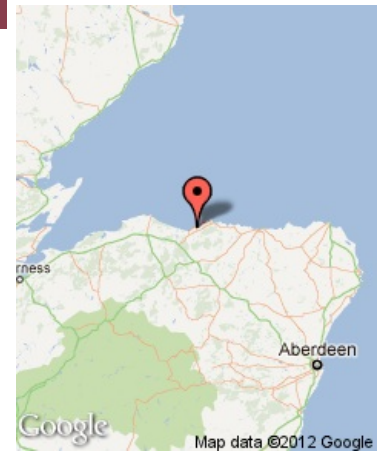


# Walk the Speyside Way



## Highlights

**Welcome to the land of salmon and whiskey! Lined with woodlands and quaint fishing villages, the River Spey passes through some of Scotland's most majestic landscapes, including the foothills of the magical Cairngorm Mountains; follow its course with this five- to seven-day self-guided walk.**

From its source at Loch Spay in the Corrieyairack Forest in the Scottish Highlands, the mighty River Spey rushes north-eastwards through woodlands and wetlands before emptying into the Moray Firth, 70 miles away. The river is the fastest flowing in Scotland, a product of high rainfall and snowmelt in its wide mountain catchment, which lends itself to excellent salmon and trout fishing; many of the riverside villages are still involved in the fishing industry, while Speyside distilleries produce more whiskey than any other region. It's not only the food and drink that make the area special; the Cairngorm Mountains supply an awesome backdrop, while in the lower reaches of the river are the Insh Marshes, one of the most important wetlands in Europe and a twitcher's paradise!

This five- to seven-day self-guided walk is the ideal way to explore this awesome region, its landscape, history and culture. Starting at the sleepy fishing village of Buckie on the rocky shores of the Moray Firth, you'll follow the river's course south-westwards, passing through the quaint hillside township of Fochabers and the equally picturesque town of Craigellachie, with its fine distillery. From there you have the option to walk the Dufftown Spur, where you'll have a chance to visit the world-renowned Glenfiddich Distillery, and the Tomintoul Spur with its commanding views of the Cairngorm range. Finally, it's on to storybook Grantown, nestled in ancient woodlands and home to a centuries-old smokehouse – and some pretty good smoked salmon! The Speyside Way is well marked, but if you want to make any side trips – to Telford Bridge, for example, or the Earth Pillars near Craigellachie – you can; you'll be supplied with a detailed map and comprehensive guidebook, with loads of information on the river, the towns and their history. Then at the end of a leisurely day's walking you can relax and enjoy some fine dining in the hand-picked bed and breakfasts, country inns and guesthouses dotted along the path – your bags will be waiting for you when you arrive.

## Is it for me?

The Speyside Way isn't a particularly challenging walk – it's fairly flat and very well signposted – but as for any hiking holiday you'll need a good level of fitness and also some experience of hill walking. If it's been a while since you've done regular exercise you might be better off trying a shorter walk first, perhaps two to three days. Then there's the question of midges. Not really a problem when you're walking and the breeze is blowing, but these small biting insects will probably hone in on you at some point, especially when you're closest to the river. For most it's only a minor irritation, but if you really can't tolerate itching then maybe Speyside in summer isn't the place for you! These walking holidays are best suited to adventurous lovers of landscape, those who prefer their paths unmarked and unpeopled. Foodies will enjoy the trip too – the hotels and guesthouses where you'll be staying have been carefully chosen for their excellent dining (their rooms aren't bad either!). And if you like whisky, well, think of this as a pilgrimage!

## Accommodation

One of the highlights of this walking holiday is the high standard of the accommodation you will enjoy. The hotels, inns, guesthouses and B&B's we use are hand-picked to ensure that you enjoy every minute of your stay. All offer a warm welcome to walkers, traditional hospitality and delicious local food.

Prices from

**355** GBP (5 - 6 days) per person

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An example of the country hotels, B&Bs and inns used include the Rosemount Hotel in Buckie, which is ideally situated overlooking the Moray Firth and the beautifully decorated 12 bedrooomed Ravenscraig Guest House on the main street of Aviemore.

## Itinerary

### Section 1 Buckie to Fochabers 10 miles/16Km 5-6 hours

Starting from the fishing port of Buckie you follow the coastline of Spey Bay before turning left along a disused railway line to follow the River Spey to Fochabers.

### Section 2 Fochabers to Craigallachie 13 miles/21Km 6-7 hours

You climb steeply as you leave Fochabers but are rewarded with expansive views over the Spey Valley and the Boat o' Brig. After a stretch of mixed forest and farmland before reaching the small village of Craigallachie. The Craigallachie Hotel famously boasts 550 malt whiskies behind its bar.

### Section 3 Craigallachie to Ballindalloch 12 miles/20Km 5-6 hours

You start your day following a pretty section of the Spey before passing close to Aberlour where you may wish to divert o visit the town's distillery. A pleasant period of walking passes before you reach the hamlet of Ballindalloch.

### Section 4 Ballindalloch to Grantown 13miles/21Km 6-7 hours

This is a rougher section of more challenging walking with good views and lovely pinewoods between Cromdale and Grantown. Grantown-on-Spey is a charming village to while away an afternoon.

### Section 5 Grantown to Aviemore 17 miles/27 Km 7-8 hours

Today you enter Strathspey and the Cairngorm Mountains start to dominate the view to your left. The walking is easy and passes through farmland and uses old railway tracks to bring you to the bustling town of Aviemore, the end of your journey.

### Spur 1 Dufftown Circuit 10 miles/16 Km 5-6 hours

The Dufftown Spur is a very pleasant excursion off the main route of the way and facilitates a visit to the world famous Glenfiddich Distillery. Well worth it if you are a whisky lover.

### Spur 2 Tomintoul Spur 15 miles/24Km 7-8 hours

Probably my favourite part of the Speyside Way as it ventures into the wild places of the Cairngorms and gives you a real insight into the reality of life in a small highland village. Oh, and you also pass by Glenlivet, which certainly helps you on your way.

## Details

### Getting there

The trail starts in Buckie. Buckie is 60 miles drive from Inverness or Aberdeen Airports. Using public transport you can catch a 35 minute from Keith train station to Buckie. The route ends at Aviemore, 30 miles South of Inverness, trains connect Aviemore to Inverness and Edinburgh

### Price includes

B&B accommodation close to the trail (en-suite wherever possible), baggage transfer, transfers as detailed in the itinerary. Detailed map, guidebook and information pack are all included.

**Not included:** travel insurance, transport to the start or from the finish of the walk, transfers should you wish to skip a stage, lunches, dinners, snacks, drinks and walking equipment.

### Available

Mar—Oct

### Typical Duration

5 days - 1 week