

| SCOTLAND HIKING
ADVENTURE: FROM THE
HIGHLANDS TO ISLANDS |



I T I N E R A R Y

EXPEDITION SUMMARY

Amid the velvet hills and craggy peaks that rise from Scotland's western reaches, saints and kings have passed, clans and armies have clashed, and poets and rebels have sought refuge. Encounter the untamed Highlands and the remote isles of the Inner Hebrides on foot, exploring glittering lakes and waterfalls, fantastic geologic formations, and historic sites that date back more than a thousand years. Following in the footsteps of famous native Scots such as John Muir, Sir Walter Scott, and Bonnie Prince Charlie, learn the rich history and legends of Scotland's wild western lands.



WHAT TO EXPECT

This trip has an activity rating of **moderate/strenuous**; travelers should be physically fit and prepared for multiple hours of activity each day. Hikes range from 2 to 6 hours (3 to 9 miles) on moderate to steep grades, with some days offering shorter or longer options based on traveler preference. Several hikes will venture off-trail, across muddy or rocky terrain. Vehicle support during hikes is limited. Please note that there are some long travel days.

EXPEDITION TEAM

A National Geographic Expert will accompany each departure to share insights and a rare behind-the-scenes perspective. An Expedition Leader will accompany you throughout the trip and local guides will join us along the way.

EXPEDITION ITINERARY

Day 1: Edinburgh, Scotland

Arrive in Edinburgh and transfer to our hotel. After time to relax, meet for a mid-afternoon walk along the Royal Mile. Step back in time as we wind our way past medieval church spires and cobbled alleyways to Holyrood Park. A short hike leads up the knoll of Arthur's Seat, where outstanding views of the city await. Tonight, gather for an orientation and a welcome dinner at the hotel.

(4 miles hiking, 2 hours)

Overnight: Bruntsfield Hotel (D)

Day 2: Loch Lomond National Park/ Glen Coe

Head west after breakfast, stopping for a walk in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park—Scotland's first national park, established in 2002. Our hike takes us along part of the famous West Highland Way trail, diverting to a small but prominent peak called Conic Hill. Geologically part of the Highland Boundary Fault, this 1,180-foot summit offers outstanding views across the islands of Loch Lomond to the peaks of the Arrochar Alps and beyond. Continue north to Glen Coe, one of Scotland's most stunning valleys, and settle into our hotel, featuring views of the surrounding mountains. Before dinner, enjoy a traditional Scottish storytelling session at the Kingshouse Bar.

(4 miles hiking, 3 hours)

Overnight: Kingshouse Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 3: Glen Coe

Today we set out on foot to explore the breathtaking Glen Coe, scene of a historic massacre of the MacDonald clan in 1692. Walking along the Devil's Staircase—part of the West Highland Way—climbing a series of switchbacks to a mountain pass, where we'll take in magnificent views of the West Highlands. This evening gather at the hotel for a lecture from the National Geographic Expert.

(9 miles hiking, 5-6 hours)

Overnight: Kingshouse Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 4: Glen Nevis / Isle of Skye

A short drive brings us to Fort William, where we'll meet a John Muir Ranger for a guided hike in the glen (valley) beneath the hulking mountain of Ben Nevis, the highest peak in the United Kingdom. Later this afternoon, cross over the sea to the Isle of Skye, stopping for a visit to the iconic Eilean Donan Castle. (3 miles hiking, 3 hours)

Note: *Today's hike does not include scaling the peak of Ben Nevis. This hike undulates through the valley at the base of the mountain.*

Overnight: Skeabost House Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 5: Northern Skye

The spectacular landscapes of northern Skye rise in soft, grassy slopes that drop off in sheer cliffs, and rock formations that spike and curl. Set off on foot into this magical place, rich with legend and intrigue. Hike beneath the unusual rock formations of the Quiraing and learn its fascinating story of geologic turmoil. (4-5 miles hiking, 3-4 hours)

Overnight: Skeabost House Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 6: Cuillin Hills / Perthshire

Hike through a wild glen on a journey through Skye's famous mountains—the Black Cuillin and Red Cuillin ranges. Surrounded by red-hued peaks, descend volcanic slopes, and take in a stunning vista of the Black Cuillin—one of Scotland's most iconic views. Trace the coast of Loch Slapin, framed by the magnificent rock citadel of Blaven. After refreshments in a local tea room, return to the mainland and head southeast to Perthshire and settle into our hotel located in a Victorian-era castle.

