



Summary

This epic coast to coast mountain biking trip offers everything that the adventurous mountain biker could want. From the rocky crags of the Glen Shiel mountains to the massive expanse of the Cairngorms, this biking adventure packs in the most dramatic scenery that Scotland has to offer. We've spent years researching the very best ride across the highlands and included as much superb singletrack as it is possible to fit in! The terrain varies from the gently undulating singletrack through the beautiful Rothiemurchus Estate, to steep, rocky climbs through the wild Braes of Abernethy.

Highlights

Sweet singletrack through native Caledonian pine forests
Spotting the rare and illusive native wildlife through the trees in Rothiemurchus Estate
Rewarding views of Loch Ness from the formidable Corrieyairack Pass
Warm Highland hospitality at every stage of your adventure

Example 7-Day Itinerary

Day 1. Arrive in Scotland. Whether arriving by bus, train, boat or plane, we can pick you up and take you to Shiel Bridge, on the western edge of the Scottish mainland, where you'll spend the night, ready for the adventure ahead!

Day 2. Bike from Glenelg to Invergarry - 78km/48 miles; 1350 metres of ascent

You start your epic journey at Glenelg, overlooking the mystical Isle of Skye. The biking begins along coastal roads then superb rocky trails take us into the heart of Scotland's west coast wilderness. From here the only way is up to leafy Glengarry and a great forest and riverside ride to your comfortable accommodation.

Day 3. Bike from Invergarry to Laggan - 54km/33 miles; 1000 metres of ascent

You start the day with an easy spin along the Caledonian canal to the southern end of Loch Ness – see if you can spot Nessy! But don't linger too long as we're bound for the infamous Corrieyairack Pass, an old military road where we'll reach a height of over 750 metres on loose rocky trails. All that effort is rewarded with magnificent views over Loch Ness and a fast, rocky descent to Laggan village.

Day 4. Bike from Laggan to Aviemore - 66km/41 miles; 630 metres of ascent

If time and energy allows you can start the day on the magnificent Laggan Wolftrax trails. Then we follow a brilliant old military road through the Cairngorm National Park and some superb natural singletrack to Aviemore. You'll be treated to stunning views of the Cairngorm Mountains to the east and your base for the night is Aviemore, a bustling mountain town.

Day 5. Bike from Aviemore to Tomintoul – 49 to 60km/30 to 37 miles; 780 to 960 metres of ascent. You'll warm up on some fantastic trails through the native pine forests of the Rothiemurchus Estate including some superb, hidden singletrack. A remote moorland crossing and a scenic mountain pass lead you to Tomintoul, the highest highland village.

Day 6. Bike from Tomintoul to Ballater - 57 to 84km/35 to 52 miles; 910 to 1340 metres of ascent From Tomintoul you descend into the depths of Glen Builg, on 4x4 trails and some great single-track. There is a big climb and huge descent to drop into Deeside where you follow the river past the highland home of the royals at Balmoral. Stay the night in pretty Ballater.

Day 7. Bike from Ballater to Edzell - 63km/39 miles; 1030 metres of ascent Some wonderful natural singletrack leads you through beautiful native woodland and along the banks of the sparkling River Dee. Leaving the river behind, you'll climb to a height of over 750 metres, affording impressive views of Mount Keen and surrounding peaks. A blistering descent leads to the pretty village of Edzell.

Day 8. Bike from Edzell to Stonehaven - 50km/31 miles; 835 metres of ascent Brilliant tree-lined trails in Drumtochty Forest lead you east, with the smell of the sea getting stronger, until you finally reach see North Sea coast. A final fast descent takes you right to the beach at Stonehaven where you can celebrate with a dram or two! We'll then transport you to Edinburgh or Glasgow where you can celebrate your achievement in style.

Duration:

8 nights' accommodation
7 days of wilderness biking

Total Distance:

428 km or 265 miles

Includes:

- 8 nights' accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps and gpx. files
- Vehicle back up (fully supported trips)
- Phone support (self guided trips)
- Transfers and transport
- 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 Grading: **Red/Black**
For a less technical, physically demanding Highland C2C have a look at our Fort William Coast to Coast

Dates:

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

What bike?

The trails in the 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 C2C – Extra 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 (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 7** which means that you should have a high level of fitness and stamina from regularly taking part in cycling-based activities and you should be comfortable riding for up to 8 hours per day. The route will include sections of physically demanding terrain including long, steep climbs. This trip has a **Technical Grading of Red/Black**,

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. Some off-road biking experience is required.

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!

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!