

SCOTLAND – THE GREAT GLEN

LIMITED DATES – EARLY BOOKING ESSENTIAL

7-days / 6-nights **STANDARD PLUS** Highlands cruising Inverness to Fort William or return



Experience breath-taking scenery and step into history following the Caledonian Canal in the Great Glen of Scotland. The 60-mile (100km) canal connects a series of long, narrow lochs strung along the Great Glen, a fault line formed millions of years ago that bisects the Scottish Highlands and links the east and west coasts.

For 2024 we are pleased to offer berths on a comfortable, cosy Standard Plus barge, offering a variety of cruise styles and themes, including **Bike & Barge** and **Walk & Barge** options, allowing you to cycle or walk the Great Glen Way. These cruises offer a unique alternative to the usual inn-to-inn options along the Way: you unpack just once and come 'home' each night to your floating hotel and dinner freshly prepared by the onboard chef. The barge carries a maximum of 12 passengers, in six well-designed comfortable bunk cabins with ensuite toilet and shower. The blond timber featured throughout the barge gives it a light, airy feeling, and there is a spacious lounge and dining area for relaxing and socialising.

The atmosphere onboard the barge is intimate and friendly. In the evening partake of a traditional freshly made meal (yes, haggis is included), share stories and make plans for the following day. At mealtimes all guests and crew sit together around a large communal table, providing a sense of warmth and family.

Cruise from the Muirtown locks near the iconic Highlands city of Inverness, to Banavie near Fort William (or vice versa). Besides incredible mountain vistas, the area also offers a wide range of wildlife including golden eagles, peregrine falcons, red deer and the elusive pine marten. Hilltops are dotted with ancient castles and forts – the Great Glen was of immense strategic importance to Highland clans and English kings – and friendly loch-side villages feature atmospheric pubs and cafés.

The Caledonian Canal, designed by Thomas Telford, was built in the early 1800s to supply employment to the depressed Highlands region and provide a safer route for shipping (avoiding the wild north coast of Scotland and French privateers during the Napoleonic Wars). From the Muirtown locks we cruise along Loch Dochfour, Loch Ness, Loch Oich and Loch Lochy, through the canal locks at Fort Augustus and Laggan, to Banavie near Fort William, where Neptune's Staircase locks lift boats some 20 metres.

Departs: Saturdays from Banavie (near Fort William) or Inverness, from 30 March to 19 October 2024

Cost from: **\$3595** per person twin share Single supplement on request
High season supplement from \$225 per person twin share

Includes: 6 nights' accommodation in twin-share bunk cabins with ensuite, all meals, tea & coffee, equipment hire and tour guide for activities as shown in itineraries.

Not included: Drinks (available for purchase at the on-board bar), personal expenses, gratuities.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331582 for details & reservations



WALK & BARGE THE GREAT GLEN

7-days / 6-nights moderate guided walking on the Great Glen Way

At 78 miles (117km), the Great Glen Way is the third longest walking route in Scotland. It leads from the outdoor enthusiasts' paradise Fort William to vibrant Inverness, or vice versa. It's an enjoyable and relatively easy walk, with gentle gradients and attractive scenery. This cruise allows you the opportunity to walk the whole of the Great Glen Way, from one coast of Scotland to the other; barge stops are planned to suit the walking stages, breaking them into day walks of up to 15 miles (24km) with daily ascents of up to 400 metres.

Departs Banavie: 30 March, 27 April, 4, 18 May, 1 June, 27 July, 31 August, 28 September, 2024
Departs Inverness: 6 April, 6 July, 14 September, 19 October, 2024

Suggested itinerary from Banavie: *(please note the cruise operates in reverse on selected departures)*

Day 1: Arrive Banavie, walk to Gairloch **walking @ 8 miles (13km)**

Arrive at the barge moored at Banavie near Fort William at 2.00pm, then transfer by taxi/minibus to Corpach, the western-most point of the Great Glen Way, to begin our walk. It's an easy, flat walk along the canal towpath, with excellent views of Ben Nevis, to the *clachan* (hamlet) of Gairloch where the barge is moored overnight.

