



TRAILBRAKES

biking holidays



Highland Coast to Coast – Fort William to Stonehaven

Summary

This coast-to-coast mountain biking trip, beginning at the foot of Ben Nevis, the UK's highest peak, has everything! Get a taste of singletrack heaven on the Witches' Trails at Fort William, and on the infamous Laggan Wolftrax. Experience true wilderness riding through beautiful, remote Glen Feshie and take in breathtaking views of the Cairngorms and Mount Keen. Sample true Highland hospitality and taste the finest whisky in the land on this unforgettable adventure.

Highlights

Views of the Nevis Range mountains at the beginning of your trip
Testing your skills on the purpose-built trails at Laggan Wolftrax
Wilderness biking through Glen Feshie
Epic mountain passes through the Cairngorm mountains

Example 6-Day Itinerary:

Day 1. Arrive in Edinburgh/Glasgow. We can arrange to transport you and your bikes up and take you to Fort William, where we will arrange comfortable accommodation for the night. You can get the bikes ready for the adventure!

Day 2. Bike Fort William to Laggan - 78km/48 miles; 1250 metres of ascent
We head out of Fort William on some cycle-friendly paths that lead to the foot of Ben Nevis and some top-quality singletrack. From here we leave civilisation behind on remote forestry trails that lead us along the banks of picturesque Loch Laggan. A well-earned rest awaits at the sleepy village of Laggan.

Day 3. Bike Laggan to Aviemore - 69km/43 miles; 900 metres of ascent
What better way to start the day than with an adrenaline-inducing blast around some top-notch singletrack? Once your legs have warmed up on the Laggan Wolftrax, some of the finest singletrack in Scotland, you head north east along the banks of the meandering River Spey into the beautiful Rothiemurchus forest. Stay the night in bustling Aviemore, where you'll find a hearty meal and a comfy bed.

Day 4. Bike Aviemore to Tomintoul – 49 to 60km/30 to 37 miles; 780 to 960 metres of ascent
The maze of winding trails through Rothiemurchus Forest lead you to Loch Morlich and onward into the wild Braes of Abernethy. With river crossings and technical singletrack reaching a height of almost 500 metres to negotiate, you'll be ready for a rapid descent into Tomintoul, where you'll spend the night. You may even have time to visit a nearby distillery and sample their wares!

Day 5. Bike Tomintoul to Ballater – 57 to 84km/35 to 52 miles; 910 to 1340 metres of ascent
You begin the day with a remote ride through beautiful Glen Bulg, following pristine rivers and loch shores. The descent on fantastic trails to the picturesque village of Ballater will leave you grinning from ear to ear. You'll also have another opportunity to sample some local 'firewater' at the Royal Lochnagar distillery.

Day 6. Bike Ballater to Edzell - 63km/39 miles; 1075 metres of ascent
Brilliant singletrack leads you through beautiful native woodland and along the banks of the sparkling River Dee, famous for its spectacular salmon fishing. Leaving the river behind, you'll climb on forestry trails, drove roads and tricky singletrack affording impressive views of Mount Keen and surrounding peaks. A blistering descent leads to the pretty village of Edzell.

Day 7. Bike Edzell to Stonehaven - 50km/31 miles; 790 metres of ascent
Brilliant pine forest trails in Drumtochty and Fetteresso Forests lead you east, with the smell of the sea getting stronger, until you finally reach the North Sea coast at Stonehaven. Well done, you made it! We'll transport you to Edinburgh or Glasgow where you can celebrate your achievement in style.

Duration:

7 nights' comfortable accommodation
6 days of Highland biking (can be extended to 7 days if you would like to do more biking!)

Total Distance:

359 km or 223 miles

Self Guided trip includes:

- 7 nights' accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps, GPX files & list of services along the route
- Phone support (self guided trips)
- Pick up and drop off in Glasgow or Edinburgh

Available on request:

- Pick up and drop off from other public transport links
- Bike and equipment hire

Grade:

Technical Grade: **Blue/Red** with some **Black** options

Dates:

Self-guided or fully supported trips are available at any time between April and September for groups of 2 or more. Contact us with the dates you have in mind.

What bike?

The trails in the Scottish Highlands can be ridden on a standard hardtail. A full suspension bike will make the riding more manageable and comfortable!

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



Highland Coast to Coast – 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. Most 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 of at least £30 per person, per night will apply depending on your dates (this will be more if a night in Edinburgh/Glasgow is required).

Clothing and kit

Scotland receives a generally mild climate all year round with the Gulf Stream passing our western coastline. There are even palm trees growing in the region! 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 (<http://www.trailbrakes.co.uk/kit-list-equipment-recommendations>). General climatic information from Scotland is available here: <http://www.scotlandinfo.eu/weather-climate.html>. Up-to-the-minute weather forecasts from 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 (between 15 and 20 litre capacity) with you on your trip, in which you can carry spare clothes and basic spares and tools that you might need during the course of a day on the bikes. In some cases, where we will be riding in wilderness for the full day, food and drink will also need to be carried.

Midges!

Midges (small biting insects) can be a pest in the Highlands but are usually not a problem when you're on the move. If you decide to stop for a break in a sheltered spot where there is no wind and there are trees and water in the vicinity, there will always be midges around. They rarely cause a serious problem, they're more of a nuisance, but some people react badly to their bites and develop an itchy red spot which can be irritating. Some insect repellent is advisable, those containing DEET being the most effective, and cream is available in pharmacies that relieve the irritation of the bites.

The trails

There is almost every type of trail imaginable on this trip, from purpose built cycle paths to old drove roads, forestry trails and superb single-track. The surfaces are all generally hard packed or rocky. Some parts are technically challenging so some off-road experience will be required. This trip has a **Fitness Grading of 6** which means that you should have a good level of fitness and take part in cycling based activities regularly. You're comfortable riding for 6 hours per day on terrain that can include short, steep climbs. This trip has a **Technical Grading of Blue/Red**, meaning that the route is suitable for proficient mountain bikers. Trails can be steep and rough with some technical sections including large rocks and water crossings. There are also

black sections of this ride which are optional and also options to extend most days so this really can be as difficult as you would like to it to be!

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 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!

Fully supported trips

Our fully supported cycling trips are designed to provide you with a completely hassle-free biking holiday experience. We will organise every aspect of your trip including 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 full support from our friendly, knowledgeable back-up team in case of technical (or physical!) emergencies. We will provide a back-up vehicle full of spares and tools to carry your baggage between your accommodation each day. Our drivers are proficient bike mechanics so will be able to help you out with common technical problems. If the issue is a bit more serious, they will be able to take your bike to a local bike shop for some TLC. Their main aim is to keep you and your bike on the road!

Bike hire

We work with local bike shops to provide you with the latest bikes for hire. There are a full range of bikes from standard hard-tails to flashy full-sussers! 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. Please check the bikes before you leave your starting location to ensure that they are in full working order and check with the person providing your bikes that the bike is set up correctly for you. Once you leave your starting location it may not be possible to exchange your bike, and, if you are taking part in an independent trip, any mechanical problems that you encounter during the course of your trip are your own responsibility. You will be expected to pay for any damage to hire bikes, other than wear and tear.

Hire bikes are provided with standard mountain biking saddles and 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.

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 containing some spare clothes, food and drink. Please note that baggage should be limited to one bag per person, not exceeding 20kg per bag unless 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!