The gentle hills. Meandering coastal paths. Lochs, lakes and waterways around every turn. These braes were built to be discovered by bicycle, and that’s exactly what we’ll do. Quiet roads, views of heather-clad mountains, some testing climbs and superb descents through Scotland’s most spectacular landscapes all conspire to romance your heart and challenge your legs. Put away your golf spikes and three-iron for a moment and consider this: Scotland was actually built for bikes, too. Riding through the Highlands, you will be treated to stunning scenery each day, along with a huge array of cultural experiences, as we visit castles, a distillery and perhaps a microbrewery as well. The weather is lovely this time of year and temperatures are perfect for cycling. Throw in some excellent Scottish cuisine, such as locally reared venison and beef at our hand-picked restaurants, and you can ensure that the food is as much a highlight as the riding. And by the time we’re finished, you’ll be forgiven if you heretofore consider Scotland a cycling paradise first, and a golf destination a far second.

**TRIP WOWS**
- Explore the Scottish Highlands and learn about the area’s rich history and culture with a local guide
- Take a ride on a speedboat across the mysterious Loch Ness and visit the 13th-Century Urquhart Castle
- Ride through the Cairngorms, Scotland’s largest and most beautiful National Park
- Enjoy a private visit and malt whiskey tasting at the famous Glenfiddich Distillery

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**Scotland**

**EXPLORER | 6 DAYS, 5 NIGHTS**

**TREKTRAVEL.COM | 866-464-8735**

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**SCOTLAND**

**THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS AND LOCH NESS**

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**From**

$3799

**Rider Type**

Active

**Hotel Style**

Explorer

**Duration**

6 days | 5 nights

**Start | End**

Pitlochry, UK | Inverness, UK

**Dates**

2019/Jul/Aug/Sep
2020/Jun/Jul
**TODAY’S RIDE:**

**Braemar to Ballater**

Approximately 30 miles with 1,300 feet of climbing

**DESCRIPTION:**

Welcome to the Scottish Highlands! As you gaze out across the misty hills, remember that this place is defined by its unique, one-of-a-kind climate, landscape and big heart. Your Trek Travel guides will meet you at the Atholl Palace in Pitlochry at 10:00 am. We’ll head north as a group to the Highland village of Braemar in the Cairngorms National Park for a relaxed lunch at a local cafe. After a brief introduction to your new travel companions and the rules of the road, you’ll be fit to your Trek bike. Our warm-up route first takes us on a scenic loop along the River Dee and through the ancient Caledonian Pine Forest. We’ll then head east along the river, passing the Royal Castle of Balmoral before arriving in the quaint village of Ballater. There, in the heart of the village, we’ll enjoy pre-dinner cocktails and learn more about the week ahead in the Scottish Highlands as we dine on a selection of local specialties.

**HOTEL:**

Deeside Inn

[VISIT WEBSITE](#)

**INCLUDED MEALS:**

Lunch | Social Hour | Dinner
Day 2

**TODAY’S RIDE:**  
Ballater to Strathdon Loop  
Approximately 47 miles with 3,200 feet of climbing

**SHORT RIDE:**  
Ballater to Strathdon Loop  
Approximately 40 miles with 2,900 feet of climbing

**AVID RIDE:**  
Ballater to Strathdon to Balmoral Loop  
Approximately 55 miles with 3,800 feet of climbing

**DESCRIPTION:**
We’ll get to know Scotland’s natural beauty today, with a ride along the river, through forests and mountains. Starting out from the square in Ballater we follow the valley of Royal Deeside before turning north and passing through several small villages to reach the next valley of Donside. You can expect quiet roads in this scenic corner of the Highlands where heather-clad hills form the beautiful backdrop. After a hearty picnic lunch we’ll gently climb alongside the river before reaching our first challenge of the tour. Two climbs take us over military roads built in the 1700s to help government forces travel through these wild highlands. Magnificent views across the mountains of the Cairngorms National Park provide ample reward as does the fast cruise down to the tiny village of Crathie. Here you will find the Queen’s official residence in Scotland - Balmoral Castle. We’ll stop for a visit of the Royal Lochnagar whiskey distillery and have a private tasting. From Balmoral, it’s a short distance back to our starting point in Ballater. Now it’s time to relax before dinner on your own, with a stroll around the village or perhaps a pint at the local pub. If you’d like, you may play a round of golf at the Ballater Golf Club this afternoon or evening (not included in trip price, please request with your trip consultant upon booking so the guides can assist with arranging a tee time - subject to tee time and rental availability). Our hotel is just a few minutes walk from the club.

