



The Great Glen Way

across Scotland by mountain bike



with the Highlands' bike hire experts



The Great Glen Way

The Great Glen Way is a mountain bike route running 73 miles from Inverness to Fort William.

The Great Glen is actually a series of glens filled by lochs which are linked by the Caledonian Canal. Cycling the Great Glen from west to east is the most popular choice but many people choose to start from Inverness too. The route is waymarked and there are some challenging sections where the route climbs high above the banks of Loch Ness. A mountain bike is required for this route.

We recommend tackling the route over three days, with overnight stops in the villages of Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit. Customer feedback tells us that this is hard enough for most folk and leaves time for visiting attractions such as Urquhart Castle or even taking a short cruise on the loch. If you've only got two days then the quiet roads on the south side of Loch Ness provide a route to Fort Augustus that's less strenuous for a single day's riding.

Our one-way bike hire service for the Great Glen Way makes organising your trip just a little bit easier. You can collect your bikes from us in Inverness and leave them with our partners in Fort William, Nevis Cycles.

If you're returning to Inverness or want to start in Fort William, our unique bike taxi service transports up to six cyclists and their bikes.



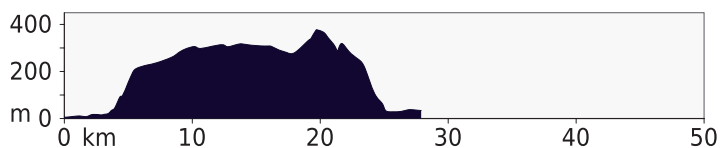
Ticket To Ride Bike Hire and Transport, based in Inverness can rent you bikes for the trip. We can store your luggage while you're gone, and provide an emergency back service for spares and repairs if any disasters happen.



Itinerary

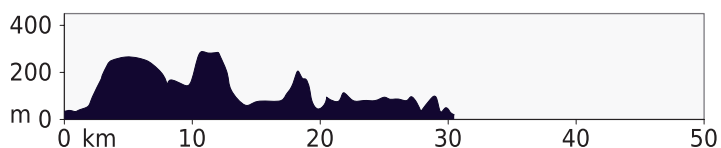
Day One - Inverness to Drumnadrochit

Pick up your hire bike from our bike hire centre in Bellfield Park, Inverness. We're only a few hundred metres from the official start point of the Great Glen Way at Inverness Castle. Follow the Great Glen Way markers along the River Ness and Caledonian Canal then climb steadily above Inverness to Abriachan on the north side of Loch Ness. The path flattens out before descending steeply to the busy village of Drumnadrochit and your first overnight stop. You should have plenty time to explore the ruined and romantic Urquhart Castle, just west of Drumnadrochit.



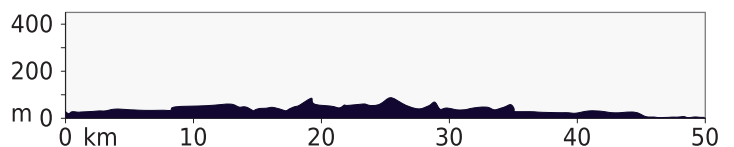
Day Two - Off-road above Loch Ness

Starting in Drumnadrochit, you continue on the Great Glen Way through Lewiston to the Iron Age fort near Grottaig. The views are great as you pass through Glen Moriston and finish the day at Fort Augustus. In the evening you can explore Fort Augustus and watch boats going through the staircase of locks on the Caledonian Canal.



Day Three - Canal paths & mountain views

The first few miles are dead flat along the towpath of the Caledonian Canal. At Bridge of Oich follow the track to the north of Loch Oich through the forest to Invergarry. The short climb out of Invergarry earns great views over Loch Oich, then it's down to the canal again at Laggan. From Laggan the path stays close to the banks of Loch Lochy. There's a short section of minor road before you rejoin the canal. As you cycle the final ten miles along the flat of the canal towpath you can enjoy views of the Nevis range of mountains on the approach to Fort William.



South Loch Ness alternative - from Inverness you can reach Fort Augustus on the quiet country roads on the south side of the loch. Although the high point is around 400m most people will manage the 50km in a day.

Arriving in Fort William the Great Glen Way passes close to Nevis Cycles, where you can return your bikes.

