



23<sup>rd</sup> November

Mini-messages from the Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership

# In the world's top 18 tourist spots!

## THAT'S how good the Moray Firth is!

We have just broken into the top 18 world coastline destinations for tourism in the National Geographic magazine's annual survey.

**The Moray Firth Coast, Inverness to Peterhead, scores a very high 76. This puts it in their 'Top Rated' category of just 18 locations: all described as being "In excellent shape, relatively unspoiled, and likely to remain so."**

And just look at these locations which are listed much – in some cases much much lower than the Moray Firth for their quality: Mallorca, The Algarve, Seychelles, Bermuda, Jamaica, Antarctic peninsula, Florida, California, Tenerife, Maldives, Crete, Australia's Gold Coast, Spain's Costa Blanca, Sharm el Sheikh – get the picture?

The Pembrokeshire Coast in west Wales is the only other UK destination to make the top grade, with Torbay in Devon, and Brighton trailing well behind us.

The survey has already been given wide publicity; including Scotland on Sunday, BBC Radio Scotland and the Press and Journal on Monday. We simply couldn't buy wonderful publicity like this; and there will be plenty of potential visitors who will pick up on it, as well as travel writers, tourism guides, and TV programme makers.

National Geographic *Traveler's* annual destination scorecard focuses on 99 coastal areas from Antarctica to Zanzibar. A panel of 340 experts in sustainable tourism and destination stewardship then rates this geographically and culturally representative sample of the world's waterside locales.

Check out their website for comments like: "A popular vacation spot for more than a century, this coast offers "outstanding cliff scenery" and maintains "a strong community feeling." Seasonal and year-round residents appear to live in relative harmony. Tourism keeps "pretty coastal villages" economically afloat as Scotland's fishing industry declines. "

Here are some links:

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/coastal-destinations-rated>

<http://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/Article.aspx/2019445?UserKey=#ixzz162GJc13x>

<http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/news/Firth-among-equals-for-sheer.6633824.jp>

Put a link onto your own website and spread the news!

Yours

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Sandra

A popular vacation spot for more than a century, this coast offers "outstanding cliff scenery" and maintains "a strong community feeling." Seasonal and year-round residents appear to live in relative harmony. Tourism keeps "pretty coastal villages" economically afloat as Scotland's fishing industry declines.

*Here is a representative sampling of additional anonymous comments from the panelists. They are not necessarily the views of the National Geographic Society:*

"A wonderful region of Scotland. Beaches are fantastic, and the area welcomes visitors as one of their own. Largely rural. People work together for the greater good—fishermen tolerate canoeists; farmers allow walkers to pass over their land on footpaths, etc."

"An undiscovered gem with pretty coastal villages, excellent beaches, and outstanding cliff scenery. Sadly, some town centers are deteriorating as supermarkets force local retailers out of business. Local restaurant food remains pretty mediocre despite the excellent seafood caught here."

"A lot of self-catering accommodation and second homes. The area is attractive to walkers, cyclists, wildlife watchers, and surfers. It also offers whale and dolphin watching."

This is how National Geographic went about their survey:

"This, our seventh annual "places rated" list, is not a popularity contest. It's an assessment of **authenticity and stewardship**, an evaluation of the qualities that make a destination unique, and a measurement of "integrity of place." Thus the remote coast of Namibia, Africa, can rate notably higher than the popular—perhaps too popular—North Jersey shore.

Evaluating an entire destination involves such unquantifiables as aesthetics and cultural integrity, so we decided the best way to measure a place would be through informed human judgment. We assembled a panel of 340 well-traveled **experts in a variety of fields**, including historic preservation, sustainable tourism, ecology, geography, site management, indigenous cultures, archaeology, and travel writing and photography. We asked the panelists to evaluate only the places with which they were familiar, using our customary **six criteria**, weighted according to importance: environmental and ecological quality; social and cultural integrity; condition of historic buildings and archaeological sites; aesthetic appeal; quality of tourism management; and outlook for the future. Experts began by posting **points of view** on each place, anonymously, to ensure objectivity. After reading each others' remarks—a variation of a research tool called the Delphi technique—panelists then filed their final scores. The resulting **Stewardship Index** rating represents the average of informed judgments about each place. Like the scores posted by Olympic judges, our experts' ratings reflect both measurable factors and intangibles (style, aesthetics, culture). And like Olympic athletes, each of the destinations rated here has an opportunity to improve.

Yours

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