



Bike and Barge Cruise Sample Itinerary

Inverness to Banavie

An inspirational biking and barging adventure along Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal. Our Belgian Barges, lovingly converted for 12 guests, make the perfect base from which to explore the Scottish Highland waterways and biking trails.

Our Bike and Barge week through the Great Glen can combine the best of intermediate cycling with barge cruising. Carefully chosen routes cover a variety of terrains from smooth cycle tracks and forest trails to quiet back roads - perfect conditions for our high quality hybrid bikes. Each day's ride will be led by our experienced guide, providing stories and information along the way and offering places to visit to suit the interests and requirements of our guests. Daily distances vary from 7-18 miles (11-29 km), allowing plenty of time to explore and relax. At any point of the journey, guests are very welcome to stay on board and enjoy cruising on the barge.

Saturday - Sea Lock to Dochgarroch

- We welcome our guests on to the barge in Inverness at 14:00 on the first afternoon. Here we introduce our friendly crew before the barge commences the ascent of the staircase of locks, marking the start of our adventure. The afternoon cycle ride then visits the sea lock at the eastern entrance to the Caledonian Canal, before following the towpath along the canal reach to Dochgarroch lock.

7 miles, (11.3 km) no height gain

Sunday- Aldourie Castle and the shores of Loch Ness

- Our tender will drop you ashore at a small inlet on the shores of Loch Dochfour. The cycle route follows the forest path past the spectacular Aldourie Castle, through Tor Point woods to the village of Dores on the shores of Loch Ness. The shingle beach by The Dores Inn provides a spectacular location for refreshments whilst admiring the view down the length of Loch Ness. The route then follows a back road along the shore of Loch Ness to Inverfarigaig. From here the route heads uphill along good forest roads, with occasional views over Loch Ness, before reaching Upper Foyers with its shop and café with a short walk on offer to a spectacular gorge and waterfall. The route down to Lower Foyers is a welcome downhill to the shore of Loch Ness where we find our barge waiting at the pier.

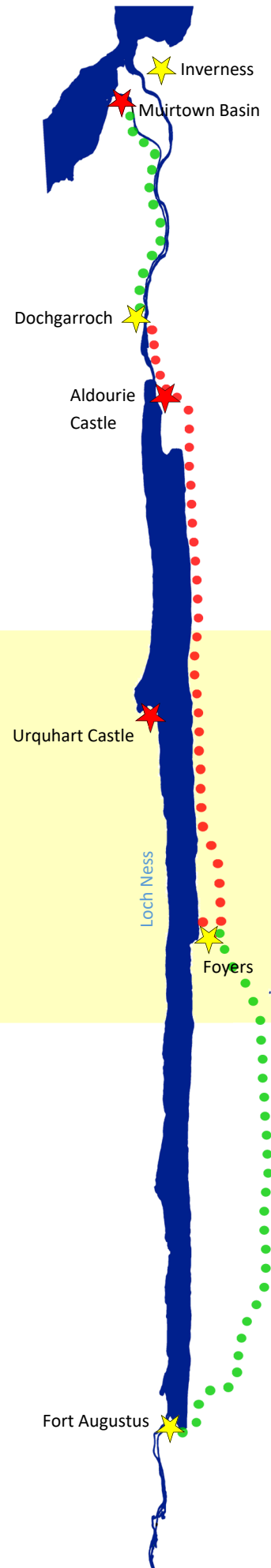
16 miles, (25.8 km) approx. 240m height gain

Monday – The wild side of Loch Ness to Fort Augustus

- We start the day with a steep climb to Upper Foyers to re-join the South Loch Ness Trail. This takes us along back roads via the picturesque Loch Tarff. The fun descent to Fort Augustus offers some wonderful views of the village and Loch Ness below. For an easy-going morning alternative, you can stay aboard the barge and enjoy cruising along the spectacular wild quarter of Loch Ness.

We are reunited with the barge in Fort Augustus. The village is centred on a staircase of 5 canal locks which raise the canal high above Loch Ness. This is the main habitation on our route and there are a variety of cafes, shops and visitor centres as well as an interesting museum describing the life of the 17th Century Highlander.

15 miles, (24 km) approx. 400m height gain





Tuesday – Loch Oich, Glen Garry and the ruin of Invergarry Castle

- In the morning we can cruise or cycle along the middle section of the canal and through the first half of the beautiful Loch Oich. The barge will anchor on Loch Oich by the elegant Glengarry Castle Hotel, within sight of the ruined Invergarry Castle.

7 miles, (11.3km) no height gain

After the morning cruise or cycle, we can set off along the road to Skye for a few miles before heading off on the start of the longest no-through road in the UK. We leave that road to cross the narrows of Loch Garry on a bridge, then head onto a fairly remote forest trail climbing steadily uphill before an exciting descent takes us down to the River Garry and then back to the shores of Loch Oich.

Back on board the barge at the end of the day, we spend the night at our beautiful anchorage overlooked by Old Invergarry Castle.

18.5 miles, (30km) approx. 250m height gain

Wednesday – Laggan Avenue and The Dark Mile

- After breakfast, the barge will weigh anchor and cruise along the remaining half of Loch Oich and on through Laggan Avenue, which makes for a stunning journey by bike or barge.

The cycle route would then follow a forest trail along Loch Lochy, with views of the largest of Scotland's mountains across the loch. The trail takes a moderate undulating route to Clunes, the start of the Dark Mile, and then passes the stunning Cia-aig Falls. After crossing the bridge at the foot of Loch Arkaig and stopping to enjoy the views stretching out to the west, we head through the Achnacarry Estate, home of Clan Cameron of Lochiel. Here the Clan Cameron Museum makes an interesting stop, offering information about the history of the area and a chance to buy a well-deserved ice cream.

The last leg of the day takes us along The Great Glen Way to meet the barge at Gairloch.

14 miles, (22.5 km) approx. 150m height gain

Thursday – Gairloch, the Nevis Range and on to Banavie

- From Gairloch, we cycle past the impressive Commando Memorial to the village of Spean Bridge. We then head onto forest tracks through the spectacular scenery of The Nevis Range, our local ski centre and home to the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup. Here you can take the optional gondola ride up to 650m, for spectacular views and a high level café stop. Later we take the cycle track towards Fort William passing the local Distillery before returning to Banavie for our last night aboard the barge.

16 miles, (25.7 km) approx. 300m height gain

Friday – The Caledonian Canal and Neptune's Staircase

- For our final morning we cycle the towpath and explore the local features of the dramatic Caledonian Canal. We will see one of the aqueducts that carries the canal over the tributary rivers to the River Lochy and visit Corpach where the canal meets the sea. We then cycle back to reach journeys end at the top of the spectacular flight of eight canal locks, known as Neptune's Staircase. A fitting end to an inspirational adventure.

7 miles, (11 km) approx. 30m height gain

Guests are fully briefed each day on the cruise plan and activity options. The itinerary above is an example all activities are subject to weather conditions.