Nevis Cycles
4 Lochy Crescent
Inverlochy
Fort William, PH33 6NG

Tel: +44 (0)1397 705555



Practical Info

The price and what it includes

The cost of this self-guided trip along the Great Glen Way includes the hire of one of our high-quality Trek Mountain bikes, panniers to carry your luggage on the bike, a tool kit and spares, a helmet, a map of the route, bike drop-off in Fort William and the knowledge that we are only a phone call away should anything go seriously wrong.

What's not included

The cost does not include accommodation, which we recommend you book early direct with the accommodation providers themselves (details below).

Accommodation

Please see the accommodation section below.

Meals

Your accommodation is likely to provide you with breakfast. For evening meals, there are some great restaurants in Inverness, Drumnadrochit and Fort Augustus and Fort William. For lunches we'd recommend carrying something to eat on the trail, although, on the first day, a stop at the Abriachan Eco Cafe is highly recommended.

Suggested kit list

Good quality cycling clothing is the key here. Bring enough warm and waterproof clothes to protect you from the elements. Certainly a waterproof, breathable jacket. Gloves and good mountain biking shoes are a must. But we will provide you with a helmet.

Fitness and equipment

The Great Glen Way requires a reasonable level of fitness, experience of riding a mountain bike on steep descents and ascents and a good quality, well-maintained front suspension mountain bike. We can supply the latter, but you'll need to bring the fitness and bike skills yourself.

Insurance

We strongly recommend you buy travel insurance that covers you for sports like mountain biking.

Arrival and departure details

This Great Glen Way trip starts at the Ticket To Ride Bike Hire Centre in Bellfield Park in Inverness. We are open May to October, 7 days a week, 9am to 6pm. The trip finishes at Nevis Cycles in Fort William where you can drop off your bike. Nevis Cycles are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday.



Travelling to Inverness

Inverness is really easy to get to by air, rail, bus and car, not to mention bike.

Inverness by air

Inverness airport, a short taxi ride from the city, is well served by major and budget airlines from all over the UK, Ireland and direct from Amsterdam. For up-to-date timetables and booking visit:

www.hial.co.uk/inverness-airport/destinations/

Inverness by rail

Trains from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Inverness take approximately three and a half hours, and there is also a sleeper service from London Euston, which arrives in Inverness at 08.30 each morning. For current timetables and to book tickets visit:

