

Family Activities



There is an abundance of things to do for families in Moray and the surrounding area. A couple of useful websites for general listings are [Days Out With The Kids](#) and [Let's Go With the Children](#), but here are some specific ideas for days out (note that some of these attractions are quite a distance from Forres and not all of them are accessible by public transport):

Museums

- Situated in the heart of Forres High Street, the [Falconer Museum](#) (open April to October, free admission) houses a wealth of treasures relating to Moray's distant and more recent past. Permanent displays include social history, geology, natural history and archaeology. Temporary exhibitions are held throughout the year and there are occasional family-themed events.
- [Nairn Museum](#) offers visitors and locals alike a fascinating insight into the life and times of the town and surrounding area over the centuries. The wide range of permanent displays features various aspects of Nairn's history. Each year there is also a special programme of visiting exhibitions. The Museum particularly welcomes children, providing a range of pick-up-and-touch exhibits and a safe play area. A wheelchair and stair lift is available for disabled visitors.
- [Elgin Museum](#) is Scotland's oldest independent museum. Its collections are housed in a Grade A listed building at the east end of the High Street. Here you will find objects displayed from all around the world, but especially from Moray, dating from before the dinosaurs to the present day. The museum has regular events for younger visitors – see the [Family Activities](#) page of the website for full details.

Animals and Nature

- The [Highland Wildlife Park](#) in Kincaig, around 11 kilometres south of Aviemore, is home to over 200 amazing animals, including native Scottish species as well as rare and endangered animals from the world's mountains and tundra regions. Drive around the main reserve in your own car and then investigate the walk-round area on foot.
- The [Scottish Dolphin Centre](#) at Spey Bay is a small visitor attraction which provides an opportunity to look for dolphins and seals. There is a children's play corner with quizzes, colouring and dolphin detective activities. Admission is free.
- The [Black Isle Wildlife Park](#) consists of ponds, fields and many animal enclosures. There is a hatchery and a play area for children. The park covers 50 acres which are home to a wide range of animals such as ducks, emu, lemur, zebra, meerkats and more. All walkways are suitable for buggies and wheelchairs.
- The [Loch Garten Osprey Centre](#) provides fantastic views of these magnificent birds on the nest – you can enjoy the intimacy of osprey family life close up. You can also walk the many paths through this gorgeous reserve for the chance to see red squirrels, dragonflies and crested tits. There are family activities on offer, events throughout the year and friendly staff on hand to tell you more about the array of wildlife in the Abernethy Forest, which includes the biggest single remnant of Caledonian pinewood left in the UK.

Outdoor Activities and Play Centres

- Treasure trails are an imaginative way to explore towns, cities and villages across the UK with a self-guided themed walk (for example, spy missions or murder mysteries in addition to the classic treasure trails). Easy-to-follow routes enable you to crack the clues whilst taking in some of the

fascinating sights along the way. Visitors to East Lodge can choose from a number of local trails, including those in Forres, Elgin, Keith, Inverness and Grantown-on-Spey. Packs are available from the [Treasure Trails](#) website and are priced at around £7.00. Each Trail is roughly three kilometres long and should take about 1-2 hours to complete.

- [Landmark Forest Adventure Park](#) at Carrbridge (11 kilometres north of Aviemore) offers fun, discovery and adventure in the Highlands. There is something for everyone, all set in the beautiful surroundings of an ancient Scots Pine woodland. Attractions include the Highlands' only rollercoaster (the Runaway Timber Train), Bamboozeleum (a gallery of illusions, puzzles and electrifying effects), the Wild Water Coaster, the Wonder Wood (a magical woodland), the Lost Labyrinth, the Tarzan Trail, the Fire Tower and the Ant City play area.
- [The Loft](#) is based at East Grange Farm, Kinloss (about seven kilometres from Forres). It's a family-run farm which has diversified into a recreational facility. There is lots to keep children entertained come rain or shine – including pottery painting, play areas, craft sessions, face-painting, archery, water walkers, quad bikes, Segways, laser tag, grass sledging and a bouncy castle. The centre's café has a family room with a small ball pit and toys for children to enjoy while parents enjoy a meal or drinks in a relaxed environment.
- [The PlayBarn](#) (about eight kilometres east of Elgin) bills itself as being just what parents have been looking for and describes itself as a premium children's soft indoor play centre, which includes a soft play structure, toddler section, colouring area, servery and games room. There is also an on-site café.

Swimming

- If you fancy a swim and it's too cold to brave the Moray Firth you can always try one of the area's leisure centres: [Forres Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre](#), [Moray Leisure Centre](#) in Elgin, or [Nairn Leisure Centre](#).

Trains and Boats

- The [CairnGorm Mountain Funicular Railway](#) (about 15 kilometres from Aviemore) is billed as a unique visitor experience which allows people of all abilities to reach the Top Station – site of the Ptarmigan restaurant – with panoramic views from over 1,000 metres. There is also a viewing terrace, exhibition, shop and the highest post box in the British Isles.
- If you're looking to explore Loch Ness, [Jacobite Cruises](#) offers a variety of trips, from a one-hour cruise through to a seven-hour coach and cruise tour of Loch Ness and Invermoriston (site of Thomas Telford's bridge which crosses the spectacular River Moriston falls). Children under the age of five go free on loch cruises.
- [The Strathspey Railway](#), which operates from Aviemore station, operates a 90-minute round trip which calls at Boat of Garten and Broomhill. In addition, there are a number of special events throughout the year, including on Mother's Day, at Easter, at Halloween and December's Santa Express.