

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **Scotland's magnificent seven hidden beaches**

Scotland's forests and woodlands transform during Autumn, as greens turn to brilliant burnt red and the season ignites the landscape.

Far less obvious are the changes that autumn brings to Scotland's beaches and, as the temperature drops, the waves rise and the chill winds quicken, they become a treasure trove.

Autumn has always been a season for long walks, with the crunch of crisp leaves beneath you, but strolls along Scotland's beaches truly offer insight into how the world changes as winter creeps closer.

"The changes are trickier to spot and not as clear cut as the woods," explained Ian Cornforth, whose beat as Head Ranger at Culzean Castle in Ayrshire includes stretches of rocky coastline, sandy beaches and cliffs pitted with old smuggler's caves.

"The stormy weather washes in the living and the dead and you can see the challenges and dangers that the season brings.

"We have found huge whalebones at this time of year and we also see seabirds and a lot of seals being washed in as the high tides and strong winds bring them higher up the beach.

"At the moment I am hooked on gathering mermaid's purses. We find loads of them washed up and dried out on the beaches but when you put them back in water, they re-shape and you can see exactly where a baby shark or skate has emerged.

"You get a glimpse of hidden nature. There is a whole world hidden beneath the ocean and it becomes real at this time of year. And when you see it, you really start to understand, appreciate and care about it."

Scotland offers every kind of coastal setting imaginable and the National Trust for Scotland, who care for Culzean Castle, count seaside nature reserves, gardens and coastal walks among their properties.

Many are included in the conservation charity's Stride Out for Scotland campaign, which is urging people to get out and explore the country's wild spaces.

The waterfronts at Culzean are really a microcosm of Scotland and, if you choose to, one moment you can be scrambling among rocks and the next strolling along a sandy beach.

“Once you develop that love of beachcombing time has no meaning,” said Ian. “You lose yourself in the thrill of the hunt.

“Autumn is also a great time to see seals. If you get down to Port Carrick Beach at Culzean in the morning before the visitors arrive and when there is a low tide when the rocks are exposed, you’ll see them there, basking in the sun.

“Just remember to please keep your dog on the lead if they are around. Autumn is when all wildlife is gearing up for the hardest time of the year. They need every ounce of food and energy they can get and if they are spooked by a dog, they’ll use that up, trying to get to safety.

“The seals can be great to watch. They don’t do much, but if something does happen, the whole group comes to life and you’ll see the big male slapping someone into place and then watch as that message goes down the line.

“This is just a great opportunity to see them and see a very different side of life on the beaches, before it gets too cold and too choppy.”

We have compiled a short list of seven magnificent National Trust for Scotland beaches which offer unforgettable adventures and take you far from the maddening crowds.

### **Scotland’s hidden beaches**

#### [Culzean Castle](#)

The coast beneath the castle has everything, rock pools, sandy stretches and caves which are perfect for exploring. Watch for porpoise and dolphin in the stretch of water leading over to Arran and get there early to say hello to the bob of resident seals at Port Carrick Beach.

#### [Inverewe Gardens](#)

This stunning Highland garden offers spectacular sights, including towering Californian Redwoods. The sea Loch Ewe which it overlooks is also a haven for wildlife, including seals, otters and sea eagles.

#### [Kintail and Morvich](#)

One of the really ‘wild’ areas of the Scottish Highlands which includes Loch Duich. The more adventurous can go sea kayaking with a National Trust for Scotland ranger, although sharp-eyed walkers on the beach will be able to spy otters and golden eagles.

#### [Rockcliffe](#)

Is one of Scotland's most beautiful coastlines, stretching along the Solway Firth on the southern edge of Dumfries and Galloway. This NTS nature reserve has been designated a National Scenic Area and is dotted with sailing villages.

### [St Abb's Head](#)

A clifftop seabird colony, Autumn may not be the best season for spotting its residents, but it is breath-taking coastal headland with dramatic cliffs and the St Abb's Head Lighthouse, designed and built by the pioneering Stevenson brothers, David and Thomas, in 1862.

### [Montrose Basin and Nature Reserve](#)

Situated just a short walk from the House of Dun, which is also cared for by the National Trust for Scotland, Montrose Basin is an enclosed estuary of the river South Esk and is home to over 80,000 migratory birds.

### [Brodick Castle](#)

Britain's only island country park stretches from seashore to mountain top. Brodick has sandy beaches and a wide grassy area and play facilities. Further along, you can also visit the quieter beach of Strabane – which is sometimes known as Dukes' Beach.

You can find more walks and days out for explorers of all ages at [nts.org.uk](https://www.nts.org.uk)

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#### **Editor's Notes:**

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at [www.nts.org.uk](https://www.nts.org.uk).

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to 'the National Trust'. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or 'the Trust'.

