

SCOTLAND – WEST HIGHLAND WAY

10-days / 9-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking holiday on Scotland's premier walking route



Scotland's West Highland Way is a spectacular long-distance route from the central Lowlands near Glasgow through wild and scenic landscapes to the Scottish Highlands. Walk through peaceful farmland, follow along the shoreline of Loch Lomond, cross bleak Rannoch Moor, step into history at Glencoe and earn breathtaking views of Scotland's iconic mountains including Ben Lomond, Buachaille Etive Mor and of course Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak. This tour follows the 95-mile (152km) national trail, starting at Milngavie on the northern fringes of Glasgow, and ending in Fort William, in the shadow of Ben Nevis. The route is well-marked throughout and follows forestry tracks, abandoned railway lines, Victorian-era hunters' paths, ancient drove routes, and old military roads. There is an array of wildlife to be spotted, including roe and red deer, spotted woodpeckers, rare golden eagles, peregrine falcons, ospreys and merlins.

Cost from: **\$2495** per person twin share
Single room supplement from **\$1375** – availability strictly limited

Departs: Daily from late March to mid-October

Starts: Milngavie, near Glasgow **Ends:** Fort William

Includes: 9 nights' accommodation in quality B&Bs, guesthouses and inns, with ensuite where available; 9 breakfasts; luggage transfers (1 bag per person up to 20kg); detailed route descriptions (digital and/or printed) and .gpx routing for GPS or mobile devices; emergency support.

Not included: Lunches, dinners, drinks, personal expenses, travel to the start or from the end of the walk.

Walk grading: Moderate with average daily distances of 12 miles / 20km (5-6 hours of walking). Average daily ascent of about 475 metres. The track is generally good underfoot, although there are some boggy areas, steep or rocky slopes and narrow trails, occasional walking on gravel and on tarmac roads. Adverse weather can make the trail seem more challenging.

When to go: The West Highland Way is in high demand, accommodation is limited in the small villages along the way, and **early booking is essential**. Note that although departures are offered in late March and early April, the weather is unpredictable and the days are still fairly short. May is the most popular month to walk the West Highland Way; September too is popular, with mild days and autumn colours, so for May or September departures, book early to avoid disappointment. Fort William hosts biking events in May and June each year so accommodation availability can be tight and you may need flexibility in your travel plans.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Milngavie

In the late 18th Century Milngavie, the official starting point of the West Highland Way, was a small village in the Allander River valley. Now it is a suburb of Glasgow on the city's northern fringes, well-connected to the city by train (every 15-30 minutes, journey time about 20 minutes, cost approx. £3 per person from Glasgow Queen Street or Glasgow Central). Milngavie (pronounced 'mill-guy') has a pedestrianised town centre with shops and restaurants which is worth a wander. Look for the stone obelisk marking the start of the West Highland Way.

Day 2: Milngavie – Drymen

walking @ 12 miles / 19km

Leave the urban landscape behind you, with an easy walk on woodland paths, through farmland and on an old railway line following the valleys of the Rivers Blane and Endrick. Just past the distinctive small peak of Dumgoyne you may like to detour to visit Glengoyne Distillery, which is open to the public for tours and tastings. Continue past the villages of Dumgoyne and Gartness to Drymen, which has a lovely village green and is home to the oldest registered licensed pub in Scotland, the Clachan Inn, dating back to 1734.

Day 3: Drymen – Rowardennan

walking @ 14 miles / 23km

A day dominated by mountain and lake. Walk on forest tracks and minor roads, passing shaggy highland cattle in the fields. Mighty Ben Lomond comes into view as the path winds up to Conic Hill with its fine views of Loch Lomond. The loch marks the Highland fault which is the official start of the Highlands. Descend to Balmaha village where refreshments are available then wind your way along the Loch shore to Rowardennan – watch for ospreys fishing in the loch. Ben Lomond (3196 feet / 974m) is one of Scotland's Munros and if you'd like to 'bag' it, stay an extra night in Rowardennan (at extra cost).

Day 4: Rowardennan – Ardlui

walking @ 13 miles / 21km

Walk in the shadow of Ben Lomond following the path at the edge of the loch. Although there are no big ascents this section of track can be rough underfoot, over undulating terrain, with some occasional scrambling. Walk through Craigrostan Woods, a remnant of ancient oak forest which once covered the region and is important habitat for pine marten. The Way passes by Rob Roy's Prison cave where Rob Roy reputedly held hostages. The hotel at Inversnaid, about halfway, has a welcoming café. At Ardluish take a ferry to your hotel on the western side of the loch (approx. £4, not included). Or continue on another mile or so to Inverarnan, where you can call for a taxi to the hotel (not included).

