

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, Pitlochry and Stirling

Friday 24th May to Wednesday 5th June 2024

Loch Lomond is the largest loch in Scotland (measured by area) and it has some 22 islands, mostly at the southern end. The National park also includes the Trossachs with many fabulous lochs. Continuing to Pitlochry in the centre of Scotland and visiting Stirling. The tour starts and finishes at Balloch at the southern tip of Loch Lomond

Number of Days cycling - 11

Average distance per day - 74km

Average ascent per day - 1,021m



Itinerary

Friday 24th May - arrive at Balloch

Meet up with the group, have dinner and get ready to start tomorrow.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

Saturday 25th May - Kilcreggan then evening cruise

Starting on the shores of Loch Lomond and cycling up the quiet scenic Glen Fruin, we descend round to Kilcreggan. Then in the evening and early dinner followed by an evening cruise on Loch Lomond, out past the largest island of Inchmurren. This is Great Britain's largest freshwater island.

- Route distance: 72.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1130.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Sunday 26th May - Aberfoyle

The route is mostly minor roads, with the reward of some lovely cafes in Aberfoyle. Option for a self-led extension out to Lake of Menteith.

- Route distance: 31.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 443.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 27th May - Loch Katrine and Killin

Starting with easy miles along Loch Ard, then several smaller lochs, before cycling on limited access minor roads along Loch Katrine. There is a more busy section along Loch Venocher, before joining cycle paths north towards Killin. Optional alternative of a shorter and less hilly 62km route.

- Route distance: 88.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1569.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Tuesday 28th Killin - Comrie

Killin sits on the western tip of Loch Tay. We cycle south to ride round Loch Earn, and visit the very pretty village of Comrie.

- Route distance: 72.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 894.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Wednesday 29th May Glen Lyon

This is an exciting days cycling, starting up a steep hill of 500m, and then enjoying the descent down the beautiful Glen Lyon. The ride continues for miles along the River Tay before continuing to Pitlochry.

- Route distance: 92.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1304.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Thursday 30th May Pitlochry to Queens View, Schiehallion and Aberfeldy

Today is a day for big views. First looking along the length of Loch Tummel from Schiehallion, and then looking north as we climb around Scheihallion.

- Route distance: 99.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1365.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Friday 31st May Pitlochry to Dunkeld then on to Blairgowrie and Bridge of Cally

First we head to Dunkeld which is a very pretty little town, with the ruin of its thirteenth century cathedral on the banks of the River Tay. Then east to Blairgowrie and then over from Bridge of Cally on single track roads (yes it is the A924) to Moulin.

- Route distance: 83.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1128.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Saturday 1st June Pitlochry to Blair Athol

Blair Castle is owned by the Duke of Athol who has Britain's only private army! The route follows first the River Garry and later the River Tummel.

- Route distance: 69.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 976.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B)

Sunday 2nd June Pitlochry to Stirling

The hamlet of Amulree is on an old drovers route, then further south the Sma Glen is just 6.5Km long and is often described as Glen Coe in miniature. It runs along the River Almond

- Route distance: 97.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 1141.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 3rd June Kelpies and Falkirk Wheel

Crossing the flat flood plains around Stirling, we visit both the magnificent Kelpies and the feat of engineering that is the Falkirk Wheel which links the Forth and Clyde canal with the Union canal.

- Route distance: 52.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 346.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 4th June Stirling to Balloch

There are a couple of very well known hill climbs to the south of our route, but I managed to resist including them.

- Route distance: 60.0 km
- Route altitude gain: 856.0 m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 5th June - HOME

Thanks for coming and I wish you a safe journey home.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: none
- Meals: (B)



Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £1650.0

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £300 per person is payable to complete a booking, with the final balance of £1,350 per person to be paid by Friday 16th February 2024.

Price includes:

- Loch Lomond cruise
- Luggage transfer - max 8kg
- 12 nights accommodation and breakfast
- dinner on 5 nights

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from the start / end points
- lunch, café stops, drinks
- Dinner on 7 nights
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Cancellations

Written Notice Received: Cancellation Charge: Tour

- before Friday 16th February 2024: £300 tour Deposit
- after Friday 16th February 2024: £1,650 tour costs



Holiday Information

Area covered by the holiday

- The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National park is a beautiful treasure includes some 22 lochs. Diane and I have swam in most of them. We also stay for 4 nights in Pitlochry, a small town in the centre of Scotland with it's own theatre. Also visiting Stirling. Tour starts and finishes at Balloch at the south tip of Loch omond. Most of the cycling is on minor roads.

Travel

- The tour starts and finishes in Balloch which has 36 trains a day from Glasgow Queen St.

Accommodation

- Hotel accomodation

Rooms

- Accomodation on on a shared room basis (due to lack of space to offer single occupancy).

Luggage transfer

- A van will be provided for luggage transfer (up to 8kg), but in case of a medical priority or breakdown, it may be necessary to carry your own luggage.

Rest Day

- We stay 2 nights in most locations, so the days when we are not moving on are optional rest days. In practice most of the days that we are not moving on the route is a bit shorter anyway.