www.seat61.com

www.scotrail.co.uk

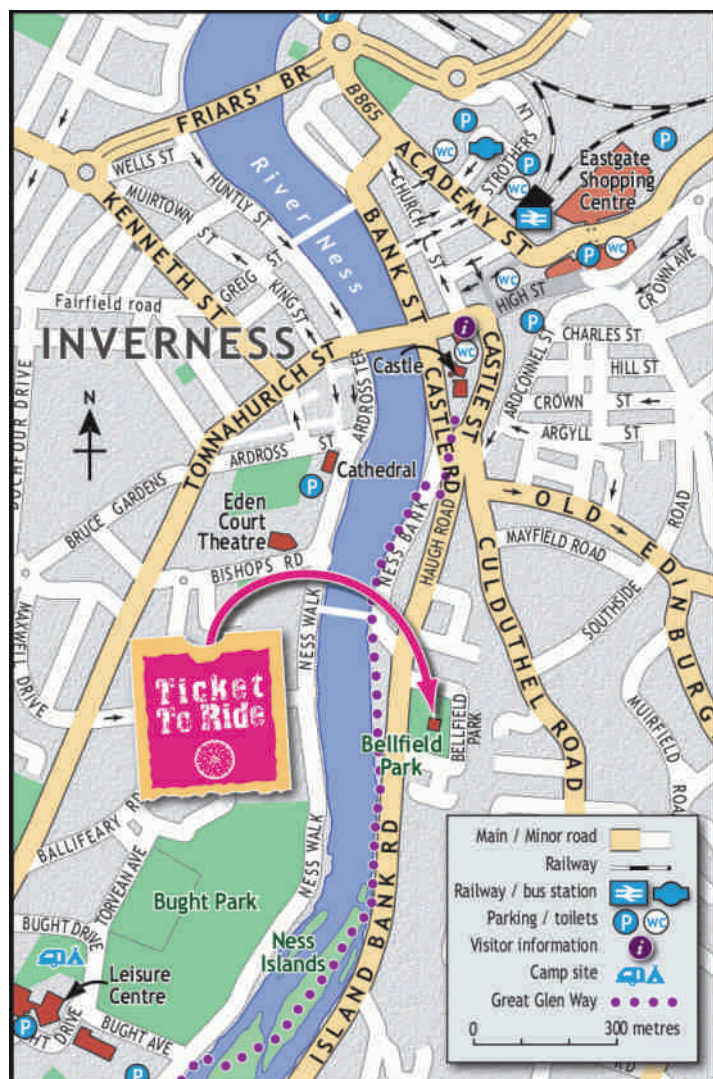
Inverness by bus

Inverness is linked to all major cities by bus and is the hub for many services to outlying areas. Most buses will not carry bikes unless boxed. For more info see:

www.travelinescotland.com

Driving to Inverness

It takes about 3 hours to drive from Edinburgh or Glasgow to Inverness. The easiest route takes you to Perth and up the A9. Don't rush, there's lots to see on the way.



FAQ



Q. What kind of cycling tour is this?

- A. The Great Glen Way is a self-guided mountain biking tour, ideal for reasonably fit riders with some mountain biking experience. It includes some riding on quiet roads and offers the chance to stop off and visit a of key attractions around Loch Ness.

Q. How far will we be riding each day?

- A. The distances covered each day are between 15 and 32 miles (24km - 50km). The terrain includes off road vehicle tracks, singletrack and some quiet roads.

Q. How easy is it to follow the route?

- A. The Great Glen Way is clearly signposted. We sell an excellent map of the Great Glen Way. You can also download GPX files compatible with most GPS devices and smartphones.

Q. What should I take with me?

- A. If you are staying in accommodation along the way, you'll just need your cycling clothes (including good waterproofs), clothes to change into in the evening and food and drink for each day on the trail. There are plenty of shops in Drumnadrochit and Fort Augustus where you can buy lunch for each day. If you are camping, you'll clearly need your camping gear too. We can hire you panniers to carry all your gear.

Q. What will the weather be like?

- A. The weather in this part of the country is famously unpredictable. Between April and September it is unlikely to be frosty and in July and August the mean daily maximum temperature is 19°C. Around Inverness between June and August there are normally fewer than 30 days with rainfall of more than 1mm. For all the facts see:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/ns/>

Q. Do I need to book in advance?

- A. Yes, we recommend you book your bike hire and all accommodation in advance.

Q. Is this tour suitable for children?

- A. Fit children aged 12 and over with experience of on and off-road cycling should enjoy this trip. We don't recommend using child-trailers or child seats due to the occasionally rough surfaces.

Q. Will my mobile phone work?

- A. There is a good signal in most towns and villages around the loch. In the forests and more remote parts of the route you may lose signal for some time. You should not rely solely on phone mapping for navigation.

Q. Can I camp?

- A. Yes. There are camp sites in Drumnadrochit, Fort Augustus, Fort William and Inverness. For information about wild camping see: www.outdooraccess-scotland.com

Accommodation

Accommodation in Inverness	Website	What's it like?
Strathness House	www.strathnesshouse.com	Lovely guest house in a great area by the river
Craignay Guesthouse	www.craignay-house.co.uk	Near the river Ness, 5 minutes walk from the city centre
Craigside Lodge	www.craigsideguesthouse.co.uk	Really friendly and a great location
Accommodation in Drumnadrochit	Website	What's it like?
Glenkirk B n B	www.lochnessbandb.com	Four star bed and breakfast in converted church
Loch Ness Inn	www.staylochness.co.uk	Small hotel with great restaurant
Accommodation in Fort Augustus	Website	What's it like?
Morag's Lodge	www.moragslodge.com	Friendly, lively hostel
The Lovat Hotel	www.thelovat.com	Award winning hotel, excellent food
Accommodation in Fort William	Website	What's it like?
The MacLean Guest House	www.macleanhouse.co.uk	Smart modern guest house
Guisachan House	www.fortwilliamholidays.co.uk	Family run private hotel

Ticket To Ride
The Pavilion
Bellfield Park
Inverness
IV2 4SZ

+44 (0) 1463 419160

info@TicketToRideHighlands.co.uk



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