



Highland and Island Tour – Circular Route from Oban

Summary

Explore true Scottish wilderness on this, our most scenic and relaxing cycling trip. Starting and finishing in Oban on the beautiful west coast of Scotland, this tour will give you a real taste of the Scottish Highlands, from stunning castles perched on the rocky coastline to ancient standing stones and fascinating museums. Take your bike on board some of the most remote ferries in the country and visit the famously colourful harbour at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. You're guaranteed a warm welcome at every stage of your journey.

Highlights

Discovering the turbulent history surrounding Castle Stalker
The stunning views over Loch Leven at the head of Glen Coe
Strolling around the colourful shops, restaurants and cafes at Tobermory Harbour

Example 4-Day Itinerary

Day 1. Arrive in Oban, if you have time you can visit Dunstaffnage Castle, offshore seal colonies or the Oban distillery. Stay overnight in Oban.

Day 2. Oban to Glencoe - 34 miles/55 km; 420 metres of ascent

Your journey begins on the newly-built cycle path that winds its way north from Oban. Your first glimpse of Scottish history comes in the form of Dunstaffnage Castle, dating back to the 13th century. Castle Stalker is another imposing sight and you may have time for a guided tour. As you cycle further north the landscape becomes increasingly mountainous and your bed for the night lies at the mouth of Glen Coe, surrounded by some of the most impressive mountains in Scotland.

Day 3. Glencoe to Strontian - 20 miles/31 km; 150 metres of ascent

Your second day in the saddle begins with a spin along the banks of Loch Linnhe to the Corran ferry. A very short rest from the cycling on the ferry will see you leaving the hordes behind, transporting you to the remote Ardnamurchan peninsula and Strontian, where you'll spend the night.

Day 4. Strontian to Kilchoan, ferry to Tobermory - 29 miles/ 47 km; 750 metres of ascent

The morning cycle along the banks of Loch Sunart is the perfect way to start the day and as you head further west the roads become narrower and the sheep outnumber the people! There are some truly beautiful views of the numerous islands dotted along the coast, including your destination, the Isle of Mull. You'll spend the night in Tobermory.

Day 5. Tobermory to Craignure, ferry to Oban - 37 miles/60 km; 905 metres of ascent

The final day of your tour is the most challenging, with a bit of climbing to be done as you cycle over to the west coast of Mull (though there are lots of route options). The views to Ben More are definitely worth the effort though and you can take a well-deserved rest on the ferry journey from Craignure back over to Oban. Well done, you've completed the Highland and Island Tour!

Duration:

3 to 5 days of Highland cycling
3 to 5 nights' comfortable accommodation

Please contact us if you'd like to extend your trip to cover more of the beautiful Scottish islands. We can arrange an amazing trip to the beautiful Outer Hebrides

Total Distance:

193 km or 120 miles

Includes

- Comfortable accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- Comprehensive maps and gpx. files
- Vehicle back up (fully supported trips only)
- Phone support (self guided trips)

Available on request:

- Pick up and drop off at public transport links
- Bike and kit hire

Dates:

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

What bike?

The Highland and Island route can be ridden on a hybrid, road bike or mountain 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



Highland and Island Tour – 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. Almost 100% 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

Northwest Scotland receives a generally mild climate all year round. 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 for Fort William is available here: http://www.yr.no/place/United_Kingdom/Scotland/Fort_William/statistics.html. Up-to-the-minute weather forecasts for 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 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. Alternatively, if you're hiring bikes from us, we can provide pannier bags in which to carry supplies for the day.

The route

Our Highland and Island cycle route is a unique route to Trailbrakes which includes stretches of National Cycle Network and follows quiet country roads, purpose built cycle paths and disused railways. The route is predominantly on quiet, scenic country roads but there are stretches of traffic-free cycle path between Oban and Glen Coe. This trip has a **Fitness Grading of 4** which means that you should have a good level of fitness and take part in cycling based activities regularly. You're comfortable riding for up to 5 hours per day on terrain that can include short, steep climbs. We can extend your Highland and Island Tour to include more of the beautiful islands off the west coast of Scotland. Ask us about the options and we'll be happy to help.

What bike?

The Highland and Island Tour is perfect for hybrid or road bikes. It is a good idea to fit mountain bikes with semi-smooth tyres to make pedalling on the roads a bit easier. It is also possible to change the distances each day depending on how far you wish to cycle and we can advise you on the best detours to take. 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 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 comfortable touring-style saddles and standard 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.

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!

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!