

SCOTLAND – HIGHLANDS, CASTLES, LOCHS & GLENS

7-days / 6-nights **QUALITY GUIDED** walks in the Cairngorms National Park in the Scottish Highlands



The Cairngorms National Park is a hugely diverse, magical place. The landscape of the Cairngorms – high wild mountains, heather-covered moorlands, peat bogs, ancient forests, clear tumbling streams, glassy lochs, picturesque castles, tiny farms and crofts and small villages – is the Scotland of your dreams.

On this two-centre guided walking holiday, we are based in Royal Deeside, where Queen Elizabeth has her Scottish residence, Balmoral Castle, and Strathspey, where the high granite plateau rises above charming villages. Hiking here is a special experience, with delights at every turn. Enjoy some of the best easy walks here, using mountain paths, old droving roads and thieves' trails once used for cattle rustling and smuggling illicit whisky. There is a huge variety of possible hikes to choose from but wherever we venture, we will enjoy the fantastic scenery, sense of wilderness and rich history and heritage.

Cost per person twin share from: Classic: **\$4285** Deluxe: **\$5930** Single supplement on request

Departures: **Classic:** 20 April, 11 May, 1, 22 June, 13 July, 3, 24 August, 15 September, 5 October
Deluxe: 28 April, 19 May, 30 June, 28 July

Includes: 6 nights' quality accommodation in two comfortable guesthouses (Classic tour) or carefully selected guesthouse then quality hotel (Deluxe tour), meals as indicated in itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner), the services of an experienced and knowledgeable guide / driver, all transport throughout starting and finishing in AviemoreP, entrance fees to a Highland castle and a wildlife reserve.

Not included: Drinks, meals not mentioned, transport to the start/end of trip, personal expenses, gratuities.

Accommodation: On the **Classic** tour we spend our nights in welcoming and friendly guesthouses. The first 3 nights will be in Royal Deeside and the next 3 nights in Strathspey. Accommodation is in twin or double rooms with ensuite bathroom facilities. A warm welcome is assured and, in the evenings, relax beside the wood-burning-stove or in one of the village pubs.

For our **Deluxe** departures our first 3 nights are in a gorgeous Strathspey guest house with welcoming hosts, then the next 3 nights are in a deluxe hotel in Royal Deeside with views across the valley of the River Dee.

Single Supplement: There is no single person supplement charged to solo travellers however, you will share a room with another person of the same sex. If you require a single room, a supplement applies.

Grade: Easy to Moderate. We walk for about 5 hours each day, following generally good trails with no major ascents, with plenty of stops to rest or take photos. The terrain underfoot will usually be on paths or hill trails, which may be muddy or rough in places. Most daily walks are glen hikes, with some ascents of low level hills, up to around 1,500 feet (450m) high.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations



Getting there: Plan to meet the tour guide at Aviemore Railway Station at 10.00am on Day 1 for the transfer to Strathspey. You should be back by 4.00pm on the last day.

Suggested Itinerary: *

Day 1: Hiking the trails of Royal Deeside **various walking options up to @ 6 miles (10km), 3-4 hours**
From Aviemore, we take a transfer to Royal Deeside, best known for being the Scottish home of the Royal family. Here we'll enjoy a short walk through the ancient, wooded landscape, taking in stunning views and keeping an eye out for the local wildlife. In the afternoon we'll transfer to the beautiful village of Braemar and check in to our guest house accommodation. (L, D)

Day 2: The Cuckoo Glen and the Devil's Punchbowl **walking @ 10 miles (17km), 6 hours**
This circular hike is one of the best in Royal Deeside. We follow a good trail north to the edge of the Cairngorm plateau, where some of the highest peaks in Scotland rise from the deep glens. The wilderness is striking and the beauty is all around. The rivers are a real highlight with the striking rock features of the Linn of Dee and the Devil's Punchbowl most notable. (B, L, D)

Day 3: Hiking Royal Deeside: The Shadow of Lochnagar **walking @ 7 miles (12km), 5 hours**
This superb circular hike explores Glen Muick, which lies in the shadow of the famous peak of Lochnagar. It takes us through ancient pine forest, past one of Queen Victoria's hunting lodges and beneath towering cliffs as we circumnavigate beautiful Loch Muick. It's also a great place for spotting wildlife – look out for red deer and golden eagles. (B, L, D)

Day 4: Highland Perthshire and Strathspey **walking @ 6 mile (9km), 4-5 hours**
We transfer west into Highland Perthshire, where we make our way to a 13th Century castle to walk on its vast estate. We enjoy a level route through a beautiful forest in a steep-sided glen. We finish back at the castle, with time for a tour of its interior and perhaps the gardens too. A short transfer north takes us into Strathspey and our base for the next 3 nights, a small hotel in a sleepy Cairngorm village. (B, L, D)

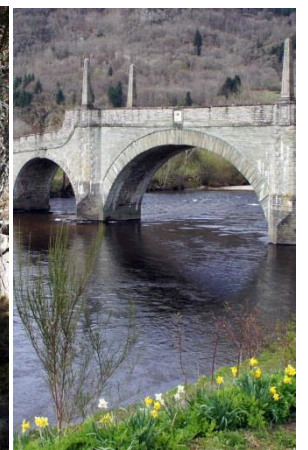
Day 5: Into Glen Feshie **walking @ 8 miles (12km), 4-5 hours**
Despite being one of the most beautiful of all the Cairngorm valleys, Glen Feshie is overlooked by many hikers, meaning that a walk here has a real wilderness feel. Our route today follows the banks of the bubbling River Feshie, through ancient pines to an old mountain hut. The route offers great wildlife-spotting potential with red deer, golden eagles and even the rare Capercaillie found in the glen. (B, L, D)

Day 6: Abernethy Forest and Wildlife Reserve **walking @ 5 miles (8km), 4-5 hours**
The Abernethy Forest is perhaps the most beautiful in Scotland, with stunning lochs surrounded by ancient Scots Pine trees and framed by views of the high mountains. We hike a circuit here, perhaps taking in a section of the Speyside Way long distance trail, and finishing at a wildlife reserve where we might see red squirrels and many bird species including, in the early part of the summer, the osprey. (B, L, D)

Day 7: Hike in Cairngorms National Park **walking @ 5miles (8km), 5 hours**
There are so many great walks in the Cairngorms that we like to keep the itinerary flexible and decide which hike to take on the day. One option is a hike close to our hotel, a favourite of the locals. It ventures into the eastern edge of the Monadh Liath Mountains on an out-and-back route to Loch Gynack. It is a wild and beautiful place, so an apt location to end our trip. After the hike, we complete our circumnavigation of the Cairngorms National Park by transferring back to Aviemore for the trip end. (B, L)

** The itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of tour guide. Some departures may operate in reverse.*

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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 **Coast to Coast** trail or the **Cotswolds Way** or the **Cornish Coastal Track** in England, the **Brecon Beacons** or **Snowdonia** in Wales and the **West Highland Way** in Scotland or **Connemara** or **Ring of Kerry** in Ireland.

In Europe you will find **Outdoor Travel** has many classic walks including the **Tour du Mont Blanc** in the Swiss and French Alps, along the **Danube** or in **Bavaria**, the pilgrim's **Way of St James** or **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy in France to Santiago in Spain or **Via Francigena** the pilgrimage 'road to Rome' in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for details and reservations:

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