

### Walker's Britain: The West Highland Way

Tour code: WWH

This tour follows most of the 92-mile national long-distance trail of the same name through the south-western part of the Scottish Highlands. It is claimed by some to be the most popular long distance trail in the British Isles. Starting at the village of Drymen just outside Glasgow, it includes Loch Lomond, valley routes through the mountains round Crianlarich and open heather moorland across the Rannoch Moor wilderness area. It passes close to somber Glencoe, famed for its massacre of the MacDonald Clan, and finishes at Fort William near the foot of Ben Nevis (Britain's highest peak, which can be readily ascended by experienced clients if they choose to spend an extra day). The West Highland Way is a well-established and popular route, containing some landscapes of great beauty. The altitude range is from sea level to 1850 ft (4408 ft if Ben Nevis is climbed).

#### General Information

**Duration:** 8 days (7 nights)

**Season:** 4 April to 6 October. Not during Loch Lomond Golf Tournament: 8-11 July or the PGA at Loch Lomond 9-12 Sept.

However you must be aware that the weather will be extremely unpredictable in April and October and the days will still be short then as well. But on average April and May are about the driest months in Britain.

**Grade:** Moderate

**Starting point:** Drymen (near Glasgow) **End:** Fort William.

**Breakfast:** in the UK will generally consist of sausage, bacon, eggs etc, cereals and fruit will also be available. It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.

**Baths:** it is not normal for your room to have a bath, the main reason being that it takes up a lot of space, some hotels/guesthouses may have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests, but in the main it is showers.

**Single Supplements:** are payable on most of our tours. The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms.

**Luggage:** When staying in hotels, sometimes your luggage will have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival. However don't be surprised if your luggage is waiting for you to take it up to your room.

#### Getting to the Start

**Most convenient major city and international airport:** Glasgow. Glasgow International Airport is only 30 mins from the centre of town by public bus (quicker by taxi).

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(Prestwick Airport is about 45 mins from Glasgow Central by train). Bus to Drymen (about five times a day) that stops near to the accommodation. Approx journey time 1 hour. Or take train from Glasgow Central to Balloch and then take taxi to Drymen 20 mins. (Taxi around £15).

**Outward journey from London to start point:** Train from London Euston to Glasgow Central (5 1/2 hours). Bus to Drymen that stops outside of the hotel (approx journey time 1 hour). Or train from Glasgow central to Balloch then bus or taxi to Drymen (Approx 1 hour journey time).

**Inward journey to Glasgow at end of tour:** Short walk to Fort William station. Train to Glasgow approx 3 hours 40 mins, then travel to airports from Glasgow. You can also take a City Link bus from Fort William to Glasgow Buchanan Street station in 3 hours. 4 departures a day. See: [www.Citylink.co.uk](http://www.Citylink.co.uk)

**Inward journey to London at end of tour:** Short walk/ taxi ride to Fort William station. Train to London, via Glasgow. There is also an overnight sleeper service from Fort William to London via Glasgow.

#### Your Accommodation

Below is described the normal accommodation that we use on this tour. At the time of booking please be aware that other places might be used instead if these choices are full or closed for whatever reason.

- ❑ **Night 1:** We stay overnight in a small guesthouse, where the host will make you more than welcome.
- ❑ **Night 2:** We stay overnight in an old loch side hotel with bar. The Inn is practically on the shore of Loch Lomond and beautiful scenery surrounds it including the mass of Ben Lomond. All rooms have ensuite facilities. The

restaurant provides carefully selected dishes ensuring that you receive a true taste of Scotland.

□ **Night 3:** Tonight we stay at a 3 star hotel with comfortable rooms on the western side of the Loch. Rooms have TV and tea tray etc. and there are two restaurants, a lounge and public bars.

□ **Night 4:** Accommodation tonight is in a small, comfortable hotel. The stone built hotel is set in beautiful surroundings, by Loch Tulla, surrounded by remnants of the Caledonian pine forest on the threshold of the wild and rugged expanse of Rannoch Moor. The hotel has a bar and a homely country restaurant offering the sort of food your mother might have made. This was an old drovers Inn and in spite of modernisation you get a real sense of time and of place here. Only a couple of rooms are fully ensuite.

□ **Night 5:** A 17<sup>th</sup> century hotel, believed to be one of Scotland's oldest Inns, provides tonight's accommodation. It was used after the Battle of Culloden (1745) to house the troops of King George II, but now provides customers with modern facilities and is functional and comfortable rather than lavish. Some rooms are en suite. The large bar is particularly warm and cosy after a day of being blasted on Rannoch Moor. The hotel is the only watering hole in the area; as an old drovers Inn in this inhospitable environment, it had to be subsidized by the government to keep going. Today the number of people who pass through here guarantees its future. Mountaineers mix with hikers and day-trippers and truck drivers. The view from the hotel is one of the finest in Scotland: overlooking the sentinel mountain: Buachaille Etive Mor (The Shepherd) at the entrance of Glencoe.

