have been refurbished for holiday letting and are managed by the National Trust for Scotland.
38. Machrihanish has a huge sandy beach exposed to the Atlantic whose gigantic rollers make it popular with surfers.
39. Dunaverty Castle witnessed a bloody massacre in 1647 when 300 Macdonald supporters of Charles I and Montrose were forced to surrender to General Leslie, who promptly shot them save for one lad.
40. From Southend, summer boat trips sail to Sanda Island, traditionally associated with St Ninian, Scotland's first bishop.