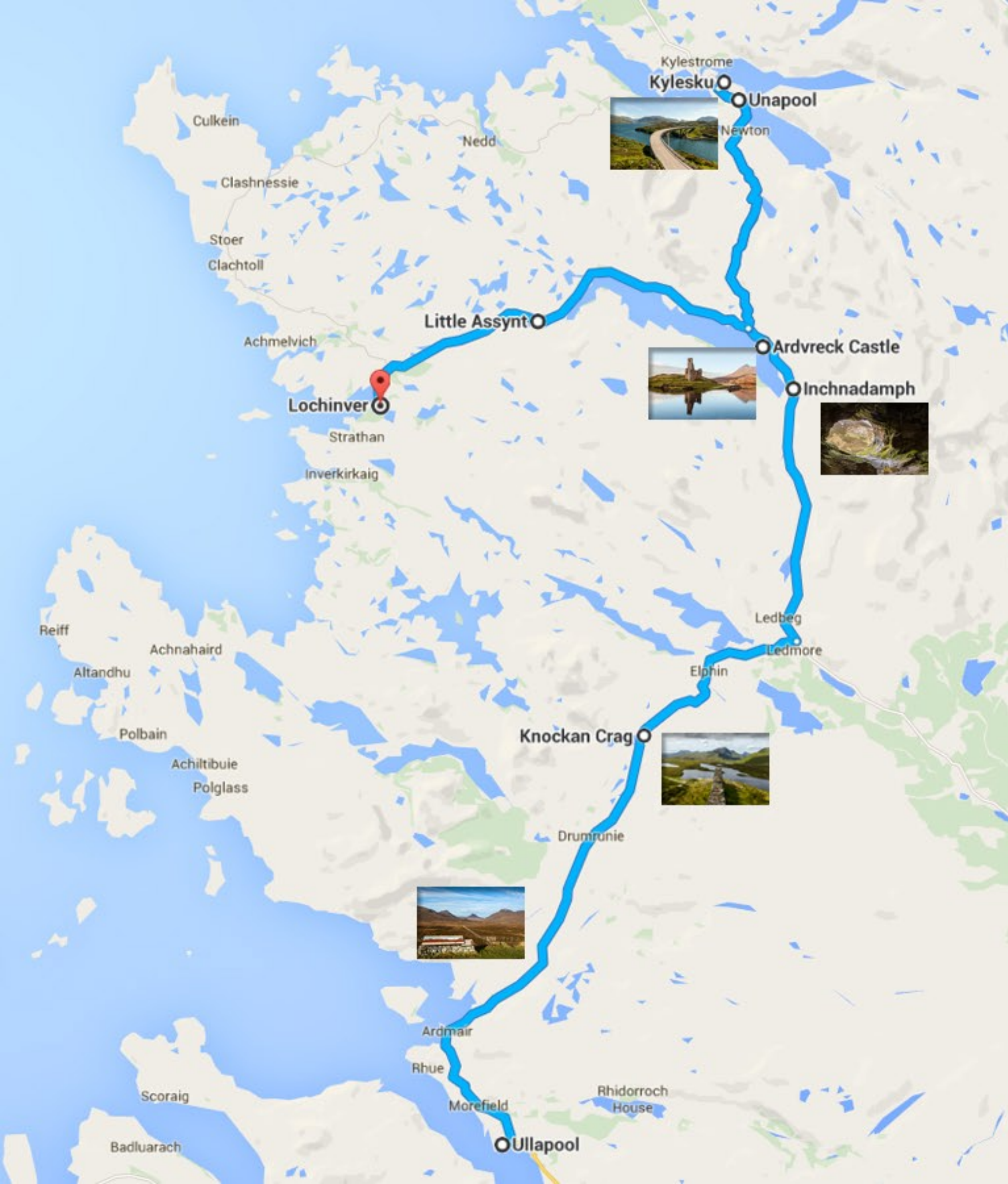


NORTH OF ULLAPOOL

Ullapool / Knockan Crag / Bone Caves / Ardvreck / Unapool
/ Kylescu / Little Assynt / Lochinver



