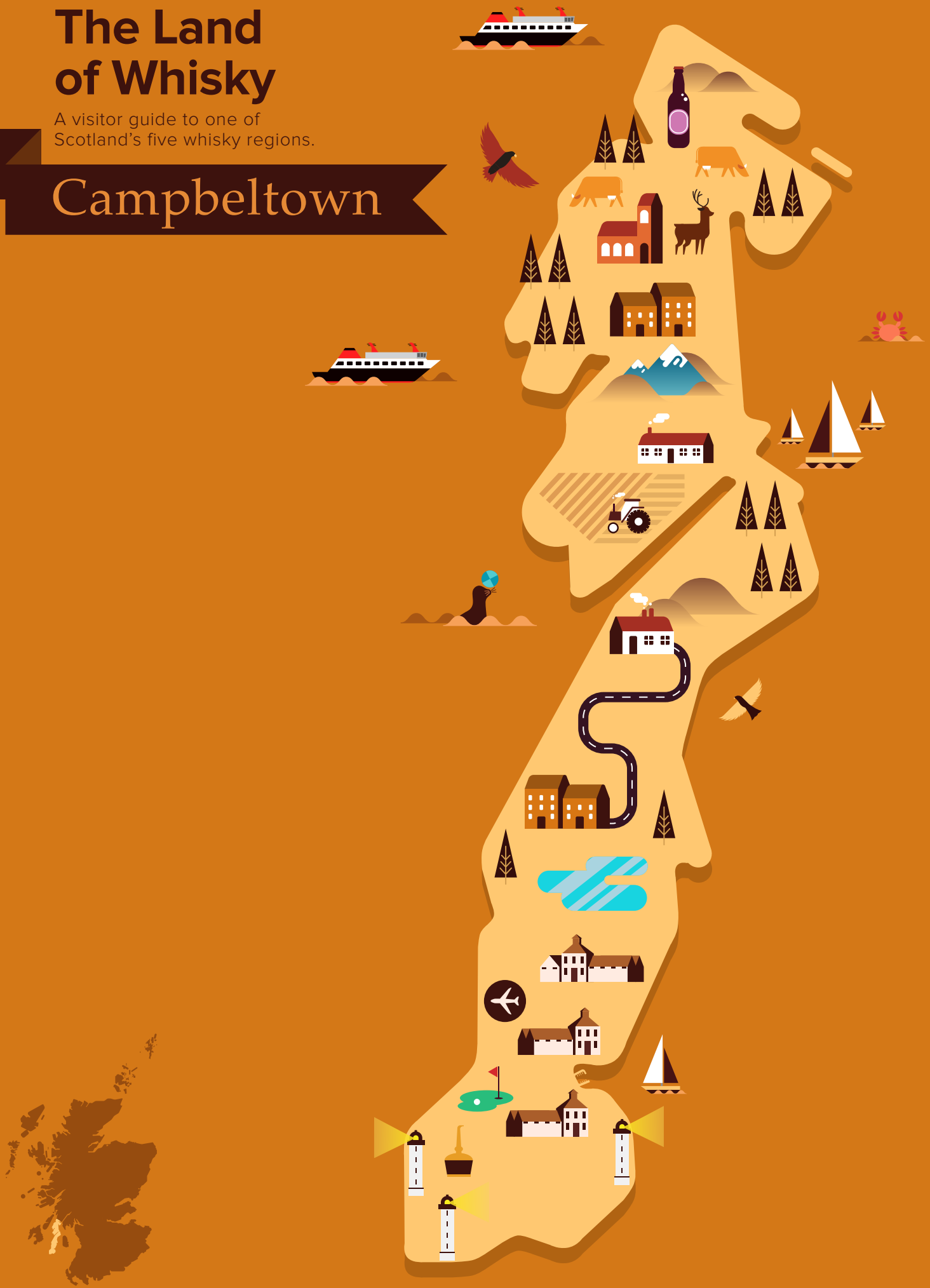
The Land of Whisky

A visitor guide to one of Scotland's five whisky regions.

Campbeltown



Whisky

The practice of distilling ***whisky*** has been lovingly perfected throughout Scotland for centuries and began as a way of turning rain-soaked barley into a drinkable spirit, using the fresh water from Scotland's crystal-clear springs, streams and burns.

To this day, distilleries across the country continue the tradition of using pure spring water from the same sources that have been used for centuries.

From the source of the water and the shape of the still to the wood of the cask used to mature the spirit, there are many factors that make Scotch whisky so wonderfully different and varied from distillery to distillery.

No two are the same; each has its own proud heritage, unique setting and its own way of doing things that has evolved and been refined over time. Paying a visit to a distillery lets you discover more about the environment and the people who shape the taste of the Scotch whisky you enjoy. So, when you're sitting back and relaxing with a dram of our most famous export at the end of your distillery tour, you'll be appreciating the essence of Scotland as it swirls in your glass.

Home to the greatest concentration of distilleries in the world, Scotland is divided into five distinct ***whisky regions***. These are Islay, Speyside, Highland, Lowland and Campbeltown.

Find out more information about whisky, how it's made, what foods to pair it with and more:
www.visitscotland.com/whisky

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Campbeltown

With just three working distilleries, Campbeltown is the smallest whisky-producing region in Scotland. While some have argued that this doesn't warrant the area being designated a whisky region, the characteristics of the town's single malts are incomparable to others around the country and have earned a loyal following of whisky enthusiasts.

In its heyday, the small Kintyre harbour town of Campbeltown was a prolific whisky producer with more than 30 legal distilleries, once earning it the moniker of 'whisky capital of the world' before later being conferred on Dufftown in Speyside.

