

Walking in the Cairngorms National Park



Highlights

A fantastic selection of walking holidays in the Cairngorms National Park. Whether you are after a more challenging week, or a gentler weekend, these guided group trips take place in some stunning scenery with rugged munros and heather clad moorland as a backdrop.

Located in the Eastern Highlands of Scotland, the Cairngorms National Park is home to five out of six of Scotland's highest mountains. The Cairngorm mountain range is the highest in the UK – the snow can stay on the mountains up until August / September. The landscape is barren and wild, with heather covered moorland creating the perfect home for small birds, which in turn brings Golden Eagles and Peregrine Falcons to the area. In the lower glens, ancient Caledonian forest and provide a contrast to the wilds of the mountains.

In such a vast area – the Cairngorms is the UK's largest National Park – the options for hill-walking are endless. Over the course of the spring and summer months, there are several different guided weekend and week long holidays available, meaning that there is something for everyone.

All of the walking weeks / weekends are based out of a comfortable lodge and lead by experienced and qualified guides. More experienced hill walkers might want to challenge themselves on the High Cairngorms Ridge holiday, a more strenuous week tackling some of the Park's more challenging ridges and peaks. For those looking for some less rigorous walking, then the Hidden Cairngorm week, taking in the magnificent hills might be for you. If you cannot spare a full week away, then there is the possibility of cramming some fantastic walking into a long weekend, perhaps on a gentle weekend learning about the endemic flora, or, if you feel like a challenge, tackling the spectacular Lairig Ghru mountain pass.

Is it for me?

This is a fantastic selection of walking holidays in the Cairngorms National Park catering for those looking for a more challenging week and for those wanting some more moderate walking. The more strenuous walks have been classified as level 3 which means that the days will be long – between 6 – 7 hours on average per day and may include steep ascents and rough terrain. You don't need to have previous hill walking experience, but it is advised that you are in good shape and that you do some regular exercise before you come away. For the trips graded as level 2, you will still need a decent level of walking fitness as you will also be walking around 6-7 hours per day, but the pace will be gentler than the level three walks.

This is a group trip, but there will probably be a maximum of 8 people, so you don't need to worry about feeling over-crowded. It is worth being at a good level of fitness so that you don't feel self-conscious.

Equipment wise, make sure that you have comfortable boots and some good quality wet-weather gear. A full list of required kit will be sent to you upon booking.

Accommodation

Accommodation for the walking holidays is in Fraoch Lodge, nestled in the picturesque setting of Boat of Garten in the Cairngorms National Park, surrounded by heather-clad hills and woodland. There are six twin bedrooms with sinks, a large lounge with an open fire and a separate dining room with log-burning stove. Please note, single

Prices from

259 GBP (2 days) per person

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guests generally share a twin room with another group member A purpose built kit drying room will have your equipment ready for the next day.

The food served at the lodge is really something very special. A hearty breakfast and good coffee are served in the morning to get you on your way. Expedition lunches are home-cooked and made with home-baked bread! After a day out on the mountains, you are welcomed back at the lodge in time for 'cake o'clock' and then for dinner you will be served two or three course fire-side dinners, prepared by a cook with a 'Certificate of Culinary Competence', serving a mix of wild and home-grown vegetables, fruits and herbs and the local beef and venison

For the backpacking trip, you will start and end your trip staying at Fraoch Lodge. The nights in between will be spent in tents and a bothy (a basic shelter) All camping equipment is provided.

Itinerary

Lairig Ghru Weekend Challenge Level 2 / 3

27th April 2011 - 28th April 2011

Arrive: Fraoch Lodge on Friday - try to aim for between 5 & 7pm if possible, so that you have time to meet the group and settle in before dinner.

Saturday: This classic route starts amongst the Caledonian pines of Linn of Dee. 18 1/2 miles, 2500ft of ascent and the most spectacular mountain scenery lie ahead before you eventually finish the day on the beautiful Rothiemurchus Estate in full view of your achievement.

Sunday: Head out for a short 3 hour 'warm down' walk incorporating beautiful Loch an Eilean to return for a Sunday roast (vegetarian option also available) before you head for home.

Depart: on Sunday after about 2pm (3pm drop-off at Inverness airport).

Addictive Arran Level 2

5th June 2011 - 10th June 2011

Arrive: Fraoch Lodge on Saturday 4th at Ardsrossan ferry terminal by 2.30pm.

Sunday: The Three Beinnns Circuit is a fine introduction to the delights of Arran's ridges. Starting with a walk up dramatic Glen Rosa you will head west to climb high above Coire a' Bhradain and link these 3 fine peaks.

Monday: Traverse the islands highest - Goat Fell. Start at sea level to ascend via the Devils Punch Bowl and the entertaining north ridge high above deep Glen Sannox - all enriched by the tremendous seaward views.

Tuesday: An easier day with one of the isle's classic coastal walks. Your route around the islands most northerly tip takes you past very colourful rocks with their strange flutings to then rise up with ever expanding sea vistas.

Wednesday: A day off for all from breakfast onwards. It's a chance to explore the local area some more; visit the local distillery; take a boat tour; explore the beach ... then in the evening meet up again to visit an outstanding local restaurant and sample some of the produce.

