



Great Glen Canoe Expedition

Brief Description

Journey by Canadian canoe right across Scotland from Fort William on the West Coast to Inverness, capital of the Highlands on the East Coast. We will paddle on flat water for 100km using stretches of the Caledonian Canal and traversing legendary lochs such as Loch Ness and the bizarrely named Loch Lochy! We will be entirely self-contained for this camping expedition and will travel with all the food and equipment that we will need for the 5 days.

Grading:	Moderate
Max numbers:	8
Suitable for:	Age 12 + (No previous experience necessary)
Duration:	5 days / 4 nights
Cost:	£450 (Adult) £350 (<18)

*"Everyone must believe in something.
I believe I'll go canoeing."*

Henry David Thoreau

What makes this trip special?

- Amazing Highland scenery as we journey along a major geological fault line
- The sense of achievement in crossing Scotland from coast to coast under your own power
- Experience up close the engineering marvel of Thomas Telford's Caledonian Canal
- The fantastic local knowledge of your guide
- Paddle the length of Loch Ness and find out the truth about the Loch Ness monster!

Accommodation

We will select our own campsites on the banks of the canal and lochs. There are no toilets or washing facilities where we camp, though we will occasionally have access to British Waterways toilet & shower blocks en route. We are happy to recommend accommodation in Inverness the night before or the night after the trip if you require it.

Food provision

All food will be provided, from evening meal on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5. Lunch on Days 1 and 5 will be up to clients to source themselves in Fort William / Inverness. The guide will co-ordinate the cooking of all meals but will expect help from members of the group when it comes to cooking and preparing meals and tidying up afterwards.

Optional learning opportunities on this trip

- Improve your technical canoeing skills and journeying techniques
- Discuss the issues facing those who live and work in the Highlands
- Access laws and traditions in Scotland
- Leave No Trace camping and travelling techniques
- Learn about the wildlife that we will encounter en route

"Awesome Highland scenery as we journey along a major geological fault line"

Meeting Point

We will start and finish the holiday from Inverness railway station. Clients can be collected from Inverness airport at no extra charge or can join the group in Fort William if this is more convenient. 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 38 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



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

Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Day 1 - Inverness to Gairloch

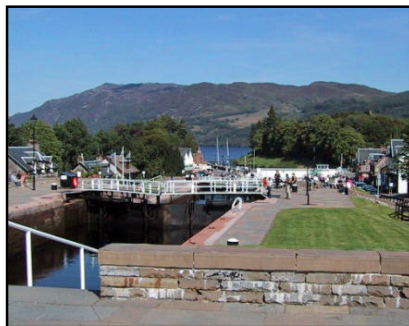
We will gather outside the ticket office at Inverness railway station at 10.30am, before transferring by minibus across country to Fort William (about 2 hours). First stop there will be a visit to a supermarket to source fresh supplies locally and a short time to look around Fort William and buy some lunch. Back in the minibus for 5 minutes as we drive out of the town and round to Banavie, the start point of our expedition. With help from your guide, we'll carefully pack the canoes and have a practice paddle in the canal basin. Once everyone is happy with steering a fully laden canoe we will paddle around 10km towards Gairloch to find a remote campsite to enjoy our first night well away from the lights of Fort William.

Day 2 - Gairloch to Loch Oich (25km)

Much of the day is spent paddling the length of Loch Lochy (who came up with that name!). Hopefully the prevailing south-westerly wind is blowing and we can rig an improvised sail to save a bit of effort. At the head of the loch we pass through Laggan Locks then paddle a two mile section of canal which takes us into the magical Loch Oich. Here we will change down a gear towards the end of the day and take our time exploring the lovely wooded bays of the loch while we look for a private and wild camping spot.

Day 3 - Loch Oich to Alltsigh (24km)

As we leave Loch Oich we are in for a treat. The River Oich runs side by side with the canal from here along to Fort Augustus, so we make the most of having a current to help us along for a while. Watch out for the interesting little grade 2 rapid, though! A decent lunch stop in the lovely little touristy village of Fort Augustus will give you the chance to visit a few shops for the first time on the trip and also to visit the Caledonian Canal Museum. On leaving the village we face the daunting prospect of tackling the 36km length of Loch Ness. This is a monster loch in more ways than one. A third of the way up Loch Ness we will look for somewhere to camp for the night on the quiet Eastern shore and cook our dinner on the beach while Nessie spotting.



Day 4 - Alltsigh to Dores (22km)

A full day on Loch Ness today. It can get pretty tough going if there is a strong wind blowing – due to the sheer size of the loch it is possible (though rare) to get up to 3ft waves forming. Good job you are in expert hands then! In normal conditions this is a lovely leisurely paddle and we may well have time to land at the dramatic Urquhart Castle for photo opportunities and a nosy round the excellent Historic Scotland visitor centre. In the evening we finally reach the head of the loch and find a



Day 5 - Dores to Inverness (10km)

The hustle and bustle of the city looms ever closer this morning as we leave Loch Ness behind, travel through the picturesque little Loch Dochfour, negotiate the last canal lock of the journey at Dochgarroch (lots of “ochs” in this part of the world), then paddle through rolling farmland and into Inverness, Capital of the Highlands. Our finishing point is at Tomnahurich Swing Bridge on the edge of the city sometime round about mid day. It will take a wee while to unpack the canoes and to sort out the kit. Once this is done we will transport you in to the town centre where we will leave you with a big bag of dirty clothes and an even bigger bag of wonderful memories. Come back soon!

What is included in the cost of the holiday?

- Transport from Inverness to Fort William
- Camping accommodation on all four nights
- All food from evening meal on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 5
- Services of an experienced guide at all times
- All canoeing and camping equipment if required (though many clients prefer to use their own camping gear)
- Quality waterproof jacket and trousers
- Liability insurance covering Boots N Paddles advice and equipment

