



Coast and Castles North – Edinburgh to Aberdeen

Summary

It takes between two and five days to experience the turbulent history and beautiful, deserted beaches between the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, and the Granite City of Aberdeen. In between these iconic cities, you'll have the chance to visit little-known but nonetheless impressive historical sites, including Lochleven Castle, Falkland Palace and St Andrews Cathedral, as well as skirting around RSPB Nature Reserves and wildlife-rich ancient woodland where you have the chance of seeing enigmatic species like ospreys, red squirrels and seals. Although the main route is best suited to hybrid or gravel bikes, it can be adapted to suit road bikes.

Highlights

Wildlife spotting at Loch Leven, where you can see ospreys fishing
 Exploring the many historical castles and palaces dotted along the route
 Soaking up the tranquillity in some of Scotland's most hidden corners
 Enjoying the coastal views from beautiful, historical fishing villages

Example 4-day itinerary

Day 1. Arrive in Edinburgh, the stunning Scottish capital. Explore the historical Royal Mile or enjoy the local hospitality and spend the night here in readiness for the adventure ahead!

Day 2. Edinburgh to Glenrothes - 50 miles/81 km; 800 metres of ascent

Your journey begins in the bustling centre of Edinburgh, zig-zagging through historical streets and purpose-built cycle paths. From there you'll have the unforgettable experience of cycling across the old Forth Road Bridge which is now only open to buses, walkers and cyclists. The route winds through Fife rolling countryside and around the edge of Loch Leven, the perfect location for a bit of bird watching. You'll spend the night in the heart of Fife, in Glenrothes or a surrounding village.

Day 3. Glenrothes to Dundee - 42 miles/ 68 km; 670 metres of ascent

Skirting around the base of the Lomond Hills (nothing to do with the Loch!), the route follows deserted country roads east towards the North Sea coast. You'll reach St Andrews where you can stop for some sightseeing. The Castle, Cathedral and museum are all well worth a visit. The route follows the coast north through Tentsmuir Nature Reserve, where red squirrels, seals and kingfishers can be spotted for those with time to look closely. After crossing the infamous Tay Road Bridge, you'll spend the night in Dundee, home to the V&A Museum and HMS Unicorn, the third oldest ship in the world!

Day 4. Dundee to Inverbervie - 49 miles/79 km; 600 metres of ascent

The route follows NCN route number 1 and heads south along traffic-free cycle paths and quiet roads that hug the coast and pass through some of Scotland's most famous golf courses. The trails are generally of a good standard, either paved or compacted stone and the route is well signposted as it picks its way around the outskirts of some lovely coastal towns. The coastal village of Inverbervie, with its sweeping stoney beach, is your home for the night.

Day 5. Inverbervie to Aberdeen - 37 miles/60 km; 600 metres of ascent

Quiet, singletrack roads weave their way through the rolling Aberdeenshire countryside, affording great views of the North Sea from the tops of dramatic cliffs. The cycle route hugs the coast heading north as Aberdeen draws ever closer. Historical sites like the impressive Dunnottar Castle and wildlife reserves of national importance lie along your path. You now have the chance to celebrate in Scotland's Granite City, Aberdeen, or head back to Edinburgh straight away.

Duration:

2 to 5 days of cycling
 2 to 6 nights' accommodation

Just let us know how many days you'd like your Coast and Castles North adventure to last!

Total Distance:

270 km or 168 miles

Includes

- Comfortable accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps and gpx.files
- Vehicle back up (fully supported trips only)
- Phone support (self-guided)
- One way transfer from Edinburgh to Aberdeen either at the beginning or end of the trip

Available on request:

- Pick up and drop off from public transport links
- Bike and equipment hire
- Accommodation in Aberdeen or Edinburgh at the end of the trip

Dates:

Self-guided and fully supported cycling trips are available between March and October for groups of 2 or more. Contact us with the dates you have in mind.

What bike?

The Coast and Castles North can be ridden on a hybrid or mountain bike. See below for more details.

To make a booking or for more information:

Email us: info@trailbrakes.co.uk
 Phone us: +44 (0)7922 653327
 or +44 (0)141 6286676



Coast and Castles North – Further Information

Accommodation and food

We use only tried and tested accommodation providers on our trips, many that we have worked with for years, so that we know that you will receive an excellent level of service. They provide everything you could need after a long day in the saddle from bike storage to hot showers, hearty breakfasts and comfortable beds. Accommodation in guest houses and hotels is always on a bed and breakfast basis and trip prices are based on two people sharing a room, unless otherwise arranged. Almost 100% of our accommodation is en-suite and we will let you know if it is not possible to book en-suite rooms. Wifi is now also pretty much universal in every location. If you would prefer hostel or bunkhouse style accommodation, breakfast is not included although most bunkhouses can provide meals at an additional charge. Bunkhouses will often have cooking facilities so that you can prepare your own meals if you'd prefer. Wherever you stay you will be able to get an evening meal at a pub or restaurant within walking distance. Lunches can usually be bought during the course of the day as you will be passing through towns or villages. It is advisable to carry plenty of snacks with you each day to keep the energy levels up!

Sole occupancy rooms are usually available in hotels or guest houses so please ask us if you'd prefer to have your own room. A single supplement from £30 per person, per night will apply (this will be more if a night in Edinburgh is required).

Clothing and kit

Scotland receives a generally mild climate all year round with the Gulf Stream passing our western coastline. The east is generally a bit drier but cooler than the west, however conditions can and do change quickly especially on higher and more exposed areas. It can rain at any time of year, sometimes all day and we often get four seasons in a day, so come prepared! A full kit list is available on our website and will be sent to you before your trip (<http://www.trailbrakes.co.uk/kit-list-equipment-recommendations>). General climatic information for Edinburgh is available here: <https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/uk/edinburgh/climate>. Up-to-the-minute weather forecasts for specific regions of the UK are available at the met office website (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/>).

It is advisable to bring a small back-pack with you on your trip, in which you can carry spare clothes, snacks and basic spares and tools that you might need during the course of a day on the bikes. Alternatively, if you're hiring bikes, we can provide pannier bags in which to carry supplies for the day.

The route

The Coast and Castles North cycle route is a well-used National Cycle Network route, along fantastic quiet country roads, purpose built, traffic-free cycle paths and disused railways. There are some short, steep climbs and some prolonged, easier gradient climbs along the route, but these are mainly on quite country roads. This trip, if completed in 4 days, has a Fitness Grading of 5, which means that you should have a good level of fitness and take part in cycling based activities regularly. You're comfortable riding for up to 6 hours per day on terrain that can include short, steep climbs. There are some short, rough off-road sections along the route which are better suited to hybrid, gravel or mountain bikes. If you'd like to ride the route on a road bike, please contact us for advice regarding potential on-road detours.

What bike?

Our customers complete the Coast and Castles North route on all kinds of bikes and a hybrid or gravel bike is probably perfect to deal with the country roads and traffic free cycle paths (some of which are unsealed). However, you can also use a mountain bike (it may be a good idea to fit mountain bikes with semi-smooth tyres to make pedalling on the roads a bit easier). It is also possible to complete the route on road bikes and although there are some sections of unsealed surface, they are mostly ok for road bikes, when ridden with care. If you are riding a road bike, we will provide detours on your maps and GPS files for the bumpiest sections of the route. Just ask if you need any further advice.

Bike hire

It is always more comfortable for you if you can use your own bike but we can provide you with quality hybrid bikes if required, which are a perfect option for the route. They have plenty of gears to help you make it up those climbs and are supplied with a spare inner tube, puncture repair kit, pump, lock, bottle holder and pannier rack. Pannier bags can also be provided by prior arrangement. If you need to hire a bike, please let us know at the time of booking and we will make sure that we get the right bike for you.

Hire bikes are provided with comfortable touring-style saddles and standard flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own saddle and/or clipless pedals to make your ride more comfortable. Please note that, if you're taking part in a self guided trip, you may have to change your saddle and/or pedals yourself so please bring suitable tools (a pedal spanner and set of allen/hex keys) with you in order for you to do this.

Self guided trips

Our self guided trips are the most popular choice and are designed for cyclists who are comfortable carrying their own basic tools and spares along with them each day so that they can fix any minor technical issues encountered along the route (punctures etc.). For our self guided trips we will provide you with everything included in our fully supported trips except the vehicle back-up service. We will organise quality accommodation, bag transfers each day, detailed information about the route, official maps of the route, pick-up and drop-off at locations convenient for your travel plans and a comprehensive list of bike shops that are located along the Coast and Castles route. We will always be only a phone call away should you require any additional advice/support so you'll never be truly on your own!

Transport and baggage transfers

We are always happy to help you to get to where you need to be as quickly and easily as possible. We can provide transfers from any local airport, train or bus station or ferry terminal to your accommodation at the beginning of your trip and back again at the end. Just let us know where and how you intend to arrive at your destination and we will arrange a pick-up for you. Please note that an extra charge may apply to cover fuel costs.

We transport your bags between each night's accommodation during your trip, leaving you free to carry a small day-pack or pannier bag containing some spare clothes, food and drink. Please note that baggage is strictly limited to one bag per person, not exceeding 20kg per bag unless alternative prior arrangements are made.

Any questions?

We've tried to cover everything on our website and this information pack but If you'd like some further information or want to ask us anything at all about our biking trips please don't hesitate to contact us on the details below:

Email: info@trailbrakes.co.uk

Phone: +44 (0)7922 653327 or +44 (0)141 6286676

We look forward to seeing you on one of our fantastic biking adventures!