Thursday: There are few views that equal that up Glen Sannox. The jagged skyline is magnificent. Follow the glen up to then climb steeply to Arran's most spectacular peak, Cir Mhor. From here it's a traverse of the western skyline to complete this wild and rugged route.

Friday: Head NW to make a traverse of the Mullach Buidhie hills for some fabulous seaward views: across Kintyre, through to Islay & Jura and the Atlantic beyond. A fitting way to round off a fantastic week.

Depart: Ardsrossan Ferry Terminal on day after walking finishes by 12.00am.

High Cairngorms Ridge Walking Level 3

25th July 2011 - 29th July 2011

Arrive: Aim to arrive between 5 & 7pm on Sunday 24th in time to settle in and join the rest of the group for dinner.

Monday: Climb Meall a' Bhuchaille (Shepherd's Hill) and walk along the spine of the Kinkardine Hills. With views down into Strathspey and beyond to the north; and a grandstand view of the Northern Cairngorms to the south, this is a lovely hill walk.

Tuesday: This skyline traverse sees you ascend via the North ridge. With dramatic views down precipitous slopes into the depths of Stath Nethy reach Cairngorm's summit to then trace the dramatic brink of the northern corries - impressive cliff scenery.

Wednesday: With a cycle and a gentle ascent through lovely Rothiemurchus arrive at the great bulk of Braeriach. Climbing to its lofty summit you are met by dramatic views down the Lairig Ghru and across the great precipied flanks of the highest peaks.

Thursday: The great gouge of Gleann Einich defines the Sgoran Ridge. At Sgor Gaoithe's summit you're suddenly presented with the awesome view down into the colossal void that holds the dark waters of Loch Einich far below. Follow its western edge.

Depart: after breakfast the morning after the walking finishes.

Highland Munros - Level 2 / 3

1st August 2011 - 6th August 2011

Arrive: Fraoch Lodge on July 31st, between 5 and 7pm so that you have time to meet the group and settle in before dinner.

Monday: The photogenic peak of Schiehallion, a familiar landmark from many summits, is the destination today. A skewed pyramid, it rises in perfect isolation from deep glens all around - never-ending views.

Tuesday: Stob Coire Sgrìodain & Chno Dearg form a very pleasant high circuit with views across unending mountain ridges high above the great trench of that holds Loch Treig.

Wednesday: Rise from lovely Glen Feshie, through native pines to the high ridges above, to complete a wonderful horseshoe that takes in Sgor Gaoithe. The real treat of the day is only revealed at summit cairn; the colossal amphitheatre of Gleann Einich.

Thursday: This is a day off for all from breakfast onwards - a chance for you to explore the area on your own; browse the gear shops in Aviemore; pop up to Inverness for the day; or simply relax. Top the day off with a fantastic meal out at local restaurant, Anderson's, a few doors up the road.

Friday: The aim is Ben Macdui, Britain's second highest. With the route skirting around the edge of the high Cairngorm plateau walk amongst constantly changing and contrasting scenery - classic high mountain views in

Scotland's newest national park.

Saturday: Geal Charn provides you with a very enjoyable horseshoe walk above its dark lochan to views into the unending wilderness of the Monadh Liath Mountains.

Depart: on day after walking finishes, after breakfast.

Complete Cairngorms Week Level 2

8th August 2011 - 13th August 2011

Arrive: On evening before walking begins. Try to aim for between 5 and 7pm so that you have time to settle in and meet the other members of the group before dinner at 7.30pm.

Monday: This holiday wouldn't be complete without an ascent of Cairngorm. The forces of nature have created numerous corries and hanging valleys. Our route seeks out many of these features to give a day of unending variety and interest.

Tuesday: Although Ben Macdui is the 2nd highest, and a 4000 ft peak 'to boot', it is by no means the hardest. You make a circuit taking in the most spectacular rock and glacial scenery of the Northern Cairngorms: the famous Lairig Ghru and the Loch A'an Basin.

Wednesday: The prominent peak of Carn Elrig is our target. You won't find a better positioned summit to view the Northern Cairngorms - the panorama is unsurpassed: native pine forest stretching to the north, mighty peaks to the south.

Thursday: This is a day off for everyone from breakfast onwards - a chance for you to explore the area on your own; browse the gear shops in Aviemore; pop up to Inverness for the day; or simply relax. The day ends with a fantastic meal out at local restaurant, Anderson's, a few doors up the road.

Friday: The group makes a traverse through Caledonian pines from Glenmore, past crofting communities, lochs and mountain backdrops of the RSPB's Abernethy Reserve to arrive back at Fraoch Lodge.

Saturday: Glen Feshie is regarded by many as the most beautiful in the area. After walking its length, you climb high to Carn Dearg Mor and fantastic high level views back down into its upper reaches.

Depart: on morning after walking finishes, after breakfast.

Details

Getting there

The nearest airport is Inverness and the closest train station is Aviemore. Your hosts can arrange for you to be picked up from either.

Price includes

Accommodation, full board and transfers are included on each of the holidays.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed