

Go wild with your child



in and around... Aberdeen



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Go Wild with your Child

in and around

Aberdeen



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For up-to-date information on bus services, timetables and fares, contact:

First Aberdeen (Aberdeen city services) tel: 01224 650065

Bluebird buses (country services) tel: 01224 212266

Organisations

NTS - National Trust for Scotland, tel: 0131 243 9300

HS - Historic Scotland, tel: 0131 668 8600

RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, tel: 01224 624824

SWT - Scottish Wildlife Trust, tel: 0131 312 7765

Woodland Trust - tel: 01476 578 104

Aberdeen City Council, tel: 01224 522000

Aberdeenshire Council, tel: 0845 6067000 (local rate)

FC - Forestry Commission, tel: 01330 844537

Introduction

Go Wild with your Child in Aberdeen has been published by Scottish Natural Heritage for parents and carers of pre-school children. One of Scottish Natural Heritage's aims is to help people to enjoy and understand Scotland's natural heritage.

This booklet provides you with a list of places in the Aberdeen area where you can introduce pre-schoolers to the wonders of nature. You will find details of directions/bus routes, costs, facilities and some activity ideas. For more activity ideas please see the Further Reading list.

By giving children direct experience of the natural world you can help them develop a positive and caring attitude towards it.

Go wild with your child!

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Go wild with your child



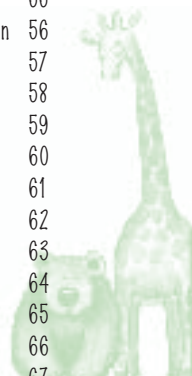
No. Contents

Page

1. Aberdeen Beach	9
2. Aberdeen Maritime Museum	10
3. Aden Country Park	11
4. Arnhall Moss Local Nature Reserve	12
5. Archaeolink Prehistory Park	13
6. Balmedie Country Park	14
7. Bennachie and Gordon Way	15
8. Bike Routes	16
9. Bridge of Feugh	17
10. Brimmond and Elrick Hills	18
11. Cambus O' May Forest Walks	19
12. Castle Fraser (NTS)	20
13. Coastal Footpath	21
14. Conoco Natural History Centre	22
15. Craigievar Castle and Gardens (NTS)	23
16. Crathes Castle and Garden (NTS)	24
17. Cullerlie Farm Park	25
18. Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve	26
19. Den Wood (Woodland Trust)	27
20. Deveron Meadow	28
21. Donmouth Local Nature Reserve	29
22. Doonies Farm	30
23. Drum Castle (NTS)	31
24. Dunnottar Castle	32
25. Duthie Park	33
Map	34
26. Fluffsfeld Donkey Sanctuary	36
27. Formartine & Buchan Way	37
28. Forvie NNR	38



No.	Contents	Page
29.	Fyvie Castle (NTS)	39
30.	Gight Woods Wildlife Reserve (SWT)	40
31.	Glen Tanar	41
32.	Haddo Country Park	42
33.	Haughton Country Park	43
34.	Hazlehead Park	44
35.	Johnston Gardens	45
36.	Kildrumny Castle (HS)	46
37.	Kincorth Hill Local Nature Reserve	47
38.	Kirkhill Forest and Tyrebagger Wood	48
39.	Lochinch Interpretation Centre	49
40.	Loch of Strathbeg (RSPB)	50
41.	Loirston Recreational Area	51
42.	Macduff Marine Aquarium	52
43.	Mill of Benholm	53
44.	Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve	54
45.	Old Deeside Railway Line-Aberdeen Section	55
46.	Old Deeside Railway Line-Dinnet to Ballater Section	56
47.	Pitmedden Garden and Farming Museum (NTS)	57
48.	Satrosphere	58
49.	Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve	59
50.	Seaton Park	60
51.	Shooting Greens	61
52.	St Cyrus National Nature Reserve	62
53.	Story Book Glen	63
54.	Victoria Park	64
55.	Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve	65
56.	Westburn Park	66
	Tips for Safe Trips	67



1. Aberdeen Beach

Beach Promenade, Aberdeen

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Kiosks, cafes, or bring your own

Disabled access at selected points on the promenade, facilities on Beach Promenade

Toilets on Promenade, and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: 14

Description: Over 2 miles of golden sand sandwiched between the 'silver city' and the grey North Sea. Safe swimming areas patrolled by lifeguards in the summer.

**make sand sculptures and
decorate with pebbles etc.**



2. Aberdeen Maritime Museum

Shiprow, Aberdeen

Contact: 01224 213066

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk



Open: Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun 12pm-3pm

Cost: free

Parking: 400 spaces in Virginia Street

Shop and licensed cafe

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Induction loop system for hard of hearing

Public transport: buses to east end of Union Street or Guild Street. Close to bus and train stations

Description: An award winning museum with a range of multimedia displays and exhibits telling the story of Aberdeen's relationship with the sea.