Background

In 2015, the North West Highlands Geopark was given UNESCO Geopark status. This 3 billion year-old region of about 2000km² represents one of the last areas of true wilderness in Europe and is of huge historical, geological and cultural importance as well as being spectacularly beautiful. The area is particularly popular with geologists, archaeologists, natural history and wildlife lovers, walkers, climbers, artists and photographers. The Knockan Crag Visitor Centre is a typical starting point and the Rock Stop Cafe and Visitor Centre at Unapool (beside Kylesku) opened in summer 2015. (<http://www.nwhgeopark.com/>). All suggestions described for the North routes are within the UNESCO North West Highlands Geopark (about 2000km of wilderness north of Ullapool)

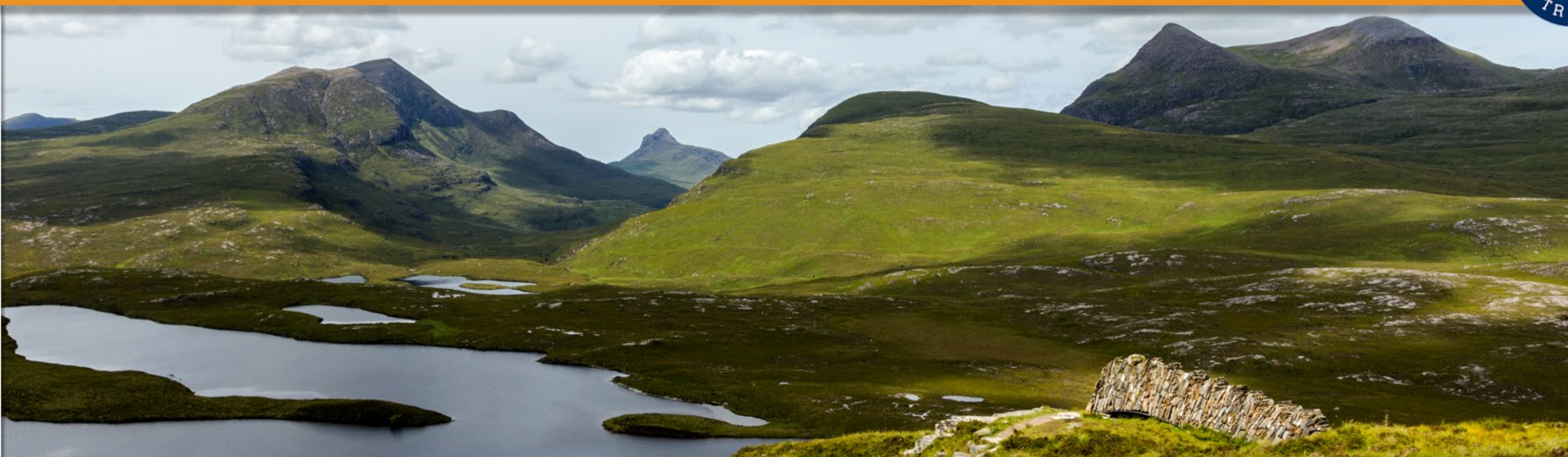
TOURS/PRESENTATIONS

Qualified, knowledgeable and very keen tour guides are happy to arrange for any walks, climbs, hikes or talks within the Geopark. The Geopark Manager is extremely keen to engage with cruise operators to discuss tailor-designing tours for visitors. This link describes a number of tours proposed for the 2016 season <http://www.nwhgeopark.com/geotours-2016/>
The locations described below can be combined to form half and full day trips or visited individually by groups with particular interests

MARKETING

Trips to the area offer the opportunity to market life-affirming experiences either “taster” trips through an ancient, spectacular, dramatic landscape forever changing in colour and aspect with an embarrassment of mountains, lochs and valleys. For nature-lovers, there are numerous options to walk, explore and immerse themselves in an extraordinary landscape and connect with a prehistoric past and. This video offers a taste of Geopark experience - it's a bit academic but is very informative and gives glimpses of what we love about up here - <https://vimeo.com/134631610>

Kockan Crag



Distance from Ullapool

12 mi/20km

Toilets?

Yes

Website

<http://www.nnr-scotland.org.uk/knockan-crag/>

Comment

Unmanned visitor centre (called The Rock Room) with literature and interpretive panels. Ideal starting point to gain understanding of geological and historical significance of region.

Coaches can drive right up to it. Great views.

For keen walkers and hikers a choice of three trails leaving the Rock Room offer spectacular views across the regions of Coigach and Assynt.

The paths are marked with poetry and sculpture en route.