With ample pasture and many local farms growing barley, coupled with nearby peat bogs and coal mines, Campbeltown distillers had all the resources they needed to produce fine Scotch whisky at their fingertips. It is little surprising then that the town became such a whisky boomtown in the 1800s. The key to its success however was its bustling port, with the arrival of ships from around the world en route to and from Glasgow – the 'second city of the Empire'.

A victim of its own popularity, the demand for the region's whisky was so great that distilleries couldn't keep up and ultimately the quality of its malt whisky dramatically began to fall. Campbeltown fell into further decline when rival whisky region Speyside was connected to the newly-built railways in the north of Scotland, allowing superior quality spirit to reach the market more quickly.

Nowadays, the three distilleries that remain in Campbeltown produce whisky with a curious mix of characteristics quite unlike anything in Scotland. Although local sources are depleted, peat from Tomintoul in the Highlands ensures the single malts retain their historic smoky palate. The proximity of the distilleries to the rolling sea mists from the Mull of Kintyre has ultimately ensured that maritime influences are very prominent in Campbeltown's dry single malts, both with a whiff of the sea on the nose and a salt, briny flavour on the palate.

Browse the listings in this guide to find out more information about the distilleries in the Campbeltown region, how to visit them or simply which of their drams to sample.

Be sure to check out our guides for the other four whisky regions:
Islay, Highland, Lowland and Speyside.

www.visitscotland.com/distilleries-guides

Glengyle/ Kilkerran Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

Campbeltown.

HOW TO GET THERE

Campbeltown sits at the southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula. The A83 runs the length of the peninsula from Arrochar near Loch Lomond where it becomes the A82 to Glasgow.

OVERVIEW

The Glengyle Distillery is situated in the centre of Campbeltown on Glebe Street, and it has a long and colourful history, starting with a tale of two brothers. William Mitchell and his brother John ran the Springbank Distillery, just down the road. They were farmers who worked hard to produce barley to use in the distilling process. After a quarrel between the two, William left the family business to start up the Glengyle Distillery on his own in 1872.

After some economic setbacks, Mitchell's Glengyle has made substantial contributions to the Campbeltown distilling industry, producing a rare single malt which has been savoured for generations. Many distilleries in this region have closed and Glengyle is one of the few remaining working distilleries, in a region which was formerly known for its booming whisky producers.

The whisky is sold under the name of Kilkerran, due to the fact that the Glengyle name was already used in another Highland blend.

SAMPLE

- Kilkerran Single Malt

WHERE TO BUY

Available to purchase online.

Glen Scotia Distillery

LOCATION

Campbeltown.

OVERVIEW

One of only three distilleries left in Campbeltown, Glen Scotia's original site on Parliament Street is said to be where the Stone of Destiny came from.

Glen Scotia Distillery is one of the smallest in Scotland, and was founded in 1832. The area around the distillery is known for mist, which rolls in off the sea, and the town's whiskies are characterised by this distinctive, salty tang.

Not open to the public

SAMPLE

- Glen Scotia 15 Year Old
- Glen Scotia Double Cask
- Glen Scotia Victoriana

WHERE TO BUY

Available online.

Looking out over the harbour at Campbeltown

Fun Facts:
Every year, the Kintyre Pensinsula celebrates with the ***Mull of Kintyre Music Festival***, where you can hear the very best of traditional and contemporary Celtic music.

Springbank Distillery

Tours available

LOCATION

Campbeltown.

HOW TO GET THERE

Campbeltown sits at the southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula. The A83 runs the length of the peninsula from Arrochar near Loch Lomond where it becomes the A82 to Glasgow. Tours start from Cadenhead's Whisky Shop at 30 Union Street, which is at the end of the A83 in Campbeltown town centre.

OVERVIEW

As most distilleries in Scotland are centuries-old businesses, many have changed hands several times over the decades. The one exception to the rule is Springbank, which remains the only independent, family-owned distillery in Scotland. First founded in 1828 on the site of Archibald Mitchell's illicit still, the distillery is still going today in the hands of Mitchell's great-great-great-grandson, Hedley Wright.

Campbeltown was once known as the 'whisky capital of the world', but it slipped into decline leaving only three working distilleries today. Much of the original Springbank Distillery remains intact, including decades-old machinery like the mill and kilns. As such, traditional methods are still employed by hand, including malting the barley on the distillery's malting floor.

It is also the only distillery to make whisky using a unique process called two-and-a-half-times distillation. The first half of the distillation (the low wines) is redistilled a second time, before being added to the second half for a third and final distillation. While the majority of distilleries concern themselves with consistency, Springbank is less concerned resulting in some of its 10 Year Old single malts, for instance, being more sherried than others – an additional quirk to a very unique distillery.

SAMPLE

- Springbank 10 Year Old
- Springbank 12 Year Old
- Springbank 15 Year Old
- Springbank 18 Year Old
- Springbank 21 Year Old
- Longrow Peated
- Longrow Red
- Longrow 18 Year Old
- Hazelburn 10 Year Old
- Hazelburn 12 Year Old

WHERE TO BUY

Available at most major retailers and online.

OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS IN CAMPBELTOWN

- ***Campbeltown Museum***
- ***Campbeltown Heritage Centre***
- ***Skipness Castle***
- ***Tarbert Castle***
- ***Taynish NNR, near Tayvallich***
- ***Kilmartin Glen***

Whisky barrels outside Springbank Distillery

Visit Scotland™

Be sure to check out our guides for the other **four regions.**

Driving around Scotland is a great way to see more of the country but before you head out exploring by car, there are a few rules and regulations you should be aware of: **www.visitscotland.com/travel/information/driving-in-scotland**

Drink responsibly: find useful information about drinking: **www.drinksmarter.org**