3. Aden Country Park

Mintlaw

Directions: A92 from Aberdeen, signposted from Mintlaw

Contact: 01771 622857

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: park all year 7am-10pm summer, 7am-7pm winter

Cost: free

Parking: pay & display

Picnic areas, cafe

Disabled facilities and partial access

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: Bluebird buses to Mintlaw and Old Deer

Description: Paths and nature trails pass through woodland and down to the lake and river. Rangers organise family events in the summer. Special activities for pre-school groups can be arranged. Hareshowe Working Farm is a reconstruction of a 1950's farm complete with crops and animals.

lie on the ground under
tall trees and watch the
leaves and branches in
the wind



4. Arnhall Moss Local Nature Reserve

Westhill, by Aberdeen

Directions: between A944 and Westhill town centre

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available by tennis courts near Denman Park

Bring your own snacks

Partial disabled access

Public transport: within walking distance of town centre

Description: This is one of the last raised bogs in lowland Aberdeenshire. Cotton grass and sphagnum moss grow in the damp soil, and long-tailed tits and robins can often be seen in the birch woodland.

look for animal signs,
owl pellets, nibbled
seeds, etc.



5. Archaeolink Prehistory Park

Oyne, near Inverurie

Directions: 8 miles north of Inverurie, signposted off A96, A944, A97

Contact: 01464 851500

www.archaeolink.co.uk

Open: Feb-Mar; Sun, Mon, Tues 11am-5pm

April-Oct: daily 11am-5pm

Coffee shop

Cost: £3.90, children £2.35, family (2+3 or 1+4) £11, under 5s free

Parking: available

Disabled facilities and partial access

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: infrequent bus service, own car advisable

Description: Go back in time - find out about the Picts through hands-on activities, interactive displays and reconstructions of a Stone Age settlement, an Iron Age farm, and a Roman marching camp. Walk up through a prehistoric tree trail to the remains of a hill fort.



6. Balmedie Country Park

By Aberdeen



Directions: 8 miles north of Aberdeen, signposted off A90

Contact: 01358 742396

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: park all year. The visitor centre will be open depending on staff availability

Cost: free

Parking: available but pay & display during summer

Picnic area and bbqs for hire

Disabled facilities and access to visitor centre and boardwalk

Toilets

Public transport: Bluebird buses to Balmedie then 15 minutes' walk to beach

Description: This coastal park has a fine sandy beach and dunes. The most popular section of the beach is designated a dog-free zone. The rangers can organise activities for pre-school groups. Over 6s can join the Beach Combers during the school summer holidays.



7. Bennachie and Gordon Way

Near Inverurie

Directions: access points detailed on map available from Forest Enterprise

Contact: 01467 681470

garioch.ranger@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Please phone or email for a list of ranger-led activities

Open: at all times

Bennachie Centre, Apr-Oct, Tues-Sun 10.30am-5pm,

Nov-Mar, Tues-Sun 9.30-4pm

Cost: free

Parking: available

bbq areas, picnic areas

Disabled access and facilities at Bennachie Centre

Toilets (seasonal)

Public transport: own car required

Description: Various waymarked walks through woodland, as well as a tree trail and play area. There are spectacular views from the top of the Mither Tap. The Junior Ranger Club (for 8-12s) meets once a month.

catch
snowflakes on
black paper



8. Bike Routes

Description: Delightful off-road routes abound in the north-east. Many are classified as easy or moderate, which makes them ideal for exploring with tots on bike seats. Leaflets containing details of these woodland bike trails are available from Forest Enterprise in Moray (01343 820223), Buchan (01466 794161) and Kincardine (01330 844537). There are also a number of very level cycle routes following disused railway lines. These include the Old Deeside Railway from Ballater (access at Old Ballater Station) to Dinnet, and from Peterculter to Aberdeen; and the Buchan Line, which connects Mintlaw and Ellon.

go on a beastie hunt - look
under rocks, in grass and in
dead wood



9. Bridge of Feugh

Just south of Banchory

Open: all year

Cost: free

Parking: available

Picnic area

Disabled access

Toilets

Public transport: Bluebird buses along South Deeside Road and a 10 minute walk.

Description: In spring you can see salmon leaping through the foaming waters of the river as they make their way upstream to spawn. There is a display panel detailing their life cycle.

make leaf
boats...have races



10. Brimmond and Elrick Hills

Between Westhill and Bucksburn

Directions: off Kingswells to Clinterty Road

Parking: available

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Picnic area

No disabled access

Public transport: own car recommended

Description: Waymarked walks across the rolling hills and moorland link up with Kirkhill Forest and Tyrebagger Wood.



11. Cambus O' May Forest Walks (FC)

By Ballater

Directions: off A93, signposted 'Forest Walks'

Web Site: www.forestry.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access

Public transport: Bluebird bus - 201 to Ballater

Description: Four routes through Forestry Commission woodland, including one specifically designed for wheelchairs.



