Cairngorms Guided Walking



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Guided Walking Holidays	Scottish Highlands	5 & 8	137kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Established in 2003 as Scotland's second-largest national park, the Cairngorms has spectacular landscapes, mountains, lochs, woodlands, and a huge amount of wildlife hotspots. This holiday is an ideal introduction to this natural paradise in the heart of the Scottish Highlands and you can look forward to plenty of carefully planned guided walks plus interesting attractions that highlight the region's nature and heritage.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- The choice of two walks a day – one easier, one harder
- Discovering the second highest mountain range in Scotland
- Climbing famous summits and bagging Munros
- Exploring quiet lochs, glens, and ancient pine forests
- Sampling a wee dram or two along the Speyside Way
- Spotting ospreys, golden eagles, capercaillie, and red deer

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)

- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

ITINERARY - GUIDED WALKING

Day 1 **Arrival Day**

Check-in at your accommodation from 15:00. Your leader will be at reception at 18:30 to meet the group and for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner.

Day 2 **The Wildcat Trail and the Monadhliath Mountains**

Option 1 – The Wildcat Trail and Loch Gynack

Distance: 8.5 miles (13.5km)

Ascent: 700 feet (220m)

In summary: Explore the rivers Spey and Calder on the Wildcat Trail from Newtonmore, then follow the East Highland Way to the small town of Kingussie.

Highlight: Very varied countryside with spectacular views of the Cairngorms, passing the secluded Loch Gynack.

Option 2 – Càrn an Fhreiceadain

Distance: 11.5 miles (18.5km)

Ascent: 2,400 feet (740m)

In summary: From Kingussie follow quiet paths past the small hill of Tom Baraidh before joining a good track over the summits of Beinn Bhreac and Càrn an Fhreiceadain. We then descend on a different track following the Allt Mòr and Gynack rivers back to Kingussie.

Highlight: The 'Corbett' summit of Càrn an Fhreiceadain, on the edge of the Monadhliath Mountains, commands fine views both over the Monadhliath and across to the Cairngorms and provides a good warm up for adventurous peaks later in the week.

Day 3 **Loch Insh and Glen Feshie**

Option 1 – Sculpture, Lochs and Glen Feshie

Distance: 7.5 miles (12.5km)

Ascent: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: From Loch Insh we follow quiet paths to Feshiebridge, then onwards to the lower reaches of Glen Feshie. Forest tracks lead us to the lovely Uath Lochans, and then along the Speyside Way back to Loch Insh.

Highlight: Sublime view of the lochans from the wooded rim of Farleitter Crag.

Option 2 – Sgòr Gaoith, from Glen Feshie

Distance: 9.3 miles (15km)

Ascent: 2725 feet (830m)

In summary: The ascent follows the old fox hunters path, rising to Càrn Bàn Mòr on the vast plateau above Glen Feshie. We continue on mostly fairly easy going terrain to Sgòr Gaoith. Our descent back into Glen Feshie is via a good path which passes through magnificent pinewoods.

Highlight: The first Munro of the week, with terrific views west over the River Spey and east to Braeriach and the bulk of the Cairngorms.

Please note this walk is +1 grade higher than the overall grade of the holiday as a whole.

Day 4 Rothiemurchus and the Cairngorm Plateau

Option 1 – Rothiemurchus and Coire an t-Sneachda

Distance: 9 miles (15km)

Ascent: 1,300 feet (400m)

In summary: Today's walk is split into two parts. Our first walk takes us into Rothiemurchus forest and to the shores of Loch an Eilein. We then transfer to the Cairngorm Ski Centre where a well graded ascent takes us into the heart of the mountains and the stunning Coire an t-Sneachda glacial corrie, a grand cirque of cliffs, often snow covered for much of the year.

Highlight: Loch an Eilein, with it's backdrop of the pines of Rothiemurchus Forest, is extremely beautiful, and is one of the most popular short walks in Scotland.

