

West Highland Way Guided Trail Holiday

Tour Style: Guided Trails
Destination: Scotland
Trip code: ZHLDW
Trip Walking Grade: 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Firmly established as one of our guests' favourite trail holidays, this superb walk winds its way from Milngavie to the foot of Ben Nevis, at Fort William. Surrounded by breathtaking mountains, discover the finest Highland scenery from the shores of Loch Lomond to the wilderness of Rannoch Moor. Spectacular scenery all the way.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full Board en-suite accommodation
- Experienced HF Holidays Walking Leader
- All transport to and from the walks
- Luggage transfer between accommodation

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Spectacular Highland scenery
- Trails steeped in Scottish history
- Stunning views of Ben Nevis and Loch Lomond

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking/Hiking Trail is graded 4 which involves walks/hikes over long distances in remote countryside and rough terrain. Underfoot conditions can be rough, boggy and pathless in places. Sustained ascents and descents require a good level of fitness. Some sections, particularly along the side of Loch Lomond can be rough and muddy. Whilst we are not actually climbing mountains, we will be walking through Scottish mountain country, where the weather can change abruptly. So please bear this in mind and be prepared for the Scottish weather! It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday. A sustained effort is required to complete this trail and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the daily mileage and ascent as listed below. The walking day is normally 6 to 7 hours and it is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace. It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.



ITINERARY

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, which is well worth a visit if time allows. We pass stone cottages at the hamlet of Gartness, before some minor road walking through rolling farmland leads us into the village of Drymen.

13 miles (21km) 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.

15 miles (24km) with 2,120 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 (18.5km) with 1,390 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 view 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, in forestry that is being sympathetically managed by the Forestry Commission, featuring some interesting and varied tree species, and maintaining an openness 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.

14½ miles (23km) with 2,130 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 (14.5km) with 1,040 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 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.

10 miles (16km) with 1,070 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. 9 miles (14.5km) with 1,340 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

16 miles (25.5 km) with 1,600 feet (480m) of ascent.

Day 10: Departure Day

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.

Winnock Hotel, Drymen - West Highland Way

The Winnock Hotel dates back to the late 1700's and throughout history has always offered lodging to weary travellers passing through by Loch Lomond and the Trossachs areas. Formally a coaching inn, it has been lovingly restored to its modern day form. All rooms include hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities, TV, WiFi and telephone.

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 from the Squires

family. The hotel has 10 en-suite bedrooms. All our rooms have a tea and coffee making facilities, TV, hairdryer and radio. WiFi is available but limited.

Alltshellach - Trails

Situated in a stunning location on the shores of Loch Leven, Alltshellach is a stately Scottish house set amid a rugged landscape. The house is a picture of Highland solidity, with spectacular views of craggy mountains and grassy slopes beyond the loch. This pocket of domesticity lets you admire nature at your leisure though, sipping tea or G&T as you watch clouds scud across the sky. In fact, this one-time home of the Bishop of Argyll & the Isles has been recast as a hiker's hotel, with an air of old-world splendour, excellent accommodation, a generous indoor pool, three lounges and a supremely cosy Highland Bar that's well-stocked with local beer and whisky, all of which is (almost) enough to distract you from the vast vistas over the waters. But it's the great outdoors you're here for and the house is ideally situated for accessing the Mamores, the mountains of Glen Coe and tackling Ben Nevis as well as bagging munros and spotting local wildlife.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Holiday Information

We try to create a relaxed atmosphere on the walk but please listen to safety instructions from your leader.

Keep members of the group in view especially when weather or visibility is poor. If you leave the group, then your leader will no longer have responsibility for you. Our leaders consider the safety of the group as a whole and are likely to be more cautious over potential risks such as bad weather.

The West Highland Way became Scotland's first long distance footpath when it was officially opened in 1980. The path runs for 96 miles, from Milngavie, 7 miles north-west of Glasgow, to Fort William; passing through some of the finest lowland and highland scenery on the way. The idea of a walk linking Glasgow to Fort William originated back in the 1930's, but it was not until the late 1960's when basic survey work started to look at the real potential for such a route; the HF Holidays Glasgow Group was partly involved in this. Much of the Way features ancient and historic routes. We make use of old drove roads, along which Highlanders herded their cattle to lowland markets; the famous military roads built in the 18th century; old coaching roads; farm tracks and disused railway lines.

Food & Transport

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: bread sandwiches or rolls with a choice of filling; some fresh fruit; fruit cake/flapjack or similar, crisps and/or yoghurt, fruit, biscuits.

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.

Luggage Transfers

When you change from one Hotel to another we will arrange for your luggage to be transferred for you. This is included in the cost of your holiday. Please remember that other people will need to move your suitcase so please pack thoughtfully with a maximum of 20 kilos. If you can limit your luggage to one bag, rucksack or suitcase that would be very helpful. Please make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name and "HF Holidays".

Luggage Transfers

We will arrange for your luggage to be transferred for you. This is included in the cost of your holiday. Please remember that other people will need to move your suitcase so please pack thoughtfully with a maximum of 20 kilos. If you can limit your luggage to one bag, rucksack or suitcase that would be very helpful. Please make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name and "HF Holidays".

Joining Instructions

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.

Travel by rail

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

Travel 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.

Essential Information

Essential Equipment

- To enjoy walking /hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety is our priority and Britain is famous for its changeable weather, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.
- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers are essential and a warm hat and gloves are useful additions. Gaiters are an optional but useful extra. Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner,
- Thermos flask for hot drink
- water bottle (at least 1 litre) and spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch and first aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent,
- sun hat,
- Sunglasses and protection
- cream
- camera

Useful Information

Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your Guided Walking/Hiking Trail 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 the party, 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. 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.

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.

Suggested Reading and Maps

Your leader will carry all the necessary maps and guides. For your 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

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 9am – 1pm, Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: National Westminster Bank, Account Name: HF Holidays Limited, Account Number: 48904805, Sort Code: 60-00-01, IBAN: GB90NWBK60000148904805

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

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.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

Document produced: 27-11-2021