**how many different seeds
can you find?**

12. Castle Fraser (NTS)



Sauchen near Kemnay

Directions: off A944, 4 miles north of Dunecht

Contact: 01330 833463

www.nts.org.uk

Open: garden and grounds all year, daily 8.00-sunset.

1 Apr-30 June, 1 Sept-30 Sept, Fri-Tues 12pm-5.30pm

June and July open daily 11am-5.30pm

Cost: grounds and gardens are free

Castle £7 adults, £5.25 conc/children, £19 family

Parking: there is a £2 charge for non-members

Tea-room, picnic area

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets



Public transport: Bluebird buses

Description: A spectacular castle with a secret staircase, and a hiding place where the laird eavesdropped on conversations. The organic, walled garden is an inspiration to adults and children alike. Interesting plants for sale at very reasonable prices. Look out for wildlife in over 300 acres of grounds.



13. Coastal Footpath

From south of Nigg Bay to Cove



Directions: signposted from roads in the vicinity

Contact: 01224 522000

Cost: free

Parking: available at Doonies Farm

Bring your own snacks

Disabled access (but bear in mind that it is a clifftop path)

Toilets at Doonies Farm

Public transport: own car required

Description: A waymarked clifftop path giving magnificent views into the coves and inlets along the coast. A footpath links the cliff path to Doonies Farm.



14. Conoco Natural History Centre

Zoology Building, Tillydrone Avenue, Aberdeen

Directions: very small signpost on St Machar Drive

Contact: 01224 493288
www.abdn.ac.uk

Open: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Cost: free

Parking: available

Food: vending machine

Disabled access with prior notice, no disabled facilities

Toilets

Public transport: 26

Description: The centre has lots of skulls and other bits of animals to handle, as well as live stick insects, millipedes, fish, and various minibeasts. The university's zoology museum - which has a full-size elephant's skeleton - and the Cruickshank botanical gardens are incorporated into the centre. Staff can arrange outdoor activities for pre-school groups such as scavenger hunts.



15. Craigievar Castle (NTS)



Alford

Directions: on A980, 6 miles south of Alford

Contact: 013398 83635

www.nts.org.uk

Open: grounds all year 9.30am-sunset

Castle 1 Apr-30 Sept, Fri-Tue 12pm-5.30pm

Cost: Castle £8.50 adults, £6.40 conc/children, £23 family; grounds only £1 (honesty box)

Parking: available

Picnic area

No disabled access or facilities

Toilets

Public transport: own car required

Description: Steeply sloping grounds with woodland walks and a countryside trail surround a fairytale castle.



make daisy chains



16. Crathes Castle and Gardens (NTS)



Banchory, near Aberdeen

Directions: 3 miles east of Banchory on A93

Contact: 01330 844651

www.nts.org.uk

Open: Castle 1 Apr-31 Oct daily, 10am-5.30pm (4.30pm in Oct); garden and grounds all year daily 9am-sunset

Cost: castle £8.50 adults, £6.40 conc/children, £23 family

Parking: there is a charge for non-members

Restaurant with high chair, snack bar, picnic area

Disabled access and facilities, wheelchair available

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: Bluebird buses

Description: A fine castle with a ghost. Nature trails and woodland walks include one designed for wheelchair users. Wayfaring trails for those with maps and compasses and a desire to negotiate rougher ground. Young naturalists club. Ranger-led walks in summer. Small adventure playground for under 8s.



17. Cullerlie Farm Park



Netherwoodside, Echt

Directions: on B9125 to Torphins

Contact: 01330 860549

Open: mid Mar-Nov 10am-5.30pm or by appointment

Cost: £1.50, children £1, under 2s free

Parking: available

Tea-room

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: own car required

Description: Large collection of animals including Clydesdales, Dartmoor and Shetland ponies, pygmy goats, ornamental pheasants, rabbits, and peacocks. Many of the animals roam freely around the farm. Check for dates of demonstrations of traditional farming methods. The farm also has a Farming Museum.



18. Den of Maidencraig Local Nature Reserve

Skene Road, Aberdeen

Directions: on A944, 4 miles west of city centre, footpath links to Hazlehead Park and Bressay Brae

Contact: 01224 897400

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available near Groats Road end of reserve

Bring your own snacks

No disabled access

Public transport: bus 215 to Kingswells and Westhill

Description: An area of ancient woodland linked to Hazlehead Park by a footpath. There's a pond and a burn, as well as grassland with wildflowers.

collect autumn leaves
of all colours - make a
leaf rainbow



19. Den Wood (Woodland Trust)

Oldmeldrum

Directions: 3 miles north of Oldmeldrum, off A947 after Meldrum House Hotel

Contact: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: small car park, or available nearby

Bring your own snacks

No disabled access

Information boards

Description: Lovely waymarked walks, of varying length, through a site owned by the Woodland Trust.



20. Deveron Meadow



Riverside Park, Huntly

Directions: off A96, by Huntly Castle

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available play "I spy" with colours

Bring your own snacks

Partial disabled access

No toilets

Within easy walking distance of Huntly

Description: Paths go along the banks of the River Deveron and through a wildflower meadow which attracts butterflies and skylarks.



