



Wild Whisky Coast to Coast – Oban to Spey Bay

Summary

Our stunning new coast to coast explores some of the most remote valleys and mountains in Scotland. Being a back country route, you will face a few river crossings and short sections of pushing but most of the route is on fantastic trails that lead you deep into the heart of the Scottish Highlands.

Highlights

Riding rarely visited trails through the Scottish Highlands
Superb views and seafood on the West Coast
The Malt Whisky trail through Speyside
Remote mountain passes through the Cairngorm mountains

Example 6 Day Itinerary:

Day 1. Arrive in Oban by train or car. We will arrange comfortable accommodation for the night in Oban, where you can get the bikes ready for the adventure ahead!

Day 2: Bike from Oban to Bridge of Orchy, distance approx. 38 miles (61km) with around 1100 metres of climbing. It's a steep start from the coast and the national cycle network leads you out of Oban on quiet country roads into a secluded glen. You'll pass standing stones and a historic iron furnace, en route to the start of the fun stuff! The remote glen (valley) is one of Scotland's finest.

Day 3: Bike from Bridge of Orchy to Kinloch Rannoch, distance approx. 38 miles (61km) with around 1100 metres of climbing. You hit the off road trails straight away today and head south along a section of the West Highland Way, along the foot of the stunning southern highland mountains. You then climb up on trails into another remote glen, surrounded by towering peaks. A big climb up to around 500 metres leads you northwards, towards the Tay Valley and a great downhill takes you through the Tay Forest Park on your way to the shores of Loch Rannoch.

Day 4: Bike from Kinloch Rannoch to Kingussie, distance approx. 36 miles (58 km) with around 880 metres of climbing. You head almost due north today, making a bee-line for the mighty Cairngorms! You cross some hills on quiet back roads before you bike through some of the most remote valleys in the Cairngorms. Nearly 20 miles of amazing, remote, off road riding will bring you through to the northern side of the Cairngorms.

Day 5: Bike from Kingussie to Grantown on Spey, distance approx. 35 miles (57km), with around 500 metres of climbing. Lovely trails lead you through the forest near Aviemore and Nethy bridge as you embark on the next stage of the trip on the Speyside Way. There is some lovely forest at Grantown on Spey and some nice, easy going singletrack to keep things interesting.

Day 6: Bike from Grantown on Spey to Fochabers, distance approx. 42 miles (67km) with 1100 metres of climbing. This is a very varied day, with options to make it easier, if need be. There are also some sections that take you along the River Spey on a well surfaced traffic free trail, so that should help you cover the miles. You will be well in need of a whisky or two by the time you arrive in Aberlour – luckily there are several distilleries on the doorstep! Some nice singletrack leads you into Fochabers.

Day 7: Bike from Fochabers to Spey Bay, distance approx. 13 miles (21km), with around 270 metres of climbing. A short last day, with the transport back to Oban in mind. There are still some brilliant trails today, including the fantastic Moray Monster trails – it would be rude for you not to do some of these! The final few miles are a nice warm down and finally you reach Spey Bay, where you often do see dolphins in the Moray Firth. We will pick you up here and transport you back to Oban (approx. 4.5 hours). Spend the night here before you depart the following day.

Duration:

5 or 6 days of Highland biking

Total Distance:

320 km or 200 miles

Self Guided trip includes:

- 6 or 7 nights' accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps, GPX files & list of services along the route
- Phone support
- Return transport to Oban

Available on request:

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

Grade:

Technical Grade: **Blue/Red**

Dates:

Self-guided 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! If you have a very off road oriented gravel bike you might also be ok on this trail.

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



Wild Whisky 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.

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!

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!