**HOTEL:**  
Deeside Inn  
[VISIT WEBSITE]

**INCLUDED MEALS:**  
Breakfast | Lunch

Day 3

**TODAY’S RIDE:**  
Ballater to Dulnain Bridge  
Approximately 48 miles with 3,600 feet of climbing

**SHORT RIDE:**  
Lecht to Dulnain Bridge with Shuttle  
Approximately 30 miles with 1,000 feet of climbing

**TODAY’S ACTIVITY:**  
Visit and whisky tasting at the Glenfiddich Distillery

**DESCRIPTION:**
Are you ready to discover the distilled side of Scotland? Enjoy a relaxed Highland breakfast before rolling out of Ballater and into the hills for a classic Scottish ride through the heart of Speyside’s Whisky Country. Our route crosses one of the highest roads in the UK, the Lecht Pass, with some steep ramps which will test your legs and challenge your heart. From the pass, it’s a fast blast downhill into the highest village in the Highlands – Tomintoul. Then our ride leads through Speyside which is the undisputed home of Scotch Whisky. More climbs and descents follow lunch as we cross the Bridge of Brown, pass through the village of Nethy Bridge before arriving in the tiny hamlet of Dulnain Bridge. Our hotel sits on the edge of the village, with its gates marked by the two resident Highland cows in the adjacent field – a must-have photo!

**HOTEL:**  
Muckrach Lodge  
[VISIT WEBSITE]

**INCLUDED MEALS:**  
Breakfast | Dinner

Day 4

**TODAY’S RIDE:**  
Carrbridge to Foyers to Fort Augustus with Shuttle  
Approximately 52 miles with 3,700 feet of climbing

**SHORT RIDE:**  
Carrbridge to Foyers with Shuttle  
Approximately 39 miles with 2,700 feet of climbing

**DESCRIPTION:**
Today we dig deeper into another famous tall tale of Scottish history with a trip down to mystical, magical Loch Ness. We ride straight from the hotel this morning, initially enjoying a rolling ride with superb views of the high summits of the Cairngorms National Park. Reaching the village of Carrbridge, we pause to admire the famous arched ‘Packhorse Bridge’, which dates back to 1717. We then turn northwest, passing under the impressive Findhorn Viaduct which was completed in 1897, as we ride towards the village of Farr. Enjoy the vast views as we ride across the wild moors which form the southern banks of Loch Ness, leading to lunch at a charming local tea house. The ride ends with an iconic descent which drops 1,300 feet over 5 miles, taking us down to the banks of Loch Ness itself and directly to our hotel in the attractive village of Fort Augustus. Here you’re free to explore the village for dinner on your own, and our guides are happy to provide some local favorite destinations.

**HOTEL:**  
The Lovat  
[VISIT WEBSITE]

**INCLUDED MEALS:**  
Breakfast | Lunch
Day 5

**TODAY'S RIDE:**
Drumnadrochit to Aigas Gorge to Beauly Loop
Approximately 49 miles with 3,300 feet of climbing

**SHORT RIDE:**
Drumnadrochit to Aigas Gorge Loop
Approximately 41 miles with 2,700 feet of climbing

**TODAY'S ACTIVITIES:**
Private speedboat trip on Loch Ness and Tour the 13th Century Castle Urquhart

**DESCRIPTION:**
Loch Ness is so much more than the story of a monster, and we'll see it all on this epic day. Our day starts with a short transfer to the village of Drumnadrochit, best known for being home to 13th Century Castle Urquhart, a ruin lying on the banks of Loch Ness. Choose to stop and take a tour to learn more about this fascinating place and its turbulent past. Your bikes will be waiting for you when you're done to continue a classic loop in the hills above Loch Ness. You can expect some of Scotland's most magnificent, spellbinding scenery along the way, including the majestic mountains of Glen Affric and the forested beauty of Aigas Gorge. Our final descent takes us from the hills back down to the shores of the Loch – from here we'll enjoy a thrilling motor boat (or Zodiac as it's known locally) transfer to Fort Augustus. Relax back at the hotel and prepare your stories for sharing over drinks and dinner with your new friends that evening.

