

CLARITY GUIDES

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TAP · BOTTLES · FILTERS · ALKALINE · HOLY WELLS · FIFE

WATER

Scottish tap water, plastic bottles, distillers and ionisers,
“living” water and wild swimming: an honest guide



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Preview – full guide coming soon – goclarity.uk

ABOUT THIS GUIDE



Water is the simplest thing we drink, and one of the most argued about. Is tap water safe? Is bottled water full of plastic? Is alkaline water “alive” and ordinary water “dead”? This guide gives you the verdict first, then the evidence, so you can decide for yourself.

It starts with the basics: **how much to drink**, and what is actually in **Scottish tap water**, including lead pipes, fluoride, chlorine and the “forever chemicals” known as PFAS. Then it looks closely at **plastic bottles** and the new research on nanoplastics, at **bottled versus tap**, and at **filters**.

The middle of the guide is about the waters people feel strongly about: **home distillers**, **alkaline water**, **water ionisers** such as the Kangen K8, and the idea of “**living**” versus “**dead**” water, from the forester Viktor Schauberger to Masaru Emoto’s water crystals. We describe these ideas fairly and in their own words, then say what science can and cannot measure.

The last part turns to **holy wells and cloutie wells**, Scotland’s water traditions, and **wild water in Fife**: which beaches have the cleanest bathing water, and how to stay safe in cold water.

A note from us. The author of this guide uses a home water distiller and an Enagic Kangen K8 water ioniser. We say so up front because those chapters (7 and 11) try to be fair to people who use them, while still being honest about what the evidence does and does not show. Nobody paid for anything in this guide, and it contains no affiliate links.

Our labels. **EVIDENCE** means something we can show from a regulator, a law or a published study.

TRADITION means a belief, practice or story from a cultural or spiritual tradition, described respectfully.

CLAIM means a modern idea or marketing claim that has not been shown in good-quality studies. Paired boxes headed **What people report** and **What the evidence says** show where experience and research meet, and where they part.

For general information only. This guide is not medical advice. If you have kidney disease, heart failure or another condition where your fluid or mineral intake matters, ask your GP before changing what you drink. For worries about your water supply, contact Scottish Water on **0800 077 8778**.

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THE SHORT ANSWERS



Each of these is explained, with sources, in the chapter shown.

QUESTION	OUR VERDICT
Is Scottish tap water safe to drink?	Yes, for almost everyone. In 2024, 99.92% of tests at consumers' taps met the standards. The main exception is homes with old lead pipes (chapters 2–3).
Is fluoride added to Scottish water?	No. No public supply in Scotland is fluoridated (chapter 3).
Is water in plastic bottles toxic?	Not proven, but not fully reassuring either. Bottled water carries large numbers of tiny plastic particles; whether they harm health is still unknown. Heat makes chemicals leach faster. Reducing exposure is sensible and cheap (chapter 4).
Is bottled water healthier than tap?	No good evidence that it is. It costs hundreds of times more and creates plastic waste (chapter 5).
Do I need a filter?	Usually not for safety on a public supply. A filter can improve taste or remove specific things, if it is certified for them (chapter 6).
Is distilled water good to drink?	It is very pure, but has no minerals. The WHO advises against relying on demineralised water long term without adding minerals back (chapter 7).
Is “living” water real, and is ordinary water “dead”?	Science can’t measure “life” in water. It can measure freshness, minerals, oxygen, temperature and microbes, which explain much of why spring water tastes alive (chapter 9).
Does alkaline water change your body’s pH?	No. Stomach acid and the kidneys keep blood pH in a tight range. Studies have not shown health benefits for healthy people (chapter 10).
Is a Kangen machine worth the money?	It makes filtered, alkaline, hydrogen-rich water. Hydrogen water has some small early studies; the big health claims are unproven. It costs over €5,000 delivered to the UK (chapter 11).
Is wild swimming in Fife safe?	Mostly good water quality, but cold water is the real danger. Learn “float to live” and check SEPA’s bathing water ratings (chapter 13).

Sources: DWQR (2025) *Drinking Water Quality in Scotland 2024*; Scottish Water; WHO (2005, 2019); Fenton & Huang (2016); Enagic Europe price list (Aug 2026); SEPA (2025); RNLI. Full list on the Sources page.