Bone Caves, Inchnadamph



Distance from Ullapool

24mi/38km

Toilets?

No

Website

<http://www.discoverassynt.co.uk/viewdetails.php?id=54>

Comment

Linx, wolf and polar bear skulls were among those found in these limestone caves over 100 years ago and exhibited in Edinburgh's Museum of Scotland.

Three main cave entrances overlook a valley through which the walker approaches - with beautiful waterfalls, ancient river beds, springs - the 2.5mi/4km walk alone is magnificent.

Guide not strictly necessary but would definitely add value to the trip. 200m ascent with one steep climb.

Duration - approximately 2 hours.

Ardvreck Castle, Calda House (Ruins)



Distance from Ullapool

25mi/40km

Toilets?

No

Website

<http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/lochinvver/ardvreckcastle/>

Comment

Dating back to about 1490, owned by the Macleods of Assynt, the history is fractious.

The castle was attacked by the Mackenzies in 1672 who replaced it in 1726 with the more modern Calda House which burned down before they ever lived there.

Excellent parking and information boards here with plenty of ruins to walk around.

Goes without saying that fantastic scenery abounds.

Obvious stop-off point after Knockan Crag en route to either Lochinvver or Unapool/Kylesku

Rock Stop Visitor Centre and Cafe Unapool



Distance from Ullapool 32mi/51km

Toilets? Yes

Website <http://www.nwhgeopark.com/plan-your-visit/rockstop/>

Comment Just st opened in the 2015 season, this is the official Geopark visitor hub.

Alongside selling refreshments, there are ongoing exhibitions.

Be Aware - this is probably only suitable for smaller half coaches/groups as parking and size of area could cause mayhem. Suggested max - XX PAXX

Just around the bend lies the tiny spectacular hamlet of Kylesku a natural turnaround point

Kylesku



Distance from Ullapool

33mi/53km

Toilets?

No

Comment

Kylesku's eye-catching bridge, its beautiful curved shape thrown into relief by the scenic backdrop was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1984, replacing a ferry which had been saving passengers and their cargo a 100-mile road trip since 1800.

Views from the car park to the north show how well the bridge fits into the surrounding landscape or view it from underneath on the south side, allowing an insight into its construction.

From the carpark there are outstanding views to Quinag; there's also a cairn commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 12th Submarine Flotilla, a miniature submarine unit which trained in local waters from 1943 onwards. Boat trips (duration 1.45hrs) from Kylesku jetty offer views of the 650ft high Eas-Coul-Aulin waterfall, Britain's highest and four times the height of Niagara Falls.

Lochinver via Little Assynt



Distance from Ullapool

36mi/58km

Toilets?

Yes

Comment

Little Assynt is suitable for visitors of all ages/abilities and offers EVERYONE the chance to experience the great outdoors.

Leitir Easaidh all abilities path is designed for wheelchair users; the trail passes two lochs.