**HOTEL:**
The Lovat

**INCLUDED MEALS:**
Breakfast | Social Hour | Dinner

Day 6

**TODAY'S RIDE:**
Fort Augustus to Glendoe Climb Return
Approximately 11 miles with 1,500 feet of climbing

**DESCRIPTION:**
Sadly, it's time to bid farewell to your Trek Travel guides and the atmospheric Scottish Highlands – perhaps with one final ride up a local classic climb used on the Loch Ness Etape. Or, simply rise at your own pace and enjoy a leisurely breakfast before we take a one-hour transfer to the Highland capital of Inverness. A private Trek Travel shuttle will depart from the hotel at 9:00 AM and you'll say farewell to your guides. We'll aim to reach Inverness by 10:00 AM to connect with regional flights to London/Amsterdam or for trains south to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Please do not schedule a flight out of Inverness Airport before 12:30 PM or a train before 10:30 AM on the last day to allow plenty of time for any unforeseen delays.

**INCLUDED MEALS:**
Breakfast

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**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

For us, the details matter most

Every moment of a Trek Travel bike trip has more than you could have ever dreamed. More romance. More scenery. More choice. It's the little additions to every Trek Travel cycling vacation that make it truly special. And that's how we help you create more memories.

What's Included

- 5 nights of accommodation at handpicked hotels
- Two experienced guides to provide local knowledge, support, and camaraderie
- Daily route support with both guides and our support van
- Daily breakfast, 3 lunches and 3 dinners
- 2 social hours of drinks and hors d'oeuvres
- Ride a Trek Domane SL 7 disc, Trek's newest Electric-Assist, or a Trek 7.6 FX Hybrid
- Up to three daily route options on riding days
- Snacks and drinks for each day's ride
- Trek Travel Bontrager cycling jersey to keep
- Trek Travel water bottles to keep
- Cinch sack day bag to keep
- Each bike is equipped with a Garmin Edge 1030 GPS computer, flat pack, front and rear Bontrager Flare R lights, a Bontrager saddle and pedals (Shimano clipless road pedals, Shimano clipless mountain pedals, caged or flat pedals)
- Bontrager WaveCel helmets
- All gratuities for drivers, local experts and hospitality staff
- All luggage transfers and transportation during your trip
- A personalized photobook of your trip
Entrance fees for all activities, private tours and events

**Gear**

- Trek Domane SL 7 disc carbon road bike with Shimano Di2 electronic shifting or Trek 7.6 FX Hybrid bike
- Trek Electric Assist XM700+ also available in a limited quantity
- Trek Travel Bontrager cycling jersey to keep
- Trek Travel water bottles to keep
- Shimano clipless road pedals, Shimano clipless mountain pedals, caged or flat pedals
- Bontrager WaveCel helmet
- Bontrager men's and women's specific saddles
- Bontrager front and rear Flare R lights and a flat pack
- Garmin Edge 1030 GPS computer
- Cinch sack day bag to keep

- Upgrade your bike to include carbon wheels (+$200)
- Coupon valued up to $500 off a new Trek Bicycle. Your coupon will be delivered via email prior to your trip.
- For the most comfortable ride, you may choose to bring your own pedals, saddle, and helmet on the trip. Your guides will install your gear on the first day during your bike fit.

**THANK YOUR GUIDES, BY TIPPING**

Gratuities for your Trek Travel guides are not included in your trip price. We recommend tipping 7.5-10% of your trip price for the guide team. Local currency is preferred and unless you want to tip separately, guides will divide tips amongst themselves. Please tip your guides at your discretion, based on their level of professionalism, guest care and service.