21. Donmouth Local Nature Reserve

Donmouth Road, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen

Directions: off Ellon Road, on northern edge of the River Don, or from Esplanade

Contact: 01224897400

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available on Donmouth Road, or on Esplanade

Bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access

Public transport: 1, 2, 3, 4, 15

Description: This is the first area of unspoilt, natural coastline north of Aberdeen harbour. Look out for seals on the sand spit near the mouth of the river. Birds, insects, and wildflowers are prolific in the salt marshes and sand dunes. Bats can be seen feeding in the evenings. Keep to the boardwalks in the area around the sand dunes to prevent erosion. Descriptive leaflet available.



22. Doonies Farm



Old Cove Road, off Greyhope Road, Nigg, Aberdeen

Directions: on the coast road between Nigg bay and Cove

Contact: 01224 522771

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: summer 10am-6.30pm, winter 10am-3.30pm

Cost: £2 family, £1 adult, 60p child, under 5's free, season tickets available

Parking: available

Picnic area

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: own car required

Description: A small working farm where every sheep, duck, pig, goat, horse and goose is a rare breed. Play area.



23. Drum Castle (NTS)



Drumoak, by Banchory

Directions: off A93, 3 miles west of Peterculter, 8 miles east of Banchory

Contact: 01330 811204

www.nts.org.uk

Open: grounds and garden daily, all year 9.30-sunset;

Castle Apr/May, Sept, daily 12.30-5.30pm,

June/Aug 10.00am-5.30pm

Cost: grounds are free, castle £7 adult, £5.25 conc/child, £19 family

Parking: £2 charge for non-members

Tea-room with high chair, picnic area

Disabled access and facilities, wheelchair available

Toilets



Public transport: Bluebird bus 201 and 20 minute walk

Description: The gardens contain rare trees and shrubs. Woodland walks go through the Forest of Drum, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There is a farmland trail, a wayfaring course, an arboretum for tree spotters, and a small adventure playground.

Ranger-led walks in the summer.

24. Dunnottar Castle

Near Stonehaven



Directions: off A92, south of Stonehaven

Contact: 01569 762173

Open: Easter Monday to mid Oct, Mon-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 2-5pm;
Mid Oct-Easter Sunday, Fri-Mon 9am-dusk
last admission half an hour before closing

Cost: £3.50, children £1.50

Parking: available

make stone sculptures
and pictures

Bring your own snacks

No disabled access without substantial assistance

Toilets

Public transport: Montrose bus stops 1/2 mile from car park, then further 1/4 mile walk to castle

Description: An impressive ruined fortress on a rocky cliff 50m above the sea. It is reached by walking down, then up steep gravel and grassy paths. Sticklebacks swim in the castle's water supply, which is a 25-ft-deep pond, and sea birds fly close overhead. The rocky beach below is made up of large, rounded stones in a great variety of colours.



25. Duthie Park

Polmuir Road/Riverside Drive, Aberdeen

Open: all year, 10am-dusk; sports facilities May-Sept

Website: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Cost: free, charges for summer activities

Parking: available

Café with high chair, picnic area

Disabled access and facilities

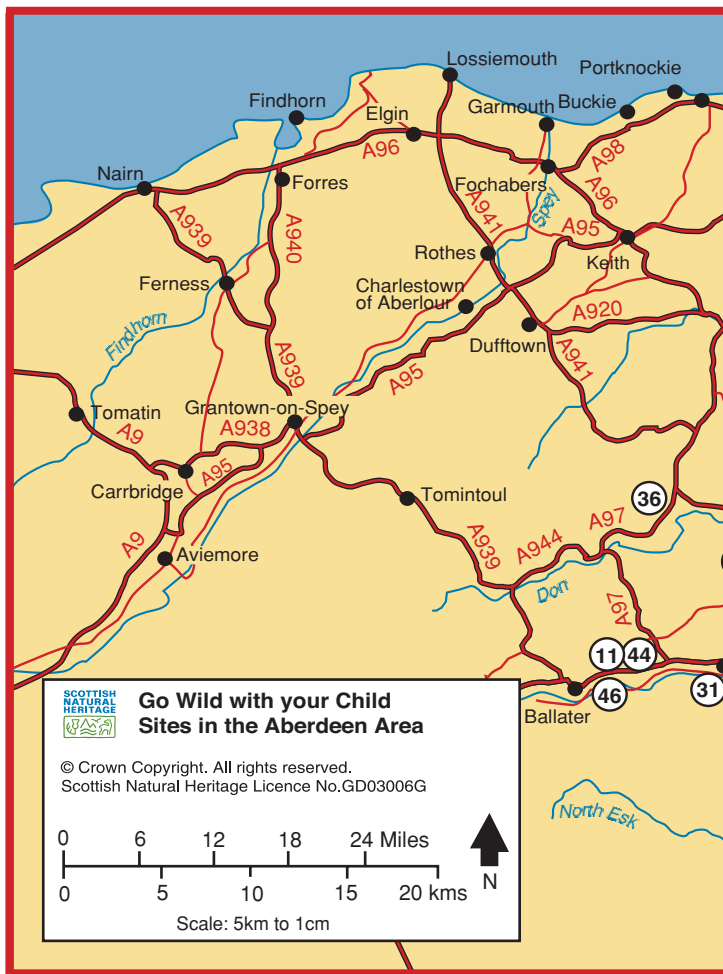
Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: 6, 16, 17

