

## SCOTLAND – GREAT GLEN WAY

8-days / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking from Fort William to Inverness in the Highlands



Experience breath-taking scenery and step into Highland history on this 75-mile (120km) walk in the Great Glen. The Great Glen of Scotland is a long, straight glen along a fault line that bisects the Scottish Highlands. Formed by a collision of earth's tectonic plates many millions of years ago, then scoured by glaciers during the last Ice Age, today the glen is filled with long, narrow lochs linked by rivers and the Caledonian Canal. The Great Glen is a natural route through the Highlands so it was of great strategic importance to Highland clans and English kings – which is why it is dotted with so many castles and forts.

Starting in the bustling town of Fort William, the '*Outdoor Capital of the UK*', the Great Glen Way follows loch-side paths along Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and Loch Ness, sometimes utilising the towpath alongside the Caledonian Canal. Designed by Thomas Telford in the early 1800s to provide an alternative shipping route from east to west coast of Scotland (bypassing the dangerous north coast which was commonly patrolled by French privateers during the Napoleonic Wars) and to reduce unemployment in the Highlands, the canal opened in 1822. Today walkers can watch the passage of small boats and luxury hotel barges along the canal. The walk finishes in Inverness, the 'capital city' of the Highlands, near to historic Culloden, scene of Bonnie Prince Charlie's final battle in 1746.

Stay in welcoming B&Bs, inns and guesthouses where walkers are well looked after, and fuel up each morning with a full Scottish breakfast, which may include anything from traditional porridge to tattie scones to black pudding. Carry only a light-weight daypack with the day's supplies as your luggage is transferred for you.

**Cost from:**     **\$1350** per person twin share             Single supplement from **\$470** – limited availability

**Departs:**       Daily from April to October

**Starts:**         Fort William         **Ends:**         Inverness

**Includes:**       7 nights' accommodation in quality B&Bs, guesthouses and inns, with ensuite where available; full Scottish breakfast daily; luggage transfers (1 bag per person up to 18kg); guidebook, notes & maps; emergency support.

**Not included:** Lunches, dinners, drinks, personal expenses, travel insurance, travel to the start of and from the end of the walk.

**Walk grading:** Easy to moderate. Average daily distances of @ 21km (4-5 hours of walking), with one longer day of 29km (7-8 hours of walking). The walking is flat or gently undulating until you reach Loch Ness, which has some steeper slopes (maximum ascent of 480m), unless you decide to take the high route between Fort Augustus and Drumnadrochit which adds an hour or two to each day of walking and has a maximum ascent of 740m. The track is generally good underfoot, utilising canal towpaths, forestry tracks, and loch-side trails, and it is well waymarked.

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations**

## Suggested itinerary:

### Day 1: Arrive Fort William

Fort William, the 'Outdoor Capital of the UK', is easily accessible by train from Glasgow. The bustling town sits in the shadow of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest peak (4414ft / 1344m) on the shore of Loch Linnhe. We can arrange extra nights in Fort William (at additional cost) if you wish to summit Ben Nevis or explore nearby trails. Fort William also boasts a number of traditional pubs for a hearty meal and a wee dram.

### Day 2: Fort William to Gairloch

walking @ 12 miles / 19km

An easy walk today past ruined Inverloch Castle to Banavie and the seven locks of Neptune's Staircase. Join the Caledonian Canal towpath, looking back for wonderful views of Ben Nevis and the Grey Corries; spot birds and wildlife and end the day in tiny Gairloch.

### Day 3: Gairloch to South Laggan

walking @ 14 miles / 23km

Walk alongside Loch Lochy on a forest trail, keeping a lookout for elusive pine martens. Pass by the long drive of Achnacarry House, a training ground for Allied Forces commandos during WWII. At Laggan, perhaps stop for refreshment at the Eagle, the Inn on the Water, a converted Dutch barge, then continue to South Laggan.

### Day 4: South Laggan to Fort Augustus

walking @ 11 miles / 17km

A delightful, easy walk along the east side of Loch Oich, with views back to Loch Lochy and the surrounding Munros and over the ruins of Invergarry Castle. Reach much-photographed Oich Bridge, built in 1854, now a listed monument and open only to pedestrian traffic. From there follow the Caledonian Canal towpath into the Fort Augustus, where you can watch the boats descending the staircase of six locks into Loch Ness.

### Day 5: Fort Augustus to Invermoriston

walking @ 8 miles / 13km

A short walk today, so you may have time for a morning cruise on Loch Ness before joining the forest trails above the loch to Invermoriston. There is an alternative High Route from Fort Augustus to Invermoriston, walking mostly on open moorland above the forest. The High Route offers outstanding views but is more exposed, and adds about an hour and some steep, zig-zagging ascents and descents to the day's walk.

### Day 6: Invermoriston to Drumnadrochit

walking @ 14 miles / 23km

A gentle ascent to start, the walk is mostly on forest trails until you join the minor road from Gortraig. Cross high moorland (look for birds of prey soaring above you) before a steep descent to the busy lochside village of Drumnadrochit. Again there is an alternative High Route for this stage, which adds 1-2 hours to the day's walk.

### Day 7: Drumnadrochit to Inverness

walking @ 18 miles / 29km

Fill up on Scottish breakfast this morning to fuel the day's walking! A steepish climb out of the village, then continue through open moorland along the edge of Craig Leach Forest. There are spectacular views over the Beaully Firth on the descent to Inverness. Follow the River Ness to the end of the walk at Inverness Castle.

### Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast in Inverness. Extra nights in Inverness can be arranged at additional cost. Inverness has direct rail services to Edinburgh, Glasgow and London, or scenic services to Thurso or Kyle of Lochalsh.



Other walking holidays from **Outdoor Travel** – guided in small groups or self-guided inn-to-inn with luggage transfers & meals – are available in many areas of the UK & Europe including the spectacular **Coast to Coast** trail or the **Cornish Coastal Track** in England, the **West Highland Way** in Scotland, the **Tour du Mont Blanc** in the Alps, the pilgrim's **Way of St James** in France and Spain or the **Via Francigena**, 'road to Rome' in Italy.

**Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations**

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