



North Coast 500

Summary

The North west corner of Scotland has always been one of the most dramatic landscapes in the UK and a road cyclists dream! It has the most aspired to climb in the UK, the switchbacks of the Bealach na Ba as well as some of the most remote and scenic roads you could imagine. It is a challenging ride with lots of hills but you will receive fabulous highland hospitality each night, making it a trip to remember

Example 7-Day Itinerary

Day 1. Arrive in Inverness, the capital of the Highlands and stay overnight in a very comfortable bed and breakfast or hotel. You can enjoy the local hospitality, soak up the atmosphere and prepare your bike for the journey ahead.

Day 2. Inverness to Lochcarron - 65 miles/105 km; 750m of ascent

A lovely first day with easy going riding along the Beaulie Firth, you can stop at a distillery or the impressive Rogie Falls or just enjoy the stunning scenery as you head into Torridon.

Day 3. Lochcarron to Kinlochewe - 60 miles/97 km; 1750m of ascent

If yesterday was the warm up today is the main event with the huge and hugely impressive climb over the Bealach na Ba. The famous switchback road is challenging but so worth it for the incredible views. The roads by the coast at Applecross are also absolutely fabulous as you ride through the majestic mountains of Torridon.

Day 4. Kinlochewe to Ullapool - 75 miles/120 km; 1600m of ascent

The stunning scenery keeps on coming today with Beinn Eigh towering above Loch Maree. The coast road from Gairloch is absolutely lovely (and hilly!) before a long downhill to the Corrieshalloch Gorge and a flat few miles to Ullapool.

Day 5. Ullapool to Scourie - 70 miles/113 km; 1800m of ascent

Today takes you through some of the most iconic scenery of the whole trip with hills like Stac Pollaidh and Suilven marking your route through ever more remote highland roads, spend the night in the pretty village of Scourie.

Day 6. Scourie to Tongue - 55 miles/89 km; 1100m of ascent

After the hills of the previous few days it is nice to get a bit of a rest with a slightly shorter and easier day. No less lovely however as you reach the north west corner of Scotland (you can take the route right out to Cape Wrath if you are feeling energetic – this would add 20 miles onto the day). There is fantastic chocolate in Durness and the impressive Smoo cave before you reach the fantastic village of Tongue between the mountains and the sea.

Day 7. Tongue to Dornoch - 60 miles/96 km; 1050m of ascent

Often one of the favourite days of the trip with a beautiful route that cuts right through the heart of Sutherland. Ben Loyal, Ben Kilbreck and Loch Shin are just some of the highlights before you reach the coast at the lovely town of Dornoch.

Day 8. Dornoch to Inverness - 50 miles/80 km; 1600m of ascent

The final day is a lovely ride along the coast of the Moray Firth with a short ferry ride over the Cromarty Firth to the Black Isle, where you should keep your eyes peeled for dolphins in the firth. The last few miles are on traffic free cycle paths into central Inverness, the end of your epic journey – well done!

Duration:

7 days of scenic cycling
7 nights of comfortable accommodation

Total Distance:

700 km or 435 miles

Includes:

- 7 days biking and 7 nights' comfortable accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps and gpx files
- Vehicle back up (fully supported trips)
- Phone support (self guided trips)

Available on request:

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

Dates:

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

What bike?

The North Coast 500 can be ridden on a hybrid or road 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



North Coast 500 – 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 from £30 per person, per night will apply.

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/>).

The route

Our North Coast 500 cycle route is a unique, specifically-designed road biking route, along quiet country roads and incorporating some stretches of National Cycle Network. This trip has a **Fitness Grading of 8** which means that you should have a good level of fitness and take part in cycling based activities regularly. You're comfortable riding for 8 or more hours per day on terrain that can include long, steep climbs.

What bike?

The North Coast 500 route is perfect for hybrid or road bikes. The entire route is comprised of scenic paved roads. It is possible to complete the route on mountain bikes but it would be a good idea to fit smooth tyres to make the bike roll more easily along the roads. Ask us 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 or road 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 standard saddles and standard flat pedals. You are welcome to bring your own saddle and/or clipless pedals to make your ride more comfortable.

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!

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!