



Exploring Highland Rivers

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Brief Description

Grading:	Easy
Max numbers:	8
Suitable for:	Age 14 + (No previous experience necessary)
Duration :	7 days / 6 nights
Cost:	£595 (Adult) £475 (<18)

The Inner Moray Firth area of the Scottish Highlands is a true mecca for open canoeing. Within 30 miles of Inverness there are five fantastic canoe touring rivers (Spey, Ness, Conon, Beaully and Findhorn) and a wealth of stunning inland lochs to explore (including Loch Ness). On this 6 night holiday with Boots N Paddles you will be based in comfortable 3 star hotel accommodation in the gorgeous historic village of Beaully, 15 miles west of Inverness. Each morning your highly experienced local canoe guide will collect you from your hotel and transport you to one of these magical waterways to go on a journey through the heart of the Highlands. Each evening you will be dropped off back at your hotel in time for a relaxing soak in the bath before dinner.

*"Everyone must believe
in something.*

*I believe I'll go
canoeing."*

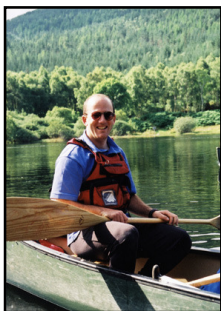
Henry David Thoreau

What makes this trip special

- Magical mountains, lazy lochs, winding rivers and, if you choose, a chance to tackle some raging rapids!
- Otters, Ospreys, Peregrine Falcons, Red Kites, Deer, Freshwater Pearl Mussels and many close encounters with wild Atlantic Salmon
- The friendly welcome and the great food at the Priory Hotel in Beaully (or similar if the Priory is not available)
- The fantastic local knowledge and unbounding enthusiasm of your guide
- The intriguing history and culture of the Highlands
- Improve your canoeing skills – up to BCU 3 star badge level
- Learn about the fantastic wildlife of the Moray Firth



"Magical mountains, lazy lochs, winding rivers and, if you choose, a chance to tackle some raging rapids!"



Accommodation

Our package price is based upon clients staying at the Priory Hotel in Beaulieu on a full board basis. Participants can sign up for a canoeing-only option if they would prefer to source their own accommodation in the Beaulieu area. It may be possible to arrange pick-ups and drop-offs at other accommodation – please phone for advice.

Food Provision

Breakfast and a packed lunch will be provided by your hotel each day from Monday morning to Saturday morning.

Optional learning opportunities on this trip

- Improve your canoeing skills – up to BCU 3 star badge level
- Learn about the fantastic wildlife of the Moray Firth
- Access laws and traditions in Scotland
- The intriguing history and culture of the Highlands

Meeting Point

Inverness is the start and finish point of this holiday. We will be delighted to collect you from the airport, bus station or train station any time on the Sunday afternoon and will drop you back there on Friday evening or Saturday morning – your choice. Please call the office on +44 (0)845 612 5567 for advice on the easiest way to reach Inverness from where you live.

Your Guide

Mike Dunthorne is 39 and has lived in the Highlands since he was 2 years old. He holds qualifications in a dozen different outdoor activities but his first love is exploring Scotland by open canoe. Mike has a wide-ranging knowledge of the natural history and heritage of the Great Glen area and is passionate about sharing the delights of canoeing and of the Highlands with other people.

Full Itinerary – Day 1

At any point during the Sunday afternoon you can be collected from Inverness and transported to the Priory Hotel in Beaulieu (or other accommodation close by if you decide to stay elsewhere). On Sunday evening there is a chance to meet your guide for the week and ask any questions.



Day 2

This is a gentle introduction day on a sheltered flat water loch such as Loch Achilty. We will spend the morning getting to know each other and learning (or perhaps getting a refresher on) how to control the lightweight, 2-person open canoes. In the afternoon we will journey around the loch, hear about crannogs and get some advice about minimising our impact in the outdoors.

Canoeing for around 4 hours.

“What sets a canoeing expedition apart is that it purifies you more rapidly and inescapably than any other travel.”

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Day 3

River Conon. A nice, wide, dam controlled easy river winds its way West to East to meet the Cromarty Firth at Conon Bridge. The scenery is a mix of estate-managed native woodlands and cereal growing farmland. The Conon is a great learners' river, starting off flat and wide before picking up a little speed and passing through one easy rapid and one (optional) fun wee moderate rapid towards the end of the day. Canoeing for around 4 hours.



Day 4

Today we paddle Mike's favourite ever one-day canoe route, down the River Beaulieu from Cannich to the Aigas Dam. The first part of the day (actually called the River Glass at this point) is characterised by easy grade 1-2 flow down a fairly narrow, tree-lined section. After a riverside picnic lunch around about Erchless Castle, the river widens and slows as we get towards the flat water backed-up behind the Aigas hydro-electric dam. The real wow! factor comes in the last hour of the trip when we reach Eilean Aigas, the historical island retreat of the Lovat Frasers. The Beaulieu at this point passes through a stunning gorge section where we are occasionally lucky to see otters playing and frequently lucky to watch Ospreys on their nest and Peregrine Falcons on the cliff side. Canoeing for around 5 hours.

Day 5

Loch Ness and the River Ness. Starting at Dochgarroch on the Caledonian Canal we enjoy a gentle flat water paddle across the lovely little Loch Dochfour, through the narrows by Aldourie Castle and into the head of Loch Ness itself. We will spend a wee while enjoying the panoramic view looking right down the full 22 mile length of Loch Ness and engaging in a spot of monster hunting before returning to Loch Dochfour, carrying our boats (portaging) round a rather nasty weir and onto the River Ness. Two hours of occasional grade 2 rapids on our biggest river yet take us into the heart of Inverness. After paddling past the cathedral, under the castle and waving at the shoppers we will take out at the very conveniently placed Waterfront Bar. Canoeing for around 5 hours.



Day 6

This morning we have a 45 minute drive southwards as we go to sample a stretch of the River Spey. The actual section tackled will depend on the water level and the competence of the group, but we would hope to maybe paddle from Boat of Garten to Advie Bridge in order to show you the Spey in all its moods. This section starts off nice and flat with lots of opportunities to admire the views of the Cairngorm Mountains, watch for wildfowl such as Eider Duck and to hopefully observe the Ospreys from Loch Garten fishing for a late breakfast. After Grantown on Spey the character of the river changes as it picks up a bit of speed in its rush to the sea. A good chance to see what all the fuss is about on probably the greatest 5-day river descent journey in Britain. Canoeing for around 5 hours.

Day 7

Time for fond farewells and address swapping with your new found friends. You will be collected from your accommodation at 9.00am and transported back to Inverness railway station / bus station / airport as required.



What is included in the cost of the holiday?

- All transport for the week
- Six nights twin room accommodation in a 3 star hotel
- Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner each day (Sun eve to Sat AM)
- Services of a qualified and experienced guide at all times
- All canoeing equipment and waterproof clothing