Day 2: Gairloch to Laggan Locks **walking @ 15 miles (24km)**

From Gairloch the Way takes us around Bunarkaig Bay, with great views of Loch Lochy and Achnacarry Estate, home of Cameron of Lochiel. We pass the picturesque Chia-Aig waterfalls, used as a film location in *Rob Roy*, then return to Loch Lochy for lunch. In the afternoon we walk alongside the loch to the barge at Laggan Locks.

Day 3: Laggan Locks to Fort Augustus **walking @ 12 miles (19km)**

We leave Laggan via canal towpath to the shores of beautiful, secluded Loch Oich. Much of our walk is on the disused Spean Bridge-Fort Augustus railway and General Wade's military road. Past Culloch, there is a short ascent (120m) to the summit of a small hill with views right up Loch Ness just before we reach Fort Augustus.

Day 4: Fort Augustus to Alltsigh **walking @ 13 miles (21km)**

We can either take the low route, below the tree line with occasional views, or the high route, above the tree line with far-reaching views over the Monadhliath mountains. The high route adds a mile of walking and 300m elevation to the day's walk. The two routes converge at Invermoriston where we have lunch before continuing to Alltsigh. Here we are collected by barge or tender and taken back to Fort Augustus where we stay overnight.

Day 5: Alltsigh to Drumnadrochit **walking @ 13 miles (21km)**

Over breakfast we cruise back to Alltsigh to continue our walk. We ascend through pine forest to the pottery and café at Grottag where we stop for lunch. In the afternoon we walk along quiet country lanes to Drumnadrochit. Here the barge collects us and we cross the loch to our overnight mooring point at Foyers.

Day 6: Drumnadrochit to Dochgarroch **walking @ 15 miles (24km)**

The barge drops us back to Drumnadrochit and we walk up to the Abriachan Forest School and Eco-Café, our most eclectic lunch stop of the week. After lunch we descend through trees and re-join the barge at Dochgarroch.

Day 7: Dochgarroch to Inverness, tour ends **walking @ 7 miles (12km)**

A flat and easy walk along the towpath to Clachnaharry Sea Lock, the end of our coast-to-coast journey. The barge is moored nearby at Muirtown locks and we disembark mid-afternoon. Inverness is well-connected by train and bus to other points in the Scottish Highlands and to Edinburgh and London.

There is a gentle walking alternative tour with shorter daily distances between 11-16km departing Banavie on 29 June, 24 August, 14 September, 12 October or Inverness on 11 May 2024.



BIKE & BARGE THE GREAT GLEN

7-days / 6-nights easy to moderate guided cycling on the Great Glen Way

Departs Inverness: 27 April, 31 August, 2024

On this unique Bike & Barge cycling cruise the itinerary has been designed so you can sample the best biking that the Glen has to offer. Tracks and paths lace the hills and mountains around the canal, including the world-class trails of the Leanachan Forest and the long-distance Great Glen Way. The towpath provides easy, flat cycling for a gentler option, or of course you can always stay onboard the barge and enjoy the cruise.

Suggested itinerary: *cruise may operate in reverse*

Day 1: Arrive Inverness

cycling @ 7 miles (12km)

Arrive at the barge moored near Inverness at 2.00pm. Inverness is well-connected to Edinburgh, Glasgow and London by train, including the sleeper from London. We start our cycle cruising holiday with the barge ascending the staircase of locks at Muirtown, then later we cycle to the sea lock at the eastern entrance to the bustling Caledonian Canal and ride the mostly flat towpath alongside the canal to Dochgarroch.

Day 2: Dochgarroch to Foyers

cycling @ 16 miles (26km)

After breakfast we go ashore by tender and begin our day's cycling on a forest track past Aldourie Castle, a 17th Century manor house (which we admire from afar as it is not open to the public), to Dores on the shores of Loch Ness. We follow a back road along the shores of Loch Ness and then head uphill for views of the lake. At Upper Foyers perhaps take the short, spectacular walk through the forest to the Falls of Foyers, with dramatic views of the gorge and the loch below. Then we coast downhill to Lower Foyers where the barge awaits.