Day 5: Ardlui – Tyndrum

walking @ 15 miles / 24km

A long walk but a fairly easy one (although you can take a taxi, at own cost, to Crianlarich to reduce the day's walk). Just past Inverarnan you begin a gentle, lengthy ascent up Glen Falloch, through ancient forests once used for charcoal and tanning leather. Glimpse the Falls of Falloch then join the old military road built in the 18th Century by General Wade. Above Crianlarich stop to scan the skies for golden eagles, before descending to the River Fillan. Pass by the 13th Century priory of St Fillan (associated with Robert the Bruce) and the 8th Century graveyard, then follow the good path through the old lead-mining settlement of Tyndrum.

Day 6: Tyndrum – Inveroran

walking @ 9 miles / 15km

Walk out of Tyndrum on the old military road. The views are dominated by the majestic mountains of Beinn Odhar and Beinn Dorain. For much of this stage you walk near the West Highland railway line, which runs from Glasgow to Mallaig on the coast. Leave the railway line to walk down to the whitewashed Bridge of Orchy hotel next to its eponymous bridge across the River Orchy. It's just a few miles further across moorland to Inveroran, where the hotel enjoys a lonely but beautiful location near Loch Tulla. The lake is surrounded by Scots pines, a remnant of the ancient Caledonian forest.



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Day 7: Inveroran – Kingshouse

walking @ 13 miles / 21km

A gentle ascent from Inveroran to Rannoch Moor, where you join Thomas Telford's Old Parliamentary Road. The wild and barren moor, with its peat bogs and small lochans, can be forbidding in bad weather but on a clear day offers superb views. Majestic red deer are often spotted on the moor. As you descend off the moor gain views of the iconic Buachaille Etive Mor (the Great Shepherd of Etive), standing sentinel above Glencoe. You pass by Black Rock cottage, a tiny whitewashed building in a photogenic location at the foot of Buachaille Etive Mor. The ancient coaching inn at Kingshouse is a welcome sight. It was used as a barracks for the king's soldiers after the Battle of Culloden and has recently undergone an extensive renovation.

Day 8: Kingshouse – Kinlochleven

walking @ 10 miles / 16 km

This is perhaps the most dramatic and scenic section of the West Highland Way. Leaving Kingshouse mighty Buachaille Etive Mor dominates the landscape; you walk the switchbacks of the 'Devil's Staircase' out of Glencoe to the highest point on the Way, where a cairn marks the summit at 1850 feet (550m). Look back for spectacular views of the Glencoe mountains and ahead for glimpses of the Mamores and Ben Nevis. You then descend, with views of Blackwater Reservoir (built to provide electricity for the aluminium smelters at Kinlochleven, which closed in 2000) and Loch Leven, into Kinlochleven.

Day 9: Kinlochleven to Fort William

walking @ 15 miles / 24km

The final stage of the West Highland Way ascends steeply through forest above Kinlochleven then joins the route of the Old Military Road over Lairigmor Pass. Walk through glens and forests with ever-changing views of Ben Nevis, into beautiful Glen Nevis. From the Glen Nevis visitor centre continue on into Fort William, where the West Highland Way ends. Fort William, the self-styled 'Outdoor Capital of the UK', is a bustling town with a number of good pubs and restaurants for a well-earned meal.

Day 10: Departure day

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. We recommend an extra night or two in Fort William to climb Ben Nevis (4414 feet / 1344m), or to enjoy one of the many other outdoor activities in Fort William. Ask about cost and availability when making your booking. Fort William has a train station and there are several daily departures to Glasgow with onward connections to Edinburgh and London. Alternatively Scottish Citylink coach services operate from Fort William to Inverness or Oban with connections to other destinations in Scotland. Or perhaps continue walking along the Great Glen Way to Inverness!

Alternate itinerary: We also offer an 8-day/7-night version of this itinerary, from **\$2140** per person, twin-share, which begins in Drymen rather than Milngavie in order to avoid urban walking through Glasgow's city fringes.

Day 1: Arrive Drymen

Day 2: Drymen to Rowardennan (14 miles / 23 km)

Day 3: Rowardennan to Ardluish or Inveroran, then ferry or taxi to Ardlui (13 miles / 21km)

Day 4: Ardlui by taxi to Crianlarich, then walk to Inveroran (13 miles / 21km)

Day 5: Inveroran to Kingshouse (13 miles / 21km)

Day 6: Kingshouse to Kinlochleven (10 miles / 16km)

Day 7: Kinlochleven to Fort William (15 miles / 24km)

Day 8: Depart Fort William



Other walking holidays from Outdoor Travel – guided in small groups or self-guided inn-to-inn with luggage transfers and meals – are available in many areas of the UK and Europe including the spectacular and challenging **Coast to Coast** trail, the **Great Glen Way** from Fort William to Inverness in Scotland, the pilgrim's **Way of St James** or **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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