Roads used

- The holiday is classified as grade 5 (medium)

The holiday is for 12 nights, of which 11 days are cycling and there are optional rest days roughly on alternate days when we are not moving on.

This is a moving on holiday staying for 2 or more nights at each locations except 1. So, if anybody needs a rest and repair day, they can sit out on one of the days that we are not moving on. No-one is obliged to ride those days.

Most of the roads are minor (some single track) and used by rural/tourist traffic and are hilly in parts. Though we may need to use some busier roads at times, we avoid them most of the time.

Detailed route notes will be provided before the tour, along with GPS tracks.

Most of each day will be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 10-12 mph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified of

recommended refreshment stops each day.

It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, look at the view or explore some local point of interest and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, parts of the route are hilly, so you do need to be fit to get the most out of this tour. It is essential to get out on your bike and do some 50-mile (83km) rides before the tour starts. There are some steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to road works or weather etc, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, you will be advised of alternative arrangements.

The Leader and Deputy will share the luggage transfer and ride leadership between them. Often with one ahead and the other behind. One will usually be at the rear of the group, so you will need to be aware of the route each day. The route information will be provided before the tour, and each day you should clarify any details that you are not sure about.

Weather and Clothing

- Like the rest of the UK the weather in Scotland is very variable. On average May is both the driest and sunniest month. Please bring sun screen and waterproofs, as you might need to use both on the same day. There is a possibility of both heat waves and cold, wet weather, so be prepared for all possibilities.

Lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures, is needed and possibly smarter clothing for the more up-market hotels (though they seem to be very relaxed about what people wear).

Cycling clothes. Two sets of clothing are recommended as you can wash each evening; two short sleeved tops, a long sleeved top, or arm warmers, shorts, longs or leg warmers, two pairs of socks, a cap or helmet cover and two pairs of short gloves with a pair of finger gloves for rain and cold. Helmet and cycling shoes. Clear riding glasses. Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended along with insect bite cream. Evening Dress. You will not need too much; Two T-shirts/shirts, one pair lightweight trousers, maybe a pair of shorts, two sets of underwear, two pairs of socks, light pullover/top and lightweight shoes. The lightweight cycling windproof top can be used in the evening if extra warmth is required. Swimming costume if you want the chance of an open water swim in one of the many lochs, water temperature are very variable depending on the depth of the loch and the weather but unlikely to exceed 16 degrees, or in Stirling the hotel pool.

Toiletries; These can be kept to a minimum by bringing very small toothpaste tubes, shampoo bottles etc. A very basic first aid kit of plasters and pain killers etc are always recommended. Some places supply shampoo, but not guaranteed, and a small hotel size bottle is always useful to take and use for clothes washing, which can be done whilst showering. Shaving can also be done using shampoo, as can face washing. A piece of

string is useful for hanging washing in the absence of coat hangers.

Cycles / Equipment

- A touring cycle, hybrid, tandem, recumbent or lightweight road bike would all be suitable for this holiday, since we will endeavour to avoid tracks if possible. You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. A low bottom gear (eg. small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended; if unsure about gears, please talk to the Bikexplore Leader about them. Mudguards are optional but demonstrate respect to those who are following you in wet weather. Lights are recommended in case of arriving back late, and are useful if walking outdoors at night. A bell is advised and bring a bike lock for security. Water bottles are required to ensure you are hydrated at all times. You will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs, including two inner tubes, a spare gear cable, quick chain link and spare brake pads. There are very few bike shops on the route, and often they are never there when you need them. You are advised to use 28mm tyres, or larger, to suit the variable terrain. You will not need to carry luggage except in case of van breakdown or medical priority. The car luggage weight should be no more than 8kg. A rack-top pack or bar bag will be useful for carrying wet weather gear, spare clothing needed for the day, camera, emergency rations and a map.

Maps & GPS

- I recommend bringing a paper backup in the form of relevant pages from an old car road atlas and an ordnance survey map if you plan on hill walking. GPS maps for each day will be provided in advance of the tour.

Fitness and Health

- Please ensure that you are fit and healthy enough to cycle the distances (and ascents) planned for the tour. Use of an electric bike can help enable cyclists to complete long rides, but please do complete some longer hilly rides so you know that you and your battery can complete the day.

Travel Insurance

- Travel insurance is highly recommended.

Tour Leader Details

- I led my first tour in 2014, and since then have run tours every year (except one - guess which) and all in Scotland. Visiting almost every one of the larger islands.

Originally tours were through CTC Holidays, but now with Bikexplore.
My style is to help people enjoy their holiday and visit the many beautiful remote parts of my home country. In fact, one of my greatest pleasures is in sharing the wonderful quiet Scottish roads and scenery. My other great pleasure from running tours is the social aspect: seeing people form friendships that transcend the duration of the tour. On tour, my partner Diane shares the ride leadership and luggage transfer. Typically people do not cycle all together, but split into small groups of similar speed / interest and we meet at cafes and leap frog along the route.

Tour Leader Contact Details

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