West Highland Way Guided Trail



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Guided trails	Scottish Highlands	8	175kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Journey through stunning highland scenery on one of Scotland's most famous trails. A firm favourite of our guests, this superb walk winds its way from Milngavie to the foot of Ben Nevis at Fort William. You'll hike from the sparkling shores of Loch Lomond to the wilderness of Rannoch Moor, surrounded by wow-worthy Scottish Munros and mountains.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Journeying through spectacular Highland scenery
- Exploring trails steeped in Scottish history
- Enjoying stunning views of Ben Nevis
- A ferry ride across Loch Lomond
- The bragging rights of conquering all 96 miles of this famous trail
- Staying in carefully-selected partner hotels and our country house in Glen Coe
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

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
- Luggage transfers

ITINERARY - GUIDED TRAIL

Day 1 **Arrival Day at Glasgow**

Check-in at the Grand Central 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 **Milngavie to Drymen**

Leaving Milngavie, we are into pleasant parkland, woods and fields. The first section to Drymen is an easy walk most of the way. Undulating at first, the path flattens out following the trackbed of the now disused railway line between Glasgow and Aberfoyle. We pass the Dumgoyach Standing Stones, thought to date from the Bronze Age, and also the Glengoyne Distillery. We pass stone cottages at the hamlet of Gartness, before some minor road walking through rolling farmland leads us into the village of Drymen.

12½ miles (20km) with 900 feet (280m) of ascent.

Day 3 **Drymen to Rowardennan**

We follow forest tracks, paths and minor roads through gently rolling countryside, gradually gaining views of the hills around us, including Ben Lomond to the north. The section over Conic Hill (1,184 feet), involves some 700 feet of ascent, but we are rewarded with fine views of Loch Lomond from the summit. Once past Balmaha we join woodland paths winding pleasantly by the shores of Loch Lomond with a good chance of seeing Ospreys. We can have welcome refreshments at the end at the Rowardennan Hotel on the edge of the loch.

14½ miles (23.5km) with 2,150 feet (650m) of ascent.

Day 4 **Rowardennan to Ardlui**

Although low level, this is a tough day. It is however a beautiful walk along this side of Loch Lomond, below Ben Lomond, and quiet once we have left Rowardennan. We have the option of the shore path to Inversnaid, rebuilt in 2014, or the higher forest path. We go through much natural oak woodland, including the RSPB Inversnaid reserve which is full of bird and animal wildlife. This is an area much associated with the outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor - the path passes close by 'Rob Roy's Prison' and 'Rob Roy's Cave'. At the north east shore a ferry takes us across the loch, to Ardlui.

11½ miles (19km) with 1,400 feet (430m) of ascent.

Day 5 Ardlui to Tyndrum

We re-cross the Loch on the ferry to rejoin the path and begin to really travel into the hills, but the walking is much easier. There are excellent views south over Loch Lomond from the side of the small hill of Cnap Mor. A gentle ascent up Glen Falloch takes us past the Falls of Falloch. Near the top of the pass, we join, for the first time, the old 18th century military road built by General Wade's successors. From now on the walking gets easier, as much of the Way follows this military road almost through to Fort William.

We stay high above Crianlarich, the half way point of the West Highland Way, allowing good views out over Strath Fillan and the surrounding hills. We drop down to Tyndrum (pronounced "Tyne-drum") a small village, now a busy little tourist centre. The village originally became prosperous from lead mining and the spoil heaps are still clearly visible on the southern hill slopes. More recently it experienced renewed fame as a gold mining centre. Despite its small size it also has the distinction of possessing two railway stations, as the lines from Glasgow to Fort William and Oban diverge at this point.

14 miles (22km) with 2,150 feet (660m) of ascent.

Day 6 Tyndrum to Inveroran

This is an easy day, mostly along the good tracks of the military road. From Tyndrum we head up over the top of the pass to face the magnificent Beinn Dorain, an imposing hill rising almost 3,000 feet from the valley floor in a single steep and craggy slope. We descend to the wide flat valley floor where we are likely to meet the Highland cattle of the Auch Estate and enjoy easy walking to Bridge of Orchy. We see the last of the railway line to Fort William here as it departs north-eastwards across lonely and uninhabited stretches of Rannoch Moor. A short ascent through forestry takes us out into the open for superb views of the mountains of The Black Mount to the north before we drop down to Inveroran.

9 miles (14km) with 1,050 feet (320m) of ascent.

Day 7 Inveroran to Kingshouse

We encounter the longest and most exposed stretch of the whole Way, reaching an altitude of almost 1,500 feet amongst the open country of Rannoch Moor. Bad weather can be experienced, with no shelter for more than six miles. We walk over a landscape of wild, open moorland, scenery of heather, rocks and lochans, always with the chance to spot an eagle. In good weather it can be a beautiful, if lonely, place with clear views for miles around and encircled by mountains. Eventually we drop down to The Kingshouse Hotel, newly re-built on the site of what is believed to be one of Scotland's oldest licensed inns. The original inn was built in the eighteenth century.

9½ miles (15.5km) with 1,080 feet (330m) of ascent.