**What’s Not Included**

- Airfare and transportation to and from the trip pick-up/drop-off locations
- Lodging before and after the trip
- Personal items purchased during the trip
- Optional activities not scheduled by Trek Travel
- On select trips some meals are not included. On these trips, Trek Travel invites you to explore the local cuisine at your leisure.

**HOTELS**

**DEESIDE INN**

**BALLATER, SCOTLAND**

Nestled in the heart of Ballater, the Deeside Inn combines old-world charm and new-world amenities. It has recently been renovated while keeping many of its original 19th-Century features such as beamed ceilings, open fires, and wooden panelling. In the restaurant you can expect local produce from the surrounding hills, rivers and farmland.

**MUCKRACH LODGE HOTEL**

**CAIRNGORM NATIONAL PARK, SCOTLAND**

This 16-bedroom luxury hotel is situated in Cairngorm National Park. A beautiful Victorian shooting lodge, it was recently restored to its previous glory and now offers a stylish and comfortable base for exploring the UK’s largest National Park. The hotel is surrounded by 10 acres of spectacular pastureland and a Scottish castle but a highlight for many guests are its two resident Highland cows, who are happy to pose for photos!

**THE LOVAT**

**FORT AUGUSTUS, SCOTLAND**

The Lovat is the only four-star, three-Rosette hotel in Loch Ness. This award-winning hotel is a short walk from the shores of the majestic and internationally famous loch. It has been fully upgraded in recent years with environment ally conscious additions to classic architecture stretching back to the 1860’s. You can expect comfortable rooms, stylish lounges and fantastic food from the 3AA Rosette restaurant. It’s a great place to stay for the final part of your Scotland journey.
How To Get There

We suggest that you arrive at least one day prior to the trip start, which will enable you to adjust to the time zone and minimize the risk of missing the trip start due to flight-related delays. We recommend you fly into Edinburgh Airport (EDI) and then take a train to Pitlochry. There are multiple train departures each day, and the ride takes two to three hours. Train schedules can be found at www.scotrail.co.uk.

Meeting Time And Location

Atholl Palace | Pitlochry, UK

Your Trek Travel guides will meet you at the Atholl Palace (Perth Rd, Pitlochry PH16 5LX, UK) at 10:00 AM on the first day of the trip. You'll then shuttle approximately one hour to the trip start. Please have your first day’s riding gear handy and separate from your other luggage to facilitate the bike fitting and ride.

If you will be late for the pick-up or will miss it altogether, please inform your guides. You will receive an email a week before the trip start with their names and contact details. If you cannot reach them, please call our first hotel, Deeside Inn (+44 1339 755413), and leave a message with your expected arrival time and contact details. A taxi to the first night’s hotel will cost approximately $100.

Departing Time And Location

Lovat Hotel | Fort Augustus, Scotland

You will say farewell to your guides at 9:00 AM at The Lovat Hotel. You'll then board a 1-hour private shuttle to Inverness where you can be dropped off either at the train station or the airport. Please do not book flights for departure prior to 12:30 PM or train tickets for departure prior to 10:30 AM.

Before: Pitlochry, UK

Pitlochry is a popular town located just south of Cairngorms National Park in the heart of Highland Perthshire. It is known for hiking, golfing, architecture, distilleries, and gardens. The town developed from the 18th-Century, and from the time Queen Victoria visited it, it became a popular holiday destination. The beautiful surrounding area with many lochs, glens and high hills, features standing stones, stone circles and other ancient sites such as the 1,200 year-old Dunfallandy Stone. If you choose to stay in Edinburgh before your trip, note that August can be very busy due to the Tattoo and the Edinburgh Fringe both taking place during that month. If you wish to attend either of these events, we recommend you book accommodation and travel well in advance. For more information, visit www.edintattoo.co.uk and www.edfringe.com. We recommend the following accommodations for your pre-trip hotel in Pitlochry:

