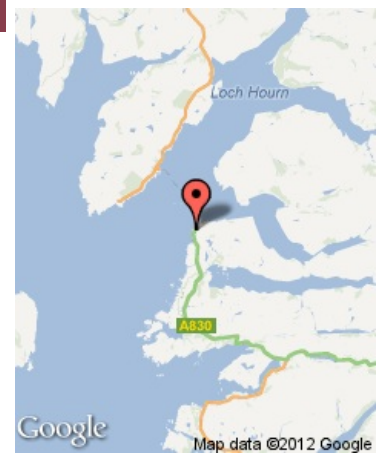


One Week Knoydart Peninsula Tour



Highlights

Scotland's 'last wilderness', the magnificent Knoydart Peninsula is home to an astonishing array of animal and birdlife, as well as some of the UK's best hiking. Discover its timeless beauty by sea and on foot with this eight-day walking tour!

When the mile-thick ice sheets finally retreated from the north of Britain at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, they left in their wake a topography gnarled, fissured and pockmarked by violent glaciation. The result is some of the wildest country in Europe; mountain massifs, rift valleys, riven volcanoes and crinkle-cut islands are just some of the extraordinary features of the Scottish landscape. Unsurprising, then, that the country has become something of a mecca for adventure travel enthusiasts, with every imaginable pursuit on offer. So whether you surf or ski, sail or kayak, hike or bike, Scotland is bound to have something special for you. (There's also 12,000 years of history, some of Europe's finest architecture and the prized national drink (no, not Irn-Bru!), in case you're interested!)

This eight-day tour is a fantastic introduction to one of Britain's most remote regions. Near-severed from the mainland by a treacherous tract of jagged mountains, the Knoydart Peninsula is best accessed by sea, and that's where your boat, the 'Mary Doune', comes in! From your wilderness lodge at the very tip of the Peninsula, you'll be whisked across the water to explore the surrounding islands, watching for whales and dolphins as you go! One day your goal is An Sgurr, a dramatic plug of columnar pitchstone and the highest point on Eigg, the next it's the Cuillin mountains on Skye. You'll also cross the Sound of Sleat to the wild island of Rum, home to red deer, white-tailed sea eagles and a host of ancient monuments. Back on the Peninsula, you'll tackle the peaks of Sgurr Coire Choinnichean and Beinn na Caillich before celebrating with a pint at The Old Forge, the most remote pub in mainland Britain!

Is it for me?

This is a wonderful week in the wild that we'd highly recommend to anyone with an interest in hiking and hill-walking. Of course, you'll need to be in pretty good shape for this tour; although the pace is leisurely you'll still be walking for around seven hours each day for six days. There are also a few ascents of over 900 metres, and in places the terrain may be uneven or boggy, so some trekking experience is a must. This said, if you feel like taking a break at any point there's the option to opt-out of the day's hiking and remain back at the lodge – not a bad place to relax!

Accommodation

Your accommodation for this tour is pretty special: an alpine-style wilderness lodge set right on the beach, with stunning views of the surrounding mountains and across the water to Skye! The lodge is bright and spacious, with bedrooms (doubles, twins and singles) and shared bathrooms on the upper floor and a large open-plan lounge and kitchen downstairs. Meals are taken in the adjacent 'Taste of Scotland' restaurant, which specialises in freshly-caught seafood like mussels and lobster. There's also a great range of other local delights - from wild venison to Highland beef, organic veg to homemade puddings - and an impressive selection of drinks, including many fine local beers and whiskies!

Prices from

895 GBP (week) per person

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Itinerary

Day 1: Travel from Mallaig to Knoydart

You meet in Mallaig, which is easily reached by car or train via the spectacular West Highland Line. A short transfer by boat takes us to your base at Doune on the very tip of the Knoydart Peninsula.

Day 2: Sgurr Coire Choinnichean, 796m

This bold peak rises up behind Inverie village. From its summit, the views to Inverie Bay below you and over the sea to Skye are outstanding. The Outer Hebrides are often visible, more than 60 miles away across the Minch. (10km, 5 hrs)

Day 3: A boat trip to and walk on the Isle of Rum

Using the "Mary Doune", you speed across the Sound of Sleat towards Rum. You may traverse this wild and beautiful island or climb one of the dramatic peaks in the Rum Cuillin. Late afternoon, you are whisked back to Doune in time for dinner.