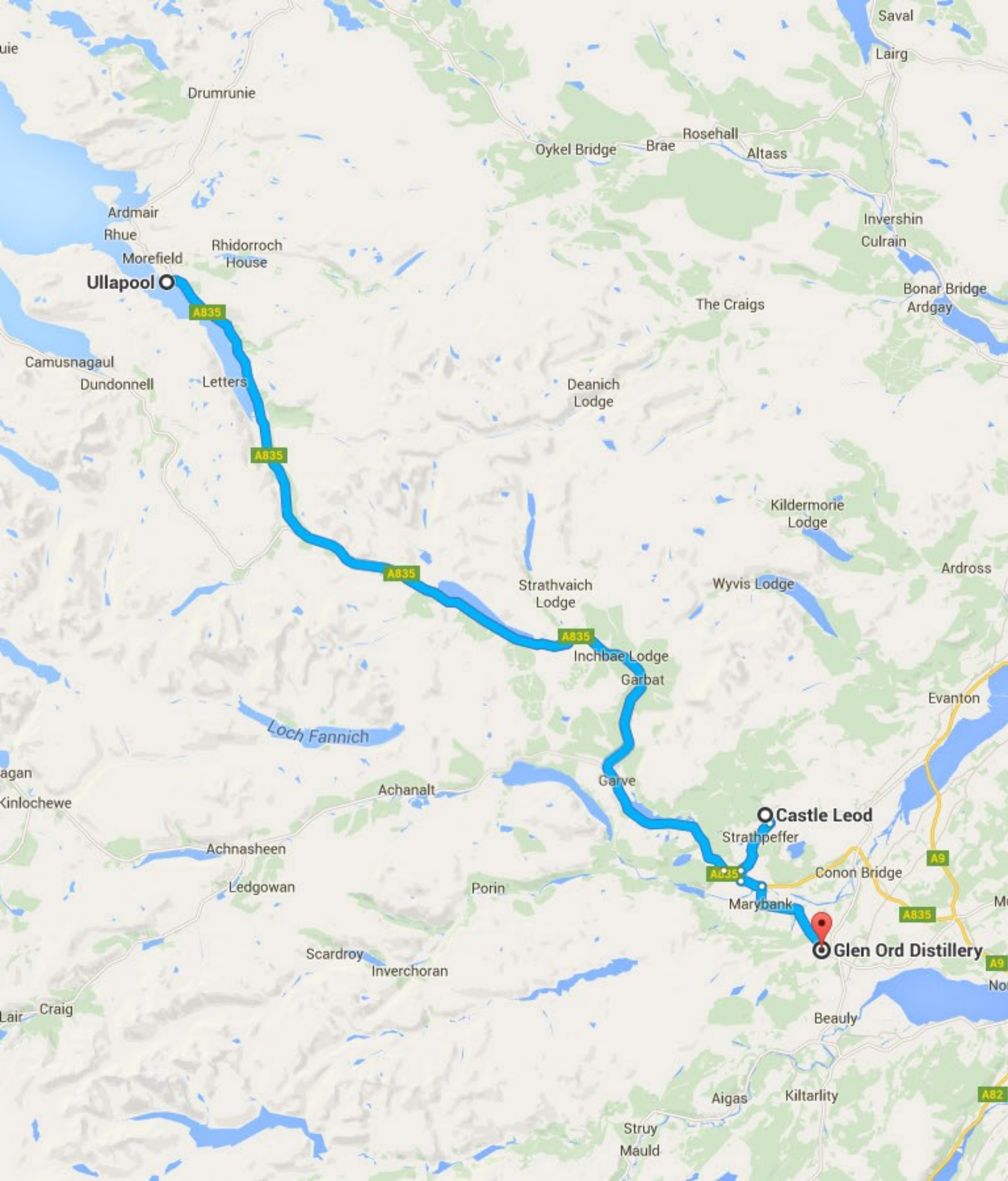
There are shelters and toilets.

And there are outstanding views across the landscape and surrounding mountains.

Lochinver village, a further five miles along the road, is a natural turning point - it's a small village with a visitor centre, some shops, pubs and restaurants.

EAST OF ULLAPOOL

Strathpeffer Castle Leod / Glen Ord Distillery



Castle Leod, Strathpeffer



Distance from Ullapool 36mi/58km **Toilets?** Yes **Website** <http://www.castleleod.org.uk/>

Comment Castle Leod, seat of Clan Mackenzie and home to the present clan chief John Mackenzie, was built around 1606. The castle provided the inspiration for Castle Leoch in the historical TV fiction show Outlander. The resident Earl of Cromarty offers private guided tours of his home to small groups and tops the visit off with a dram of whisky. The castle also benefits from wonderful gardens; there are Giant Sequoia and a Spanish Chestnut planted in 1550 for Mary of Guise, mother of Mary Queen of Scots. The Earl will host groups of no more than 30.

Just a short walk away lies the little Victorian spa village of Strathpeffer, however we wonder whether it would be attractive to offer a full day trip with half a coach visiting Castle Leod while the others visit Glen Ord Distillery, 7 miles away and then a swap over. We know John, both he and the castle are delightful. The distillery is one of the oldest in Scotland and have set up an exhibition space and are fully equipped to do tours.

Glen Ord Distillery



Distance from Ullapool

44mi/71km

Toilets? Yes

Website <https://www.discovering-distilleries.com/glenord/>

Comment

visit to Glen Ord Distillery, on the edge of the Black Isle in the Highlands west of Inverness, is a delight to both the eye and the palate. Watch our distillers at work creating a magical malt whisky which is sweet, malty and dry on the palate. Visitors are also welcome to browse our shop that is well stocked with a wide variety of single malt whiskies, books, glassware and other quality items.