



A Lap of Loch Ness

on mountain bike tracks and quiet roads



with the Highlands' bike hire experts



a Lap of the Loch

Around Loch Ness by bike on mountain tracks and quiet roads

A four day tour around one of the most beautiful lochs in Scotland and certainly the most famous in the world, combining some strenuous off-road tracks with some easier riding on quiet roads. Starting and finishing in Inverness, the scenery and views are great throughout the trip, with the added excitement of a possible glimpse of the elusive monster, keep your camera handy.

Loch Ness is a quite unique body of water. You would expect that a loch large enough to contain the whole world's population (yes really!) to be enormous, and Loch Ness really is a monster. But although it's hugely deep, the loch is only about 23 miles long and a mile wide. The countryside surrounding the loch is very scenic, with hidden glens, ruined castles and friendly villages to explore.

The route on the north side makes use of the Great Glen Way, a walking and cycling route, that is rough in some places while in others offers pretty easy cycling and is car-free for almost its entire length. On the south side of Loch Ness you have a choice, the newly opened South Loch Ness Trail for mountain bikes and walkers, or quiet back roads with very little traffic. Of course, you can decide which route to choose when you see them, or mix the two together depending on how adventurous you feel.



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 - Great Glen Way to "Drum"

Pick up your hire bike from the Ticket to Ride bike hire centre in Inverness's Bellfield Park, IV2 4SZ. Follow the Great Glen Way markers up above Inverness to Abriachan on the north side of Loch Ness and then on 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 itself.



Day Two - off-road riding 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 - quiet roads, stunning views

Up above Fort Augustus there's a wonderful viewpoint from which you can see all the way back to the east coast and your final destination. A long downhill takes you to the settlement of Whitebridge. At your overnight stop at Foyers you

can visit the huge waterfall and explore the ancient woodlands. For an off-road alternative pick up the South Loch Ness Trail at Loch Tarff.



Day Four - Loch Ness Monster Hunters

The road hugs the banks of Loch Ness giving excellent views and a chance to spot the monster if she's about. The Dores Inn is a top place for some lunch or a restorative pint, with lovely views looking all the way up the Loch. If you are lucky, the resident "Nessy watcher" will be at his post to tell you some tales of the monster and sell you a souvenir or two.



South Loch Ness Trail alternative - from Inverfarigaig you can rejoin the South Loch Ness Trail by taking the 'Corkscrew Road' to a high point on a forest track 1300 feet above Loch Ness. From here the South Loch Ness Trail drops gradually down to Dores.

Arriving back in Inverness, the road goes straight past Bellfield Park, home of Ticket to Ride Bike Hire, where you can return your bikes and pick up your luggage.



practical info

The price and what it includes

The cost of this self-guided tour 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, 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 Dores. The Cafe at Foyers is lovely, but may not be open late in the evening. 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 Lap of the Loch 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

The Lap of the Loch tour starts and finishes 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.



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

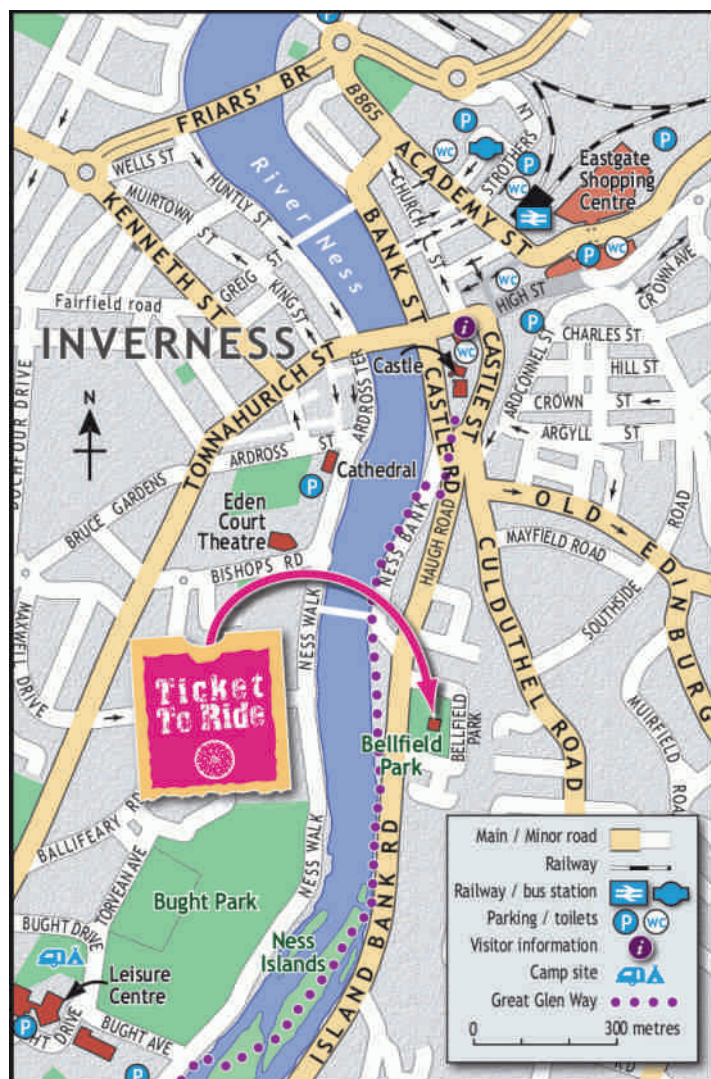
Inverness by bus

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 Lap of the Loch 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 20 miles (24km - 32km). 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. The return to Inverness on the south side of Loch Ness is on easy to navigate small roads.

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 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 near Foyers	Website	What's it like?
Craigdarroch Inn	www.thecraigdarrochinn.co.uk	Small hotel and restaurant with great Loch views
Loch Ness Shores	lochnessshores.com	Glamping wigwams!

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