

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 follows 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.

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. The canal was 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. Today walkers can watch the passage of small boats and luxury hotel barges along the canal. Walk via small, welcoming Highlands villages and pass by numerous forts, castles and ruins, testament to the turbulent history of the region. Finish in Inverness, the 'capital city' of the Highlands, near to historic Culloden, scene of Bonnie Prince Charlie's final battle in 1746.

We recommend you **book early** as accommodation is strictly limited in the small towns and villages along this popular walking route.

Departs: Daily from April to October

Starts: Fort William **Ends:** Inverness

Cost from: Low season (April & October) **\$1870** per person twin share
High season supplement (May-September) from **\$365** per person

Single Room supplement, Solo Traveller supplement on request

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation in quality B&Bs, guesthouses, small hotels and inns, with ensuite where available; 7 breakfasts; luggage transfers (1 bag per person up to 20kg); taxi transfer day 7 (if required); digital route notes, maps and roadbook; emergency support.

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

Walk grading: Easy to moderate. Average daily distances of between 17-21km (4-6 hours of walking), with one longer day of 30km (6-8 hours of walking), although this can be shortened with an optional taxi transfer. The walking is flat or gently undulating until you reach Loch Ness, which has some steeper slopes (maximum ascent of 580m). There is an optional High Route between Fort Augustus-Drumnadrochit-Inverness 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 or Edinburgh. 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 / Spean Bridge

walking @ 11 miles / 17km

An easy walk to start, with several possible side trips should you like to extend your walk. You pass ruined Inverloch Castle en route to Banavie and the seven locks of Neptune's Staircase, with a possible diversion to the sea lock at Corpach with its lock-keepers' cottages and pepper-pot lighthouse. Join the Caledonian Canal towpath, looking back for wonderful views of Ben Nevis and the Grey Corries. Gairloch is a tiny village with few services so you stay in the highland village of Spean Bridge, a further 6km. Often the guesthouse in Spean Bridge can collect you from Gairloch by prior arrangement at additional cost.

Day 3: Gairloch / Spean Bridge to South Laggan

walking @ 13 miles / 21km

Walk alongside Loch Lochy on a forest trail, keeping a lookout for elusive pine martens. Some stages of this day's walk are shared with the Great Glen Cycle Route. Pass by the long drive of Achnacarry House, a training ground for Allied Forces commandos during WWII. Again there are possible side trips to the Clan Cameron museum, open in the afternoons, or the picturesque Eas Chia-Aig waterfall. 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 @ 13 miles / 21km

The route follows the Invergarry Link through woodland along the west side of Loch Oich, offering superb views down the loch, before dropping into Invergarry. From there follow the Caledonian Canal towpath into Fort Augustus, where you can watch the boats descending the staircase of locks into Loch Ness.

Day 5: Fort Augustus to Invermoriston

walking @ 8 miles / 13km

A shorter walk on this day, so you may have time for a morning cruise on Loch Ness before joining the forest trails above the loch to Invermoriston. The walk starts with a climb through the birch and pine along a forest track with several vantage points to see the dramatic views over Loch Ness. End in the village of Invermoriston where you could perhaps taste malt whisky or local beer. 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 / 22km

A gentle ascent to start, the walk is mostly on forest trails until you join the minor road from Gortaig. 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 @ 13 miles / 21km or 19 miles / 30km

A steepish climb out of the village, then walk a forest road to Abriachan Forest, now a community-owned woodland bought from the UK Forestry Commission, and where you may choose to take the High Route, which ascends to the highest point on the Great Glen Way (434m). There is an optional taxi transfer from Drumnadrochit to Loch Laide which shortens the day's walk. Walk on old drove roads, used to drive livestock from the pastures of the Highlands to the cattle markets of lowland Scotland. The descent to Inverness offers spectacular views over the Beaully Firth. 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.

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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