Day 3: Foyers to Fort Augustus

cycling @ 15 miles (25km) + optional trails

A choice this morning: either cycle the South Loch Ness Trail on back roads and cycle tracks offering views down to Loch Ness and Fort Augustus or stay on the barge to cruise this wilder end of Loch Ness – keep your eyes open for Nessie! We have lunch aboard the barge in Fort Augustus, a bustling historic town. After lunch there is an option to cycle on trails in the forest above Fort Augustus and alongside the river Oich, or you may prefer to explore Fort Augustus – there are cosy welcoming pubs and cafés, or perhaps visit the Clansman Centre Museum for a slice of Highland life as it was 500 years ago.



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Day 4: Fort Augustus to Loch Oich

cycling @ 18 miles (29km)

We cruise along the canal and Loch Oich then go ashore by tender and cycle alongside the River Garry to quaint Invergarry. We ride out on the road to Skye before crossing at the head of Loch Garry and descending through scenic forest to Loch Oich, where the barge is moored near to Old Invergarry Castle.

Day 5: Loch Oich to Gairloch

cycling @ 14 miles (23km)

After breakfast we cruise Loch Oich and Laggan Avenue, a tree-lined section of canal. From Laggan Locks we cycle a loch-side forest trail then ascend into the mountainous landscape of Lochaber with views of Scotland's high peaks. We ride over undulating terrain to Clunes, the start of the Dark Mile, where the trees and walls are adorned with a rich carpet of mosses and lichens, and cycle through Achnacarry Estate, home of Cameron of Lochiel. The Clan Cameron Museum is an interesting stop, offering refreshments and information about the area's history. We then pedal along the Great Glen Way to the *clachan* (hamlet) of Gairloch.

Day 6: Gairloch to Banavie

cycling @ 16 miles (26km)

From Gairloch, we cycle past the Commando Memorial to the village of Spean Bridge, then ride on forest tracks through the spectacular scenery of the Nevis Range, the local ski area as well as home of the Mountain Bike World Cup. Here you can take the optional scenic gondola ride (cost not included, single return trip approximately £21 per person) for spectacular views and a high level café stop. Later we take the cycle track towards Fort William, passing the local distillery, before returning to the barge moored in Banavie.

Day 7: Tour ends in Banavie

cycling @ 12 miles (20km)

For our final morning we concentrate on the engineering feat that is the Caledonian Canal. We cycle along the towpath to an aqueduct that carries the canal over the tributary rivers to the River Lochy and visit Corpach where the canal meets the sea. We then cycle back to the top of the spectacular flight of eight canal locks known as Neptune's Staircase at Banavie, where we disembark the barge by 1pm. Banavie is a short journey from Fort William, with onward connections to Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland and England.

We highly recommend spending extra nights (at own cost) at the beginning and end of the tour in Inverness, the gateway to the Highlands, and in lively Fort William, where there is an opportunity to climb nearby Ben Nevis, the tallest mountain in Britain at 1344 metres.



In addition to **Walk & Barge The Great Glen Way** and **Bike & Barge The Great Glen Way**, other themed cruises, multi-activity cruises (including canoeing, sailing, cycling, walking and paddleboarding) and **classic Caledonian Canal cruises** are available onboard this Standard Plus barge on selected departure dates throughout the season. Ask for more details including departure dates and suggested itineraries.

Outdoor Travel offers many active holidays in Scotland, including **guided walking holidays** in the Scottish Highlands at **Glen Coe**, or inn-to-inn self-guided walking on the **West Highland Way** from outside Glasgow to Fort William. Hire a **self-skipped traditional narrowboat** from our base at Falkirk and cruise the canals that link Edinburgh and Glasgow. Luxury hotel barge cruises are also available along the **Caledonian Canal**.

Inn-to-inn cycling and walking tours are also available in most destinations in Europe.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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