

OUTDOOR TRAVEL



THE ACTIVE HOLIDAY COMPANY

# BARGE CRUISING SCOTLAND

2025

## SCOTLAND – THE GREAT GLEN

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 2025 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. In addition to Walk & Barge and Bike & Barge, **Multi-activity** cruises (including canoeing, cycling, walking and paddleboarding) and **Discovery cruises** focusing on the history and culture of the Great Glen are available onboard this Standard Plus barge on selected departure dates throughout the season.

The barge carries up to 12 passengers, in six 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 in a traditional freshly made meal (yes, haggis is included), share stories and make plans for the following day. At mealtimes guests and crew sit together around a 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 5 April to 25 October 2025

**Cost from:** **\$3795** per person twin share      Single supplement on request  
High season supplement from \$290 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**



## **BIKE & BARGE THE GREAT GLEN**

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

**Departs:** 21 June, 2 August, 6 September, 2025

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, or the towpath provides easy, flat cycling for a gentler option. Of course you can always stay onboard 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 cycling on a forest track past Aldourie Castle, a 17<sup>th</sup> century manor house, follow a back road along the shores of Loch Ness then ascend for views of the lake. At Upper Foyers there is a short, spectacular forest walk 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 with its cosy welcoming pubs and cafés and Clansman Centre Museum.

### **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 lined with trees. From Laggan Locks we cycle a loch-side forest trail then ascend into mountainous 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, then pedal through Achnacarry Estate and to the *clachan* (hamlet) of Gairloch.

### **Day 6: Gairloch to Banavie**

**cycling @ 16 miles (26km)**

We cycle past the Commando Memorial to Spean Bridge, then ride on forest tracks through the spectacular scenery of the Nevis Range, the local ski area and home of the Mountain Bike World Cup. Here you can take the optional scenic gondola ride (cost not included) 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 in Banavie.

### **Day 7: Tour ends in Banavie**

**cycling @ 12 miles (20km)**

On our final morning we concentrate on the engineering feats of the Caledonian Canal. We cycle 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 loop back to the top of the spectacular flight of eight locks known as Neptune's Staircase at Banavie, returning in time to disembark the barge by 11am. Banavie is a short journey from Fort William, with onward connections to Glasgow and elsewhere in Scotland and England.





## WALK & BARGE THE GREAT GLEN WAY

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

**Departs:** 5, 12 April, 3, 10, 24 May, 21 June, 12 July, 2, 16 August, 6, 20 September, 4 October, 2025

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 easy to moderate walk, with typically 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. It is a relaxing alternative to the usual inn-to-inn options along the Way, allowing you to unpack just once and savor the day's walking, knowing you are coming 'home' each evening to your comfortable cabin and convivial dinner prepared by the onboard chef and shared with the other guests and crew.

Highlights of the Great Glen Way include wonderful views, whether of Ben Nevis, the tallest peak in the UK, or far-reaching panoramas of Loch Ness and the Monadhliath mountains. We walk along canal towpath, quiet country lanes, disused railway lines, tracks through forest and old military roads. We pass grand estates like Achnacarry Estate, home of Cameron of Lochiel, and walk alongside the shores of beautiful, secluded lochs. Cosy loch-side pubs, an eclectic forest café and a pottery gallery and clay works all feature on the itinerary too. On some days there is an option to walk a higher route, adding up to 300 metres of elevation to the daily walks and rewarding with fine views over the countryside.

Contact us for more details and a suggested itinerary.

## GENTLE WALKING & CRUISING THE GREAT GLEN

7-days / 6-nights easy guided walking alongside the Caledonian Canal

**Departs:** 17 May, 7 June, 5 July, 30 August, 18 October, 2025

This is an easier, gentler walking alternative to **Walk & Barge The Great Glen Way**, with shorter daily distances. Daily walks are carefully selected to display the best of the scenic and low-level walks on offer alongside the Caledonian Canal and in the Great Glen, and to highlight areas of historical or cultural significance. Most walks are circuits, with daily distances of 5 to 11 miles (8-18km) and up to 200 metres of elevation gain. On some days there are different routes in the morning and afternoon so you can choose to join both walks or just one, allowing you to explore the local area or rest onboard the barge during the other part of the day.

Highlights of the walking itinerary include the forest walk to the Falls of Foyers, rewarded with views of Loch Ness; a relaxing walk along the banks of Loch Oich; and riverside walks near Loch Garry and Invergarry providing a great opportunity to spot wildlife. We walk through Achnacarry Estate, the home of the Cameron of Lochiel, and along the 'Mile Dorcha' (Dark Mile) where moss and lichen eerily drape the trees.

Cruises may start in Inverness and end in Banavie near Fort William, or vice versa. The barge moors overnight at the tiny *clachan* (hamlet) of Gairloch, at charming Fort Augustus with its cosy traditional pubs, and near the ruins of Invergarry Castle, once the seat of the chiefs of Clan MacDonnell then sacked and burned by the Duke of Cumberland in the aftermath of the Jacobite uprising in 1745.

Contact us for more details and a suggested itinerary.

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## GREAT GLEN MULTI-ACTIVITY CRUISE

7-days / 6-nights cruising the Caledonian Canal, with optional canoeing, cycling and walking

**Departs:** 19, 26 April, 24, 31 May, 14, 28 June, 5, 12, 19, 26 July, 9, 23, 30 August, 13, 27 September, 11 October 2025

A fantastic journey along the Caledonian Canal, offering gorgeous Highland scenery and the opportunity to participate in numerous activities, with all equipment included and with qualified, patient instructors and guides ready to help. Each day there is a full briefing on the planned cruise and activity options which are of course weather dependent. Loch Oich, Loch Ness and Foyers Bay are ideal locations for canoeing and paddleboarding. Walking routes include a tranquil forest trail to the Falls of Foyers or an ascent into the hills above Fort Augustus for panoramic views of Loch Ness. You can explore the Clan Cameron estate by bike or ride to Bunarkaig Bay. The activities are designed to explore a particular area of the Great Glen, usually returning to the barge in the same location (although you can cycle or walk one-way along the canal towpath, meeting the barge at its next mooring point). At any time of course you can forgo the activities and just relax onboard the barge as it cruises to its next destination – the choice is entirely yours.

On selected dates (28 June, 9 August) the aim of the journey is to travel the whole length of the Great Glen entirely by human power – walking, cycling, and canoeing or paddleboarding – so these activities are usually one-way or point-to-point, leaving the barge in one location and meeting elsewhere. On these departures the barge may stay an additional day on Loch Ness, allowing guests to canoe the whole length of the loch.

Contact us for more details and a suggested itinerary.

## GREAT GLEN DISCOVERY CRUISE

7-days / 6-nights cruising the Great Glen, with gentle cycling or walking

**Departs:** 28 June, 26 July, 16, 23 August, 13 September, 2025

Discovery cruises are focused on shore-based explorations of the Great Glen, with sites of historical and cultural significance highlighted on the itinerary. Gentle guided walking and cycling opportunities are on offer and are entirely optional. We may explore the Clan Cameron estate, cruise past Urquhart Castle, or visit the Clansman Centre open-air museum at Fort Augustus and step back in time to 17<sup>th</sup> century Highland life.

Contact us for more details and a suggested itinerary.

We highly recommend spending extra nights (at own cost) at the beginning and end of the cruise 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.



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

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

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