EAST HAUGH HOUSE

This 17th-Century turreted stone house was converted to a small country house hotel and is perfectly suited for guests to have a leisurely woodland walk or explore Pitlochry.

www.easthaugh.co.uk | $130

ATHOLL PALACE HOTEL

Perched above the town of Pitlochry, this historic hotel features sweeping views of the Valley of the Tummel River. It’s an ideal base for exploring everything Perthshire has to offer.

www.athollpalace.com | $210

MOULIN HOTEL

The Moulin Hotel embraces a warm and welcoming world of peace, tranquility and traditional Scottish hospitality. Perfectly situated in the village square of Moulin, the hotel sits peacefully just 3/4 of a mile away from the bustling and perennially popular tourist town of Pitlochry.

www.moulinhotel.co.uk | $130
After: Inverness, UK

As one of the smallest cities in Scotland with some 55,000 people, Inverness is ideally located as a hub in the north of Scotland. Known as the "Highland Capital" Inverness offers outdoor activities as well as many cultural attractions. Enjoy dolphin watching on Chanonry Point, arguably the best place to watch Bottlenose Dolphins in Scotland. Walk along the Caledonian Canal, a Scheduled Ancient Monument that runs the length of the Great Glen. Explore some local castles and fortresses and learn about highland clan history, or savor a pint with some live music at the Hootananny Ceilidh Bar. If you like to play golf, there are several Links courses nearby: Royal Dornoch (www.royaldornoch.com), Castle Stuart (www.castlestuartgolf.com), and Nairn Dunbar (www.nairndunbar.com) We recommend the following accommodations for your post-trip hotel:

KINGSMILL HOTEL
The Kingsmills Hotel is a four-star hotel offering spa services, a restaurant serving locally sourced delicacies, and good old-fashioned Scottish hospitality.
www.kingsmillshotel.com | $150

HEATHMOUNT HOTEL
Heathmount Hotel is a small family owned boutique hotel featuring stylish rooms and its own bar and restaurant, all close to the center of town.
www.heathmounthotel.com | $180

LOCH NESS COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL
A comfortable and tranquil getaway, this Country House features a Georgian exterior complemented by an elegant modern interior.
www.lochnesscountryhousehotel.co.uk | $250

* Hotels listed above are local properties we love. We do not have special rates available.

FAQS

What Are The Daily Rides Like?

- Rider Type | 3 - Active
- Average Daily Mileage | 42
- Terrain | Hilly
- Average Daily Elevation | 2,567 feet
- Total Miles | 254
- Total Elevation | 15,400 feet

Averages and totals are calculated from our Today’s Ride options.

The terrain in Scotland includes quiet roads with views of heather-clad mountains, testing climbs, and superb descents. Scotland is best suited for our Type 3 Riders. Our Trek Travel guides can also easily accommodate Type 2 Riders, who seek less mileage or fewer uphills, with a boost in the van. Those who wish to ride every mile but are concerned about their physical ability may want to try our electric bike option—you still get a workout but can climb alongside even the strongest rider. Type 4+ Riders will enjoy the extra mileage the avid route options offer.

What are the options for a non-rider travel companion?

On most Trek Travel trips, we offer non-riding options for riders who want to take the afternoon off, or travel companions who want to spend little or no time in the saddle. Some of these options may need to be scheduled before your trip—please contact one of our Trip Consultants for more information. Expenses and/or related transportation to these activities may not be included in the trip price. Some non-riding options on this trip are:

- Private tour of Glenfiddich whisky distillery with tasting
- Boat ride on Loch Ness
- Visit the 13th-Century Urquhart Castle
- Golf (not included)

Trip Changes

See itinerary for specific daily ride distances and elevation options. On all of our vacations, Trek Travel strives to find quiet, paved secondary roads or bike paths to experience a region; busy roads are avoided as much as possible. Our itineraries are an approximation of our trips. Trek Travel strives to offer every guest a vacation of a lifetime on every trip. At times routes, hotels, activities, etc. listed here may change at the discretion of the trip designer or guides to improve the trip experience.