(5-6 miles hiking, 3-4 hours)

Overnight: Fonab Castle Hotel & Spa (B, L)

Day 7: Perthshire

This morning, set out on foot to explore Highland Perthshire, heading toward the Ben Vrackie peak. Venture into enchanting woodlands and across heather-draped moorlands to reach picturesque Loch a' Choire. Enjoy a picnic lunch on the shores of this secluded lake before completing our walking circuit. Time permitting, we'll pop into one of Scotland's oldest inns to sip on a pint of ale before continuing on to a local whisky distillery. Sit down to a farewell dinner with your fellow travelers this evening. (5-6 miles hiking, 4 hours)

Overnight: Fonab Castle Hotel & Spa (B, L, D)

Day 8: Pitlochry / Edinburgh

Enjoy a free morning to explore the picturesque Highland town of Pitlochry. Stroll the main street past Victorian-era stone buildings, or visit the town's famed fish ladder, which allows salmon to bypass the Pitlochry dam and continue upstream to their spawning grounds each year. Transfer to the Edinburgh airport (EDI) in the late afternoon to catch your flight home.

(B, L)

I INCLUDES

- National Geographic Expert and lectures
- Professional on-site Expedition Leader
- English-speaking local guides
- Accommodations as indicated in the itinerary
- Non-alcoholic beverages at included meals
- Bottled or filtered water at included meals, group transfers and activities
- Welcome and farewell receptions/dinners (alcoholic beverages included)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner)
- Activities as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to sites as indicated in the itinerary
- Airport transfers in Day 1 and Day 8 of itinerary
- Ground transportation as indicated in the itinerary
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, hotel and lodge staff, and restaurant staff at included meals

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International flights (to and from Edinburgh/EDI)
- International airport departure taxes (included in most international tickets)
- Meals not noted as included (discretionary)
- Additional beverages (discretionary)
- Travel insurance (discretionary)
- Passport fees, visas, and visa photos as required
- Phone calls, laundry, and other items of a personal nature (discretionary)
- Expedition Leader gratuities

ACCOMMODATIONS

EDINBURGH

Bruntsfield Hotel

Overlooking Bruntsfield Links park, the Bruntsfield Hotel is a classic yet contemporary hotel in a brownstone townhouse just a 15 minute walk from the city center. All rooms include luxe bedding, a sitting area, en-suite bathroom with designer toiletries, flat-screen televisions with satellite channels, and wireless internet connection. Property amenities include a restaurant and bar.

www.thebruntsfield.co.uk

GLEN COE

Kingshouse Hotel

This unique hotel is located in the stunning landscape of Glencoe, enjoying sweeping views down the glen and of the impressive mountains. This spot has been a traditional welcoming stop for travellers since the 1750s but the hotel was recently re-imagined and rebuilt, opening its new doors in 2019. The original building now houses a traditional walker's bar which is open to all visitors including many people walking the iconic West Highland Way which passes right by the hotel. Rooms are stylish and comfy and guests have use of the drying rooms. The Kingshouse also has a restaurant and bar offering delicious locally sourced food. Relax here in front of the log fires and enjoy the huge windows showing wonderful panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

www.kingshousehotel.co.uk

ISLE OF SKYE

Skeabost House Hotel

A former hunting lodge built in the 1870s, Skeabost House is a waterfront country retreat set on 23 acres of woodlands at the heart of the Isle of Skye. The River Snizort flows through the property, offering some of the best trout and salmon fishing on the island. Fully refurbished in 2015, the hotel blends contemporary accents and Victorian grandeur in its public spaces, which include an inviting drawing room with a fireplace, a light-filled morning room, and an award-winning restaurant. The 20 guestrooms range from Victorian-style suites with four-poster beds, high ceilings, and period furniture to modern deluxe rooms.

www.skyehotel.co.uk/skeabost/

PERTHSHIRE

Fonab Castle Hotel & Spa

Overlooking Loch Faskally in the heart of Highland Perthshire, the stately Fonab Castle Hotel draws inspiration from its historic past and beautiful surroundings. Each of the 26 rooms has been individually decorated to blend contemporary style with original room features. The rooms include en-suite bathrooms with walk-in shower and designer toiletries, flat screen televisions, wireless internet connection, and coffee making facilities. Property amenities include an upscale restaurant, casual brasserie, bar, lounge, fitness center, and spa.

www.fonabcastlehotel.com