Day 4: Beinn na Caillich, 785m and Glen Guiserein

You head into the interior of Knoydart to climb the remote peak of Beinn na Caillich, which commands superb views of Loch Houran, Barrisdale Bay and the Glenelg Peninsula. Later, you enjoy a pint in The Old Forge, the most remote pub in mainland Britain! (14km, 7 hrs)

Day 5: The Isle of Eigg and an ascent of An Sgurr, 393m

The goal for the day is the highest point on the island of Eigg, An Sgurr - a dramatic plug of columnar pitchstone, rising abruptly from wild moorlands. The summit boasts fine views over this beautiful island and the nearby emerald wedge of the Isle of Muck. (8km, 4 hrs)

Day 6 – Loch Coruisk on the Isle of Skye and a visit to Canna

Your final island visit takes us into the heart of the Cuillin mountains on Skye. You circle the shores of Loch Coruisk, surrounded by towering rocky peaks. If time permits, you hop over to Canna to complete your tour of the Small Isles. (11km, 5 hrs)

Day 7 – Ladhar Bheinn, 1020m

This fantastic mountain is often the highlight of a trip to Knoydart. You enjoy a dramatic approach by boat before being dropped at beautiful Barrisdale Bay. The ascent is challenging but rewarding - the views from the top are simply magnificent. (14km, 8 hrs)

Day 8 - Return to Mallaig

Following a relaxed breakfast, you board the launch boat and, keeping your eyes open for Minke Whales that are often spotted in these waters, return to Mallaig. For those travelling by rail, you arrive in Mallaig in time to catch the mid-morning train back to Glasgow.

Details

Getting there

This trip begins in Mallaig, which is easily accessible from Fort William by car or train.

Price includes

Accommodation, meals, guide, all boat transfers

Comfort level

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

Experience required

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

Reviews (1)

Reviews of this experience

“ The surroundings are satisfying, warm, everything we need, cosy rooms with their two towels, hot showers, fat sofas, kettles starting to whistle, as those in our eight-strong group begin to get to know each other.

And the food, in the evening, is good and plentiful. Very, very fresh. I compliment the tiny bustling chef on the crab, and she beams. 'I'm so glad. Caught it myself just this morning.' By lights out (because of the generator) at 11, we know each other pretty well. Splendid bunch. Some retired, some still busy, some Scots, some English, some who know these hills; we all vie in self-deprecating fashion to say who's going to be the slowest. Unfortunately, I am telling the truth.

A sweet, sweet sleep by the sea, a good hot breakfast, and the walking begins. Plans are fluid, depending on the weather on the hills and the state of the water, and on this first day we get to go, gloriously, to Eigg. A half-hour or so's boat ride, with Skye and Rum passing to port in splendid sun, and then we're there. It's hot. I know this is Scotland, but it's hot. But there's a breeze, and I soon stop panting, or at least pant in a semblance of rhythm, and we find our walking legs, and move up towards the dark, looming, sheer, magnificently scary An Sgurr. It's only 393m high,

good for our first day, but the fall, on those three sheer sides from the top, is pretty much every one of those 393.

Next day is, as they all are, different. We walk in Knoydart, up a long, twisting isolated glen, towards the apparently splendid peak of Meall Buidhe, hidden in the mist. We pass huge horned Highland cattle, asleep amid misted trees, and a cluster of white ponies, used to haul down stags during the season. We are very much in a wilderness, in Scotland, a knowledge that comes whirling in with the wind and rain. That's the thing about weather: it changes.

In the morning, the group set out again, chattering. Long days, long climbs; mist and wild wind and sun, and supple hard sinews by the end, and happy scrambles for the showers, and long talks into the night.

(Euan Ferguson writing for the Guardian in August 2008) ”

The-Guardian reviewing One Week Knoydart Peninsula Tour