Description: Climb the 'rose mountain' and smell the perfume of over 100,000 roses. The Winter Gardens feature exotic plants, terrapins, large carp, and a huge plastic frog. The Japanese garden has a little stream and lots of wooden bridges and stepping stones. The park is also the start of the Deeside walkway and cycle path to Peterculter.

**how many smelly
plants can you find?**





26. Fluffsfeld Donkey Sanctuary



Kirkton, Millbrex, Fyvie

Directions: on the A947, 6 miles from Fyvie

Contact: 01771 644770

Open: Apr-Oct, Thurs-Sun, 10am-4pm; winter Thurs-Sun 10am-2pm

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Disabled access with assistance

No toilets

Public transport: Own transport required

Description: Over 100 donkeys that have been rescued are looked after here. Lots of opportunities to pet the animals.

**look for animal signs -
owl pellets, nibbled seeds, etc.**



27. Formartine & Buchan Way



Directions: various access points including Dyce, Newmachar, Udry Station, Ellon, and Auchnagatt

Directions: descriptive leaflet available detailing access points

Contact: 01224 664342

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Almost entirely accessible to wheelchairs

Public transport: train to Dyce (tel: 0345 484950), Bluebird buses

Description: The disused railway line links Dyce to Maud, where it splits into two lines leading to Peterhead and Fraserburgh. Look out for salmon leaping up the River Don near Dyce. Cyclists and horse riders (with permits) are welcome.



28. Forvie National Nature Reserve



Little Collieston Croft, Collieston

Directions: 15 miles north of Aberdeen, 4 miles north of Newburgh, signposted locally as Stevenson Forvie Centre

Contact: 01358 751330

www.snh.org.uk

Open: Reserve open at all times, Centre Apr-Sept, staff permitting, daily 10am-5pm

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Disabled facilities and limited access

Toilets

Public transport: Bluebird Stagecoach 263 via Cruden Bay - infrequent service

Description: The dunes on this part of the coast are an internationally important site for birds. It has the largest colony of eider ducks in the UK. There are good walks through the coastal heath and mobile sand dunes. The visitor centre has hands-on activities and a wildlife garden.



29. Fyvie Castle (NTS)



Fyvie, Turriff

Directions: off A947, 8 miles south-east of Turriff

Contact: 01651 891266

www.nts.org.uk

Open: grounds are open all year, 9.30am-sunset;
Castle Apr/June, Sept 1.30-5pm, July/Aug 11am-5pm

Cost: grounds are free; castle £7 adult, £5.25 conc/child, £19 family

Parking: £2 charge for non-members

Tea-room with high chair, picnic area

Assisted disabled access to castle, access to grounds and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: Bluebird bus 305, then 200 yds to perimeter of grounds

Description: The 120 acres of grounds include a loch, an American garden, a walled garden with fruit and vegetables, various woodland walks and trails and a bird hide. The rangers organise a programme of events and can put on special activities for groups.



30. Gight Woods Wildlife Reserve (SWT)

Near Methlick

Directions: on B9005, 2 miles west of Methlick

Website: www.swt.org.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

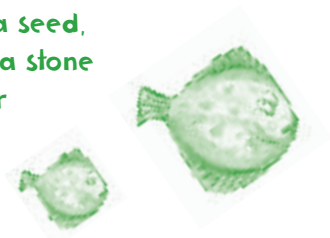
Bring your own snacks

No disabled access

Public transport: own car required

Description: A steep path leads down into a deep ravine cut through by the River Ythan. The broadleaved woodland includes hazel, sloe, oak, and rowan. Roe deer, foxes, badgers, red squirrels, and hares all live in the woods, and otter and heron can be seen hunting in the river.

**go on a scavenger hunt, find
something smooth, a seed,
something scratchy, a stone
and a feather**



31. Glen Tanar



Aboyne

Directions: 1 mile west of Aboyne on B976

Contact: 013398 86072.

www.glentantar.co.uk

Open: estate at all times; visitor centre Apr-Sept Wed-Mon, 10am-5pm, Oct-Mar Thurs-Mon, 10am-5pm

Cost: free

Parking: £1 weekdays, £2 Sunday

Picnic areas

Disabled facilities but difficult access to toilets and visitor centre

Toilets

Public transport: own car required

Description: Lovely walks through woodland and by the river.

Rangers can organise activities for groups.



32. Haddo Country Park



Tarves, Ellon

Directions: off B999, 4 miles north of Pitmedden

Contact: 01651 851489

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: all year 9.30am - dusk; discovery room open staff permitting

Cost: free

Parking: available (20p charge)

Picnic area, restaurant at Haddo House

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: infrequent Bluebird buses, 1 mile from national cycle route

Description: The 180 acres of parkland include woodland walks, nature trails, a lake and ponds with ducks, bird hides, a small play area, and a Discovery Room with games and computer activities for under 5s. A nature club meets throughout the year - phone for details of times and activities. Special events for pre-school groups by arrangement.



33. Haughton Country Park



Near Alford

Directions: 1/2 mile north of Alford

Contact: 01975 562453

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: park all year; centre open staff permitting

Cost: free

Parking: available

Picnic area, bring your own bbq, shop in caravan site

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: Bluebird buses to Alford then 1/2 mile walk

Directions: Lots of parkland with riverside walks, putting, a walled garden and a playground. There is a childrens' wayfaring course and a ranger service.

play "I spy" with colours



34. Hazlehead Park

Groats Road, Hazlehead Avenue, Aberdeen

Open: all year, daily from 8am; sports facilities May-Sept from 10am

Web Site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Cost: free, charges for summer activities

Parking: available

Cafe with high chair, kiosk, picnic area

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: 14, 14A, 15

Description: This is the largest park in Aberdeen. There are walks, a hedge maze, sports pitches and a playground. Plenty of open grass and flowers galore in the rose, heather and azalea gardens. The small zoo has lambs, rabbits and pot-bellied pigs, as well as a wonderful walk-in aviary full of exotically coloured birds. Den Wood (adjacent to Countesswells Road) is a much wilder area.



how many smelly
plants can you
find?



35. Johnston Gardens



Viewfield Road, Aberdeen

Open: all year

Web Site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Cost: free

Parking: small car park at park entrance

Bring your own snacks

Disabled access

Toilets

Public transport: 11

Description: A small garden with stream, cascades, waterfowl and alpine plants. Lots of fun for toddlers.

play pooh sticks...racing
twigs/sticks in a burn



36. Kildrummy Castle (HS)



Near Alford

Directions: 10 miles south-west of Alford on A97

Contact: 0131 668 8600

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

Open: Apr-Sept, daily 9.30am-6.30pm

Cost: £2.20 adults, £1.60 conc, 75p children, under 5's free

Parking: available

Disabled facilities and access to garden

Toilets

Public transport: Bluebird buses

Description: There are shrub and alpine gardens, as well as water gardens, a play area and woodland walks around the ruins of this 13th century castle.

**make bark rubbings
using paper and a
wax crayon**



37. Kincorth Hill Local Nature Reserve

Abbotswell Crescent, Aberdeen

Directions: off West Tullos Road, 1/2 mile from George IV Bridge

Contact: 01224 897400

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: on Abbotswell Crescent or Redmoss Walk

Food: bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access

Public Transport: 6, 16, 17

Description: Kincorth Hill is a blaze of yellow gorse flowers in early summer. The gorse flowers smell of coconut - but watch out for the thorns! With a bit of luck you might also see rabbits, shrews, voles, or even roe deer and foxes.



38. Kirkhill Forest and Tyrebagger Wood (FC)

Dyce, Aberdeen

Directions: off A96 and B979 near airport

Contact: 01330 844537

www.forestry.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access

Public transport: Bluebird buses stop on A96, then short walk

Description: Forest walks and a wayfaring course (information packs available from Mace supermarket, Blackburn). One trail passes the 'Robber's Cave', which is reputed to have been used by brigands in the 17th century. There is a sculpture walk with animals and a camera obscura made of natural materials.

**go on a listening walk...don't
talk, just listen - how many
things can you hear?**



39. Lochinch Countryside Interpretation Centre

Southern end of Redmoss Road, near Nigg

Directions: off Wellington Road, close to Nigg/Altens roundabout

Contact: 01224 897400

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: farm at all times, visitor centre by arrangement

Cost: free

Parking: available

Picnic area

Disabled access and facilities (in visitor centre)

Toilets

Public transport: own car required

Description: Highland cattle and Exmoor ponies graze in the pastures close to Loirston Loch. Rangers can organise pond-dipping, minibeast safaris, scavenger hunts, and other activities by prior arrangement.

**play "I spy" with
colours**



40. Loch of Strathbeg (RSPB)



Starnafin, nr Crimond

Directions: off A90 between Peterhead and Fraserburgh

Contact: 01346 532017
www.rspb.org.uk

Open: daily, dawn to dusk

Cost: free to members, small charge to non members

Parking: available

Disabled access to visitor centre and 1 hide

Toilets

Bring your own snack

Public transport: own car required

Description: An internationally important site for wintering geese and ducks, breeding birds and seasonal migrants. There are Ranger led events during the summer.



41. Loirston Recreational Area

Old Cove Road, off Greyhope Road, Nigg, Aberdeen

Directions: on the coast road between Nigg Bay and Cove

Contact: 01224 897400

www.loirston.care4free.net

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Food: bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access

Toilets at Doonies Farm

Public transport: own car required

Description: There are many types of birds to look out for in this area of open land close to the seacliffs. Combine a walk here with a visit to Doonies Farm to see rare breeds of farm animals.



**look out for shells,
stones and seabirds**



42. Macduff Marine Aquarium

11 High Shore, Macduff

Directions: Just east of Macduff harbour

Contact: 01261 833369

www.marine-aquarium.com

Open: daily, 10am-5pm, last admission 4.15pm

Cost: adult £4, child £1.70, conc £2.20, family £10.10

Parking: available

Disabled access and facilities, wheelchair available

Suitable for prams

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: Bluebird Stagecoach 305

Description: The Aquarium has Scotland's deepest tank where you can enjoy an underwater view of fish, eels and wavy kelp. There are also rock pool displays, touch tanks and a ray pool. Call to find out when divers will be in the main tank.



43. Mill of Benholm



By Johnshaven

Directions: off A92 south of Inverbervie

Contact: 01561 361969

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: mill-please check before visiting; grounds at all times.

Cost: free

Tea-room with high chairs (June-Sept, weekends in May and October), picnic area

Disabled facilities and limited access to mill, no access to nature walks

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: Bluebird buses from Aberdeen to Montrose, Dundee and Edinburgh

Description: Restored water mill with ducks on the dam, a woodland walk, and chickens (watch your sandwiches). A reed bed is used as a natural sewage works.

remember some crusts
to feed the ducks



44. Muir of Dinnet National Nature Reserve

Directions: between Aboyne and Ballater on A97, 1 mile north of junction with A93

Contact: 013398 81022

www.snh.org.uk

Open: reserve at all times; visitor centre, Easter-Sept, daily 10am- 5.00pm

Cost: free

Parking: available



Bring your own snacks

Disabled facilities and partial access to network of paths

Toilets open Easter-Sept, daily 10am-5.00pm

Public transport: own car required

Description: Visitor centre with masks, puzzles, indoor bog, touch tables, and books. Nature trails and a walk to the spectacular Burn o' Vat.



45. Old Deeside Railway Line - Aberdeen Section

North Deeside, Aberdeen

Directions: easiest access point at Broomhill Road, Garthdee

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Disabled access and facilities at Duthie Park, access at Garthdee

Toilets at Duthie Park

Public transport: 6, 16, 17 to Duthie Park, buses along North Deeside Road

Description: Walk or cycle along a good level track from Duthie Park to Peterculter. Other access points at Auchinyell Road, Cults, Bielside and Milltimber - some are steeply sloping or have steps. Take care after rain as the track can become rutted.



46. Old Deeside Railway Line - Dinnet and Ballater Section

North Deeside, Aberdeen

Directions: access point at Dinnet, Cambus O'May and Ballater

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available at Dinnet, Cambus O'May and Ballater

Tea-room across road from line at Cambus O'May

Toilets in Ballater

Public transport: 201

Description: Walk or cycle along a good level track.



47. Pitmedden Garden and Farming Museum (NTS)

Pitmedden

Directions: on outskirts of village on A920, 14 miles north of Aberdeen

Contact: 01651 842352
www.nts.org.uk

Open: May-Sept, daily 10am-5.30pm

Cost: £5, £3.75 child/conc

Parking: available

Tea-room, picnic area, Nature Hut

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: infrequent Bluebird bus service passes road end, 2 miles from national cycle route

Description: The 17th century formal garden has been recreated with elaborate floral designs, miles of box hedging, pavilions, fountains, and sundials. There are also woodland and farmland walks, a herb garden, and a visitor centre.

**make bark rubbings
using paper and a
wax crayon**



48. Satrosphere



Tramsheds, 179 Constitution Street, Aberdeen

Contact: 01224 640340

www.satrosphere.net

Open: all year, Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sunday 11.30am-5pm

Cost: £5 adult, £3 child, group prices and family tickets also available. Cafe is free to access

Parking: available

Cafe

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities

Public transport: 14, 15

Description: Explore over 100 hands-on science exhibits. There are also interactive shows, weekend events and a science shop.



49. Scotstown Moor Local Nature Reserve

Scotstown Road, near Bridge of Don, Aberdeen

Directions: within the city limit on B977

Contact: 01224 897400

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Picnic areas

Limited disabled access

No toilets

Public transport: 2

Description: Once an extensive area of heathland and bog, there are now also ponds, rough grassland, and woodlands with footpaths. Look out for foxes and roe deer, dragonflies and butterflies, long-eared owls, and skylarks.

look out for animal
signs...owl pellets,
nibbled seeds, etc.



50. Seaton Park

Don Street, Aberdeen

Directions: also accessible from the Chanonry

Web Site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: all year

Cost: free

Parking: on street

Picnic area

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 15, 20

Descriptions: A mixture of formal gardens and woodland by the River Don. Go there in the spring to see the spectacular banks of daffodils.