□ **Night 6:** In Kinlochleven we stay in a guesthouse.

□ **Night 7:** We use many different bed & breakfast and guesthouses in Fort William as it is a pretty busy town.

## Outline Itinerary

□ **Day 1 Drymen:** Travel to starting point a small town north of Glasgow that is a gateway to the Highlands. If you arrive early there is a teashop with home made cakes across the green and the small Clacan Inn where Rob Roy used to come down for a swift pint whilst collecting "Blackmail."

□ **Day 2 Drymen - Rowardennan** (15 miles / 24km): Gentle scenery on the bonny banks of Loch Lomond. Passing highland cattle in the fields the route winds up through forest and across the moors up to Conic Hill, which from the summit gives great views over the loch, and across the islands there. This marks the boundary of the Highland fault and officially the start of the Highlands proper. The way drops down to Balmaha by the water, and then winds its way towards Rowardennan along the Loch shore with tree-framed views. Rowardennan marks the road head, and a convenient place to stay at our pleasant hotel. An extra day here would be advised if you wanted to make an ascent of Ben Lomond.

□ **Day 3 Rowardennan – Inverarnan (Ardlui)** (12 or 14 miles / 19 or 22km): Today you walk in the shadow of Ben Lomond for much of the time, following the Loch edge path. There are no big ascents to make, but a few short steep ups and downs. You can pass by Rob Roy's prison and cave: cave areas where he is said to have held

up in times of difficulty and held prisoners at his pleasure. You could perhaps have a drink at the hotel at Inversnaid before either walking on to Ardleish, where you can raise a buoy on a pole to attract the attention of the ferry man who will collect you and transfer you to our hotel on the western side of the Loch (approx £3 not included). If you fancy the longer option, or if the weather is too rough, you need to continue to Beinglas farm or the Inverarnan Drover's inn to call for a taxi to transfer you to the hotel (not included) .

□ **Day 4 Ardlui to Loch Tulla:** (15 miles / 24.15km or 21 miles / 34km) Two choices today: It is a long way from here to Loch Tulla, if you are a strong walker then it is fine, but otherwise we advise you to use the taxi (included) to take you to Crianlarich or further, to reduce the day to a more manageable length. Crianlarich lies under another big peak; Ben Mor. The largely valley route goes via the ancient priory of St. Fillan associated with both Robert The Bruce and Rob Roy, through the moraines of Dalrigh, where the Bruce was defeated in 1306, then via the old mining settlement of Tyndrum where a seam of gold has been recently found. The route continues up past the peaks of Ben Lui and Ben Dorain to the Bridge of Orchy for a quick dram before continuing on to Loch Tulla (Inveroran), a beautifully situated lake surrounded by Scots pines a remnant of the ancient Caledonian forest.

□ **Day 5 Loch Tulla to Rannoch Moor and Kingshouse:** (10 miles / 16 km) Leave the relative leafy tranquility of Loch Tulla and head up on the old military road across the wilds and the heather clad wastes of Rannoch Moor, past Ba Bridge, claimed to be the remotest part of the route. The views become ever more expansive with views into great corries once filled with glaciers. Often you can see deer on this section and there is a great interplay between land, lake, mountain and sky. A cairn memorial to Peter Fleming, the inspiration to his brother Ian for the James Bond character. The military road winds down to the old drovers Inn near the Gateway to Glencoe. This is in the shadow of perhaps the most impressive looking mountain of the tour- Buachaille Etive Mor - the shepherd of Etive Mor.

□ **Day 6 Kingshouse to Kinlochleven:** (8 miles 13 km). From the Inn the way passes beside one of the most impressive mountains in Scotland - Buahaille Etive Mor or the Shepherd and then proceeds up the Devil's staircase to 1850 ft: not as bad as it seems, a well graded section of the Way. This offers spectacular views back from whence you came. Then it is a long descent to sea level at the head of Loch Leven with views of the Blackwater damn, Loch Leven and The Pap of Glencoe.

□ **Day 7 Kinlochleven to Fort William:** (13 miles / 21km) A steep climb up under the steep slopes of the Mamore hills at the beginning of the day follows old Victorian hunting tracks and then you are back on the old military road and over Lairigmor Pass and through dense coniferous forest to Glen Nevis past the foot of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak (4408ft).

□ **Day 8 End of tour:** The tour ends after breakfast but why not stay an extra night to climb Ben Nevis and take the evening sleeper out of Fort William?

## **Included**

Bed & breakfast on all days throughout your itinerary.  
Ensuite facilities where available. Luggage transfers from Inn to Inn, and transfer from Ardlui to Crianlarich if required. Full route notes and map package.

## **Extending Your Tour**

**Extra nights** are available any where along the trail. Please contact us.