

naturally good for you

remember to use your sense of smell as well. Breathe in the scent of a bluebell wood or the resinous aroma of a birch tree newly in leaf.

Children love to explore by touch. Let them feel the difference between soft willow catkins and rough Scots pine bark. Find out just how sticky horse chestnut buds are.



Fun and relaxation

For a spot of aquatherapy, seek out woodland walks beside lochs, rivers and waterfalls. Few things are more invigorating than the sight and sound of lively, crystal clear water. The River Lochy at Strone Hill near Dalmally and the waterfalls and sea views at Aros Park near Tobermory are great for refreshing the spirits.

Trees and their foliage act like a natural hide, enabling visitors to the woods to come much closer to the wildlife than they would be able to in the open. Go quietly and you could surprise a red squirrel or an otter foraging for food. Sparrowhawk and buzzard fly between the trees, while heron and sandpiper frequent the loch shores.

If you need a bit of encouragement to get active in the woods, a ranger led event can introduce you to new areas and activities. It might be searching for Easter eggs, participating in a family treasure hunt on bicycles or joining a guided walk with a wildlife expert.

Inspiring experiences

Expect a fascinating time in the forest.

You can meet the giants of the tree world by walking amongst their soaring trunks. Douglas fir and other trees introduced from North America are well on their way to becoming record breakers at Sutherland's Grove in Bar-

caldine Forest on Loch Creran and at MacKenzie's Grove at Cruachan on Lochaweside.

Many woodland trails lead to sites of historical and archaeological interest. At Torinturk on West Loch Tarbert there are Neolithic and Bronze Age burial cairns. Or explore the remains of an ancient settlement, with a cross slab and holy well, at Kilmory Oib in Knapdale.

A short walk on Kintyre leads to Tarbert Castle, which was extended by Robert the Bruce after he became king of Scotland 700 years ago. The more recent history of the clearances is evident in several forests, such as Inniemore on Morvern, where the tales are particularly poignant.

At all these places, Forestry Commission Scotland interpretative boards and waymarked routes add an extra dimension to the experience.

Active Woods

Here are some great Forestry Commission Scotland woods and forests to explore:

1. Glenachulish - enjoy cycle routes with

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