Option 2 – Cairn Gorm and the northern corries

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 2,600 feet (780m)

In summary: From the Cairngorm ski centre we ascend to the plateau with stunning views across towards Cairn Toul and SgÒr an Lochain Uaine. We continue along the top of the northern corries to Cairn Gorm, our second Munro of the week, before returning past the Ptarmigan station and the ski areas.

Highlight: The summit of Cairn Gorm, one of the highest summits in the National Park and a Munro. Dramatic views down into the Lairig Ghru and the northern corries, and terrific rock architecture.

Day 5 Free day – Cairngorms National Park

Each holiday there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest.

There's plenty to do within easy reach, whether it's a visit to Inverness (the cultural capital of the Scottish Highlands) or a day trip to the historic battlefield at Culloden and the 18th century fortress of Fort George.

Day 6 Meall a' Bhuachaille and the Ryvoan Pass

Option 1 – Lochan Uaine & Loch Morlich

Distance: 9 miles (14.5km)

Ascent: 520 feet (160m)

In summary: A beautiful walk exploring the Glenmore area of Rothiemurchus. From Glenmore Lodge we follow the Ryvoan Pass past the beautiful Lochan Uaine to visit the Ryvoan bothy. We return by an intriguing higher path through the woods, then take a circuit of Loch Morlich, popular for water sports, and finish at the visitor centre where we can enjoy refreshments.

Highlight: The green waters of Lochan Uaine are full of mystery.

Option 2 – Craiggowrie & Meall a' Bhuachaill

Distance: 9.5 miles (15.5km)

Ascent: 2,600 feet (780m)

In summary: A varied walk with the ascent of Craiggowrie on good paths, then along the dramatic and windswept ridge to the Corbett, Meall a' Bhuachaille, From here we descend to the Ryvoan Pass, visiting Lochan Uaine on our return to the Glenmore visitor centre.

Highlight: The dramatic ridge from Craiggowrie has stunning views in all directions, and is a good spot from which to pick out all the areas where we have been walking earlier in the week.

Day 7 The Speyside Way Tomintoul Spur

Option 1 – Glenlivet to Tomintoul

Distance: 8.5miles (14 km)

Ascent: 1400 feet (420m)

In summary: This off-shoot of the Speyside Way is considered by many to be the finest section of the entire trail, providing views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the south-west and the Hills of Cromdale to the west. It is a scenic delight, the easily reached summit of Carn Daimh providing 360 degree views.

Highlight: We finish in Tomintoul for a whisky tasting (or gin, if preferred).

Option 2 – Glenlivet via distillery and Blairfindy Castle to Tomintoul

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Ascent: 1,740 feet (530m)

In summary: Starting at Glenlivet, we follow the Speyside Way, passing by the distillery and with a short detour to Blairfindy Castle. From here we continue along the national trail, following the option 1 group to the summit of Carn Daimh before descending into the village of Tomintoul for a well-earned dram.

Highlight: A more relaxing day and a chance to unwind, with varied scenery, a lower summit but still with superb views, and a whisky tasting at the end.

Day 8 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Moderate walking grade 5

Some walking experience needed. Full day walks which may include some short but steep ascents and descents throughout the day, and varied terrain. Regular stops. Typically, 8-9 miles (13-15km) with around 1,300ft (400m) of ascent.



Challenging walking grade 8

Challenging walks for fit, experienced walkers. Expect rugged or mountainous terrain, or some longer distances than typical for this grade. Typically, 12-13 miles (19-21km) with around 2,300ft (700m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

2026 - The Boat Inn - Cairngorms National Park

Set amongst heather clad hills and native Scots pine woodlands, the Boat Inn, Boat of Garten is in the heart of the Cairngorms National Park. With its roaring log fires and with plenty of character and charm, we've the perfect base for our holiday. The rooms are all comfortable ensuites, equipped with tea/coffee making facilities, TV, hairdryers and with WiFi access too. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

FOOD & DRINK

Dining at The Boat Inn

Your stay is full-board. This includes daily breakfasts, packed lunch options, and evening meals. Vegetarian choices and dietary requirements can be catered for (please give advance notice when booking).

