

Isle of Skye

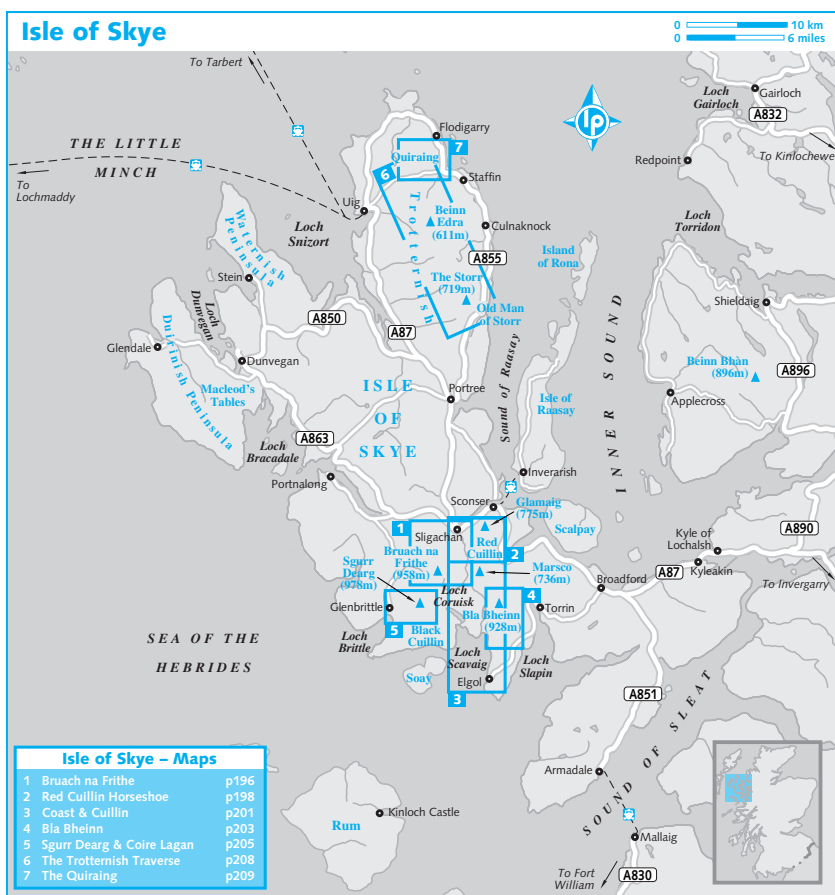
The Isle of Skye is blessed with incontestably the finest scenic splendour and variety in Scotland, assets that have drawn writers, artists and travellers to the island for centuries. Since the early 20th century walkers and climbers have also flocked to Skye to revel in the glorious array of hill and coast walking. All manner of visitors also come in search of the island's mystical atmosphere, little diminished in many quiet corners, at a safe distance from the seemingly unstoppable growth of tourism and construction of new houses.

The Black and Red Cuillins, Skye's trademark among hill folk, are all about adrenalin-drenched challenge and sublime hill and sea vistas, and immensely rewarding for that. They're the subject of the first part of this chapter with two walks, both involving a modest amount of rock scrambling, in the angular Black Cuillin and one in the rounded Red Cuillin. A third Black Cuillin outing, to Sgurr Dearg, and involving a hefty swag of scrambling, is outlined in the boxed text on p204. Proving that height isn't everything, the Coast & Cuillin walk, into the heart of the Black Cuillin, combines superb coast and hill scenery.

North of the Cuillin, beyond the island's capital of Portree, lies the Trotternish peninsula, the centrepiece of which is an undulating, mostly grassy ridge, encrusted with crumbling cliffs and fantastic pinnacles. The walking here is over gentler gradients and on grass. The Quiraing, close to the northern tip of the island, is an extraordinary assemblage of pinnacles, bluffs and secret places.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Venturing into the remote sanctuary of **Loch Coruisk** (p201)
- Finding the way along on the airy ridge of **Bla Bheinn** (p203) in the Black Cuillin
- Savouring the magnificent views far and wide from the **Storr** (p208)
- Romping along the roller-coaster Trotternish ridge on the **Trotternish Traverse** (p207)
- Not getting lost among the weird pinnacles of the **Quiraing** (p209)



INFORMATION

Maps & Books

For a topographic overview of the island the OS Travel – Road 1:250,000 map No 2 *Western Scotland* is ideal.

Skye & the North West Highlands by John Brooks and Neil Wilson covers 15 varied walks on Skye. The Ramblers' Association's *Guide to the Isle of Skye* by Chris Townsend describes 30 walks, ranging from easy strolls to challenging Cuillin scrambles. *Isle of Skye including Raasay* by Paul Williams concentrates on walks at the easier end of the spectrum. *Skye 360, Walking the Coastline of Skye* by Andrew Dempster is a personalised account of a month-long journey with just enough details to follow in his

footsteps. A *Long Walk on the Isle of Skye* by David Paterson, in coffee-table format, offers a description of his walk, inspired by his superb photos.

Guided Walks

Highland Council's countryside rangers (☎ 01471 822905; Old Cory Industrial Estate, Broadford) run varied programs of guided walks, with particular emphasis on Skye's natural heritage, from around March until October. Pick up a printed program from local tourist information centres (TICs).

Cuillin Guides (☎ 01478 640289; www.cuillin-guides.co.uk; Glenbrittle) has years of solid experience behind it, and an unrivalled knowledge of the hills. Its program includes five days of