



# from home

creations such as the Clyde Puffer (a fruit loaf made using an Arran Brewery oatmeal stout), a chocolate truffle creation, Tunisian polenta cake, giant buns, homemade sausage rolls, cherry tarts and other amazing *Bake-Off* standard stuff.

For more gluten, we also took a pilgrimage to our favourite Blackwater Bakehouse at Blackwaterfoot, and ordered the usual rosemary and olive focaccias, but also the most frangipani loaded almond croissants I've had in my life.

One of the men who work here, while wearing a kilt, was loading cucumbers into a giant Kilner jar, and said that they're unofficially branching out into fermented

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food and pickles. It's good to have something to look forward to next year. For now, it's back to the ranch with our spoils.

You can always work it off if you stride up to the Glenashdale Falls or the Giants' Graves, probably the best walks from Whiting Bay. The kids (four and seven) were scared, despite all the good work the BFG did for tall people, and shut down any talk about Giants' Graves (in reality, the remains of neolithic tombs), so the waterfall section of the walk it was. You're almost guaranteed to see a red squirrel en route. Apparently,

**Clockwise from main: Goatfell from Brodick Bay; Grahamfield; one of the bedrooms**

there are no greys on Arran, so their auburn cousins thrive.

There's a cottage at the start of this walk, with lots of feeders strung up, and it seems to be a popular hang-out for these perky-eared critters. We saw one, doing its limber acrobatics. The rest of this 90 minute perambulation was punctuated by wafts of wild garlic, frogspawn sightings, and a walk along "the plank" – aka the vertiginous viewing platform – for the customary annual "vomiting a waterfall" photograph.

For more outdoor fun with small people, Brodick Castle (the castle itself is closed until April 2019, but the grounds are open) launched its Isle be Wild Playpark last year. It's sort of like an Ewok village, with ramps and towers. There are flying foxes for little ones, and a version for bigger kids, plus swings and slides.

Buy the kids an Arran Dairies Ice Cream from the little on-site hut, then let them work off their sugar rush. It'll pay off later on, when they're fast asleep in bed and you're slumped in front of the big telly at Grahamfield. ■

**Prices range from £750 to £925 for a week at Grahamfield, which sleeps up to seven, see [www.cottages-and-castles.co.uk](http://www.cottages-and-castles.co.uk). Admission to Brodick Castle's grounds, including the new Isle be Wild Playpark is £7.50 per adult, £15 per family, see [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk) for more information.**

## 48 HOURS IN

### Galle, Sri Lanka

#### Friday, midday

Check into the Amangalle (doubles from £325, [www.aman.com](http://www.aman.com)), one of Asia's finest colonial-era hotels lying right in the heart of the historic fort that forms Galle's evocative core.

#### 1pm

Savour the national dish of "rice and curry" at Fort Printers ([www.thefortprinters.com](http://www.thefortprinters.com)), which is actually a range of delicious dishes similar to an Indian thali.

#### 2:30pm

Take a guided walk around the fort's walls delving into its history and enjoying views of the fort peninsula, a riot of Dutch and British colonial architecture.

#### 5pm

End your walking tour at the old Dutch Hospital, where a sprinkling of swish venues are on hand, all able to provide a cooling local Lion beer.

#### 7pm

Dinner at Church Street Social (tel: +94 773-638 381). Snag a table on the colonial-era veranda and choose from local seafood or a range of curries.

#### Saturday, 9am

Head out on a river boat trip that connects with one of the Village Rider ([www.villagerider.lk](http://www.villagerider.lk)) cycle tours. After experiencing the jungle, breakfast is delicious fresh hoppers (thin savoury pancakes) cooked in front of you.

#### Midday

Rather than going back to the city centre, relax at Wijaya Beach ([www.wijayabeach.com](http://www.wijayabeach.com)) with lunch



overlooking brilliant white Indian Ocean sands.

#### 2:30pm

After a swim (stay within the safety of the lagoon) return to the fort to explore the network of wee ex-pat run boutiques that are opening alongside the local shops.

#### 7pm

The best hotel in Galle also sports its best restaurant. Savour dinner on the grand terrace at the Amangalle as the years peel back and a piano tinkles away. Their fillet steak is superb, as is their Sri Lankan cuisine.

#### Sunday, 9am

Take it easy at the Amangalle; either lounge by their huge jungle shrouded pool, or try one of the excellent treatments at their acclaimed spa. ■

**Robin McKelvie**

**Etihad ([www.etihad.com](http://www.etihad.com)) fly to Sri Lanka from Edinburgh via Abu Dhabi from around £500 return. Flat beds available in business class. Indian Odyssey ([www.indianodyssey.co.uk](http://www.indianodyssey.co.uk)) can package together the hotel and all sightseeing above.**

## BARGAIN BREAKS

### Treasures of Venice

See Venice with Jet2CityBreaks, who are offering seven nights room-only at the four-star Antony Palace Hotel, as well as flights from Edinburgh on 13 July, all from £339pp based on two sharing and a 22kg baggage allowance. **Call 0800 408 5594 or see [www.jet2holidays.com](http://www.jet2holidays.com)**

### Sun in Lanzarote

Prices start from £418pp for a seven night holiday in Lanzarote with Travel Republic. It includes self catering accommodation at the three star Sol Apartments and return flights from Glasgow Prestwick departing on 17 July. **Call 020 8974 7200 or see [www.travelrepublic.co.uk](http://www.travelrepublic.co.uk)**

### Take a walk

National Parks Week runs from 23–29 July and is a week-long celebration of Britain's 15 National Parks including the Peak District National Park. To celebrate, try Inntravel's Landscapes of the Peak District walking break – a self-guided trip that will take in the River Derwent, North Lees Hall, Hathersage and Ladybower Reservoir, amongst other locations. Departing on 26 July, it costs £560pp based on two sharing, including six nights' bed and breakfast at two country inns and a guesthouse, three picnics, luggage transfers, route notes, maps and a transfer to your first guesthouse. **Call 01653 617000 or see [www.inntravel.co.uk](http://www.inntravel.co.uk)**