Packed lunches

Our packed lunches will be too much food for some and not enough for others; if you feel you might need more food during the walk, please bring a supply of snacks to supplement this – it won't always be possible to buy these on the route. Your packed lunches will include: a bread sandwich or roll with a choice of filling; some fresh fruit; fruit cake/ flapjack or similar, crisps and/or biscuits. For those of you tackling a level 4 or above holiday, we would highly recommend bringing some trail mix or something similar to ensure you've some fuel in reserve should you need it.

Dietary requirements

Our partner hotels can cater for most dietary requirements, but it is important you advise us of any allergies and dietary restrictions you have at the time of booking.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

The Boat Hotel
Deshar Road
Boat of Garten PH24 3BH

By train

For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call +44 (0)3457 484950.

By bus

There is a stagecoach bus approx. once an hour from Aviemore train station to Boat of Garten. For times and route planning visit www.stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey.

By taxi

A taxi from Aviemore Train Station takes approx. 12 minutes and costs roughly £20 (one way) in 2024.

By air

There are a number of both national and international flights to Glasgow International. From there, take the regular airport bus to Glasgow Queen Street station (George Square) (journey time 30 minutes). From Glasgow Queen Street train station you can get the train to Aviemore.

2027 - The Cairngorm Hotel - Aviemore, Cairngorms National Park

The Cairngorm Hotel is situated directly opposite the railway station in the heart of Aviemore. Offering the warm and friendly welcome you'd expect from a traditional Highland hotel, rooms are comfortably furnished with touches of tartan, and feature blackout curtains as well as tea/coffee making facilities. Popular with locals and visitors alike, the Cairngorm Hotel's bar and restaurant is a convivial and sociable space to start the day with a good breakfast and enjoy a hearty dinner after a day out exploring. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four-legged friends in some of the communal areas.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Getting there

Cairngorm Hotel
Grampian Road
Aviemore
Inverness-shire
PH22 1PE

Joining Instructions

PLEASE NOTE the website www.travelinescotland.com is a fantastic resource for public transport in Scotland and planning your journey.

Holiday Start

By Air

There are International flights and also flights from around the UK to Glasgow International Airport or Edinburgh. From Glasgow International Airport take the regular airport bus to Glasgow Central station (journey time 30 minutes) (www.glasgowairport.com). From Edinburgh Airport you can take a bus or a tram into the city centre; see https://www.edinburghairport.com/transport-links . You may also wish to consider pre-booking with all-electric, intercity bus service Ember (as they operate a dynamic service based on pre-booked seats); https://www.ember.to/ or please see Traveline Scotland above. There are also flights to Glasgow Prestwick Airport, which is further outside the city and has its own railway station with frequent trains (journey time 45 minutes to Glasgow Central station), (www.gpia.co.uk).

By Rail

The nearest railway station to the accommodation is Aviemore; the hotel is just across the street from the station. From Glasgow Queen Street or Edinburgh Waverley train stations you can take the train to Aviemore. Again, please see www.travelinescotland.com for assistance with journey planning.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleeces make a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

For holidays operating October through to the end of March, please also bring the following on your walks:

- spare warm clothing
- spare high energy food
- head torch and spare batteries
- please note for the October to March season your waterproof jacket needs to offer a high level of waterproofing and wind resistance, and a hood. Look for a waterproof jacket with sealed/taped seams and a minimum HH (hyrodstatic head - this is the rating given on waterproof jackets) of 10,000mm+

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and midge repellent/net and tick remover tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- Walking poles
- Midge net

USEFUL INFORMATION

Ticks

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

Your Island Hopping Leader

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your holiday and are delighted to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you.

Please ensure you complete and hand in your registration form on arrival and let the leader know about any medical problems you may have. This may be useful in the event of a problem on the walk and will be treated confidentially by the leader.

In the event of a problem

If you become separated from your group, please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you.

All our leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas).

Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

If you have any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

Document produced: 6 November 2026