Day 8 Kingshouse to Kinlochleven

We are now in the upper end of Glencoe, which is guarded by the imposing rocky mountain of Buachaille Etive Mor (the Great Herdsman of Etive). This is magnificent scenery, which we can take time to admire as we climb the "Devil's Staircase"; a zig-zag track winding its way upwards. From the high point of 1,850 feet at the Staircase summit, also the highest point of the West Highland Way. The way from the top of “Devil’s Staircase” to Kinlochleven holds a sting in the tail; it is a hard road which seems to double back away from Kinlochleven. We descend to Kinlochleven, the former site of Britain's second aluminium smelting plant. The complex was built between 1904 and 1909, although the first aluminium was produced in 1908, in a small temporary factory. On the way we pass close by the water conduit and pipelines bringing water down from Blackwater Reservoir to power the former plant by hydro-electricity.

8½ miles (13.5km) with 1,360 feet (410m) of ascent.

Day 9 Kinlochleven to Fort William

A steep but short climb out of Kinlochleven takes us on to easy walking through Lairigmor. There are magnificent mountains on both sides before a final ascent through forestry, cuts across the hillsides bringing us out above Glen Nevis, with spectacular Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain at 4,414 feet, immediately opposite. We then continue down the glen to the end of the walk in Fort William

15½ miles (24.5 km) with 2,230 feet (680m) of ascent.

Day 10 Departure Day

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



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

Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow - West Highland Way

The historic Grand Central Hotel is adjacent to Glasgow Central Station. Dating back to 1883, the hotel has original features including the grand staircase and the magnificent Champagne Central Bar with its domed ceiling and marble floor. The comfortable rooms are equipped with TV, WiFi, tea and coffee making facilities and a hairdryer. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

2026 - Ardlui Hotel, Ardlui - West Highland Way

The Ardlui Hotel commands a magnificent location on the banks of Loch Lomond. Having walked along the eastern shore of the Loch we arrive at the hotel by boat, where a warm welcome is assured. The hotel has 10 en-suite bedrooms. All rooms have tea and coffee making facilities, TV, hairdryer and radio. WiFi is available but limited. The hotel has a public bar, which may result in some residual noise on Friday nights until it closes at midnight. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

Alltshellach - West Highland Way

For a combination of mountain views, olde-worlde charm, and somewhere comfortable to sleep, our stately Scottish house in Glen Coe is hard to beat. With an enviable setting right on the shores of Loch Leven, the scenery here is every bit rugged and romantic as you'd expect. After a long day of walking, unwind in one of three comfortable lounges with a wee dram or two, take a swim in the indoor pool, or take a post-dinner stroll around the beautiful lawns and wooded grounds that lead down to the water's edge Holiday Finish The last four nights are spent at Alltshellach (HF Holidays Country House). You can return to Glasgow Airport or Glasgow City using the Scottish Citylink Bus (the nearest bus stop is at North Ballachulish (not Ballachulish) which is a 400m walk from Alltshellach). See www.citylink.co.uk for the timetable and to book in advance. The nearest railway station to Alltshellach is at Fort William. Our house manager can arrange a local taxi to Fort William if required.

Buchanan Arms Hotel - West Highland Way

Situated in the popular tourist village of Drymen, the Buchanan Arms Hotel dates to the mid 1700's. Formerly an inn, it has been lovingly restored to its modern-day form. The hotel boasts a leisure club with swimming pool and gym

which are free for guests to use. All rooms include hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities, TV, Wi-Fi, and telephone. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

2027 - Crianlarich Hotel, Crianlarich - West Highland Way

The family-owned Crianlarich Hotel is located at the midpoint of the West Highland Way. It offers walkers a warm welcome with boot room/drying facilities and a fantastic AA-rosette awarded restaurant. Guests will find free WiFi in public spaces and all guest rooms, in-room tea/coffee making facilities and even a small gift and book shop. At the end of a rewarding day on the trail, unwind by the roaring log fire in the Highland Lounge or take a seat (and perhaps a wee dram) in the informal public bar.

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

JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Joining instructions for The West Highland Way

Holiday start

Our first hotel is located in Glasgow and is at Glasgow Central railway station. Your leader will meet you at the Hotel and hold an introductory meeting prior to dinner.

By rail

For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 03457 484950.

By air

There are International flights and also flights from around the UK to Glasgow International Airport. From Glasgow International Airport take the regular airport bus to Glasgow Central station (journey time 30 minutes) (www.glasgowairport.com). There are also flights to Glasgow Prestwick Airport, which has its own railway station with frequent trains (journey time 45 minutes to Glasgow Central station), (www.gpia.co.uk).

Holiday finish

The last four nights are spent at Alltshellach (HF Holidays Country House). You can return to Glasgow Airport or Glasgow City using the Scottish Citylink Bus (the nearest bus stop is at **North Ballachulish (not Ballachulish)** which is a 400m walk from Alltshellach). See www.citylink.co.uk for the timetable. The nearest railway station to Alltshellach is at Fort William. Our house manager can arrange a local taxi to Fort William if required.

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.

Maps and Guides for The West Highland WAy

Suggested Reading and Maps

Your leader will carry all the necessary maps and guides. For you own interest you may consider looking at some of the following:

www.west-highland-way.co.uk/

West Highland Way 11th edition by Bob Aitken and Roger Smith

Recreational Path Guide West Highland Way by Anthony Burton

Harvey West Highland Way Map

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.

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