51. Shooting Greens (FC)



Blackhall Forest, by Banchory

Directions: 1 1/2 miles north of B976, on unclassified Feughside-Potarch road

Web Site: www.forestry.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

No disabled access

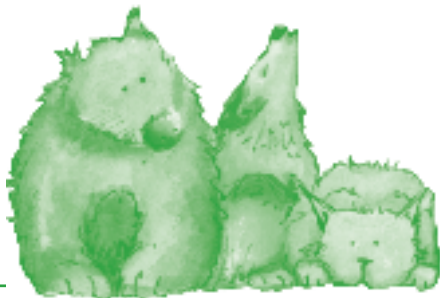
Toilets (during summer months)

Public transport: own car required

Description: Lovely forest walks through pine trees. Look out for fir cones and blaeberreries.



look for wild
raspberries, brambles
or conkers



52. St Cyrus National Nature Reserve

1/4 mile south of St Cyrus, off A92

Contact: 01674 830736

www.snh.org.uk

Open: reserve open at all times, visitor centre Apr-Sept,
daily 10am-5pm, staff permitting

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Limited disabled access and facilities

Toilets (seasonal)

Public transport: Bluebird bus to St Cyrus then 1/2 hour walk to beach along coastal path (starts from church)

Description: The reserve is a combination of sandy beach, cliff, dunes, and grassland. Look for a variety of seabirds along the coast and cliff. In summer the wild flowers produce a riot of colour.

**make sand sculptures
and decorate with
pebbles etc.**



53. Story Book Glen

Maryculter, by Aberdeen

Directions: B9077 off the south Deeside Road, 5 miles west of Aberdeen, signposted

Contact: 01224 732941

Open: Mar-Oct, daily 10am-6pm; Nov-Feb, daily 10am-4pm

Cost: £3.95 adult, £2.95 child, £3.10 OAP, under 2's free

Parking: available

Cafe with high chair

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets and baby-changing facilities, breast feeding room

Public transport: Bluebird bus 204, one service per day

Description: Over 100 larger-than-life fairy tale and nursery rhyme characters are scattered the length and breadth of a pretty wooded glen. The models lack charm but kids love them. The small animal farm is the most attractive area - children can get really close to chickens, pigs, etc.



54. Victoria Park

Westburn Road, Argyll Place, Aberdeen

Open: at all times

Web Site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Cost: free

Parking: on street

Bring your own snacks

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: 12

Description: This is Aberdeen's oldest park. It has grassy areas and a conservatory for cooler days. The spectacular fountain incorporates tiny cymbals that tinkle as the water cascades over them, and there is a fragrant garden with strongly scented plants.



55. Waters of Philorth Local Nature Reserve

Near Fraserburgh

Directions: 2 miles south-east of town centre on B9033

Web Site: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Open: at all times

Cost: free

Parking: available

Bring your own snacks

Very limited disabled access

Public transport: 275 from Fraserburgh to St Combs, or on foot along the beach of Fraserburgh Bay

Description: Board walks and sandy paths lead through the dunes to the beach, and alongside the river. Look out for seals basking on the rocks at the seashore.



**go on a listening walk...don't
talk just listen - how many
things can you hear?**



56. Westburn Park



Westburn Road, Aberdeen

Web Site: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Open: all year

Cost: free

Parking: available

Cafe, picnic area (suitable for wheelchairs)

Disabled access and facilities

Toilets

Public transport: 12

Description: Look out for birds and insects in the trees and flower beds, en route to the children's cycle track, play areas and tennis.

**collect autumn
leaves of every
colour - make a
rainbow**



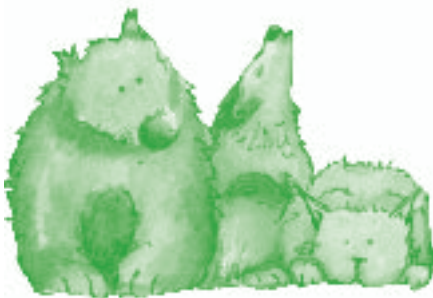
Tips for Safe Trips

Remember to wear or bring along appropriate warm, waterproof and windproof clothing, strong waterproof footwear and sun protection etc.

Take along snacks and drinks for frequent refuelling.

Remember that some berries and plants can be poisonous and shouldn't be touched or eaten.

Be aware of local hazards (cliffs, ponds, dog dirt, slippery paths etc.).



Further Reading

'Playing for Keeps' Scottish Natural Heritage, Battleby,
Perth, PH1 3EW, Tel: 01738 444177

'Sharing Nature with Children'

by Joseph Cornell ISBN 1-85015-137-7

'Roots, Shoots & Wellington Boots' ISBN 0-7469-3131-6

'The Amazing Outdoor Activity Book' ISBN 0-7513-5372-8

Spotters Guide 'Nature' ISBN 0-7513-55321

Go wild with your child



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