

Burg & the fossil tree



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Walk to the edge of the wilderness

- Follow this map to take a walk to MacCulloch's fossil tree. Please leave your car at the Tiroran car park.
- The walk from here to the fossil tree is about 5 miles (8.5km) along a rough and sometimes steep path.
- Allow at least six hours for the round trip. Beyond Burg bothy, the track deteriorates and passes below some spectacular cliffs.
- The path includes a steep descent to a beach via an iron ladder. Take extreme care.
- Keep dogs under close control and bear in mind that they can't descend the ladder.
- The path ends at the fossil tree and it is very difficult to progress beyond this.



Fossil tree trail



Heath-spotted orchid



Globeflower



Mountain avens



Ramsons (wild garlic)

7 DUN BHUIRG

Situated on a cliff edge, this unexcavated defended stone roundhouse is one of nine such sites around the edge of Loch Scridain, all thought to date back 2,000 years to the Iron Age. Each was the focus for a farming community. The walls are over 4m thick, and the base of a flight of stairs is visible.

8 COASTAL GRASSLANDS

The coastal grasslands are home to one of Scotland's rarest moths, the slender Scotch burnet. Flying mainly in June, this red and black moth feeds on birdsfoot trefoil. Flowering plants such as thyme, wild carrot and kidney vetch provide a mass of colour in summer.

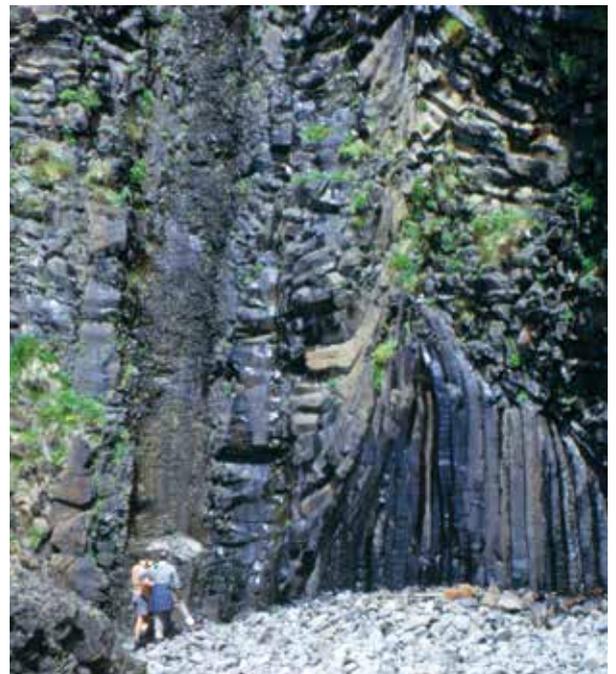
9 BEARRAICH

The summit of Bearraich provides excellent views to Ben More in the east and over Ulva, Staffa and the Treshnish Isles to Tiree. On a clear day you can see the Outer Hebrides. The basalt rocks provide ideal habitats for some rare plants, including Iceland purslane, purple saxifrage, mountain avens and globeflower. You may see golden and sea eagles soaring around the cliffs.

10 MacCULLOCH'S FOSSIL TREE

The impression of a 50-million-year-old tree is embedded in an old lava flow. Over the years, souvenir hunters have damaged what remains of the tree trunk. Please don't pick away pieces of the fossil.

Signs of other fossil trees can be seen in the beach below the path. The columnar structures that fan out like the spokes of a wheel formed as the lava cooled.





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Burg

Fossil tree trail

Description

From 200-million-year-old fossils to an Iron Age farm, Burg's wild landscape holds traces of a long and rich past. Rare plants thrive on Burg's rich volcanic soil. The short grass is perfect for catching a glimpse of the rare slender Scotch burnet moth, the chimney sweep moth or the dark green fritillary butterfly. The peninsula is home to red deer, feral goats and otters. Walk the rugged coastal trail to enjoy archaeology, geology, wildlife and breathtaking views of Staffa and the Treshnish Isles.

Grade

Rough ground and challenging

Terrain

A rough and, in places, steep path which includes a steep descent to a beach via an iron ladder. Please **take extreme care** and bear in mind that dogs cannot descend the ladder. The path ends at the fossil tree and it is then very difficult to progress beyond this.

Distance

5 miles / 8.5km

Time

At least six hours

OS Map

Landranger Sheet 48



1 TIORAN CAR PARK

Start your walk here. The name Tioran may mean 'the house of Oran'. Oran was an early medieval priest and follower of St Columba.

2 SCOBULL SCHOOL AND DUN SCOBULL

The name Scobull is old Norse for Scob's farm. Children used to walk barefoot to school here from Burg bothy. On the hill behind the school is the Iron Age fortification Dun Scobuill.

3 COFFIN CAIRNS

Each of these cairns represents one generation of the MacGillivray family. They would rest a coffin here on the way to the graveyard.

4 RUINED TOWNSHIPS

Culliemore and Salachry were once busy settlements – 35 people lived at Culliemore alone. In the mid-19th century they were cleared to make way for sheep. Ruins can also be seen of shieling huts where cattle were taken to graze in the summer. The grass fields, now rich in flowers, give a glimpse of the plants that thrived before intensive farming began. In spring the slopes are covered in bluebells and primroses.

5 TAVOOL HOUSE

Tavool House was the 'big house' on the Ardmeanach peninsula, and once belonged to the Bell family who spent their summers here and provided employment for local people.

6 BURG FARM AND BOTHY

Over 50 people thrived at Burg until the clearances of the 1840s. Remains of stone and turf blackhouses can still be seen along the track. The tiny bothy, built in the 1880s and now owned by the National Trust for Scotland, once housed eight members of the MacGillivray family. Later they built the larger farmhouse and four generations of the family farmed here. During the 1930s and World War Two, they ran an experimental farm, trying out agricultural methods that other island communities might learn from. Many of the fields – once full of potatoes, turnips and oats – have now been reclaimed by bracken.

Evidence for farming at Burg dates back to Neolithic times and two possible Bronze Age cairns can be seen on the beach below the farm.