



Scotland: The Highlands, Isle of Skye & the Cairngorms

September 2-12, 2022 (11 days)

Join Cathy Ann Taylor for an exhilarating inn-to-inn hike in Scotland's Highlands, Isle of Skye & the Cairngorms. Some 32 miles of rugged trails bring us through a spectacular highland landscape of sparkling lochs, velvety moors, and craggy mountains with views of Scotland's highest peaks. Iconic Loch Lomond, Rannoch Moor, and Glencoe, a dramatic glen of history, myth, and legend—they're all on this journey. Next we hike into Glen Nevis in the shadow of Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in Scotland. We then head to the beautiful Isle of Skye for hikes among the rocky peaks of the Red and Black Cuillins. We end in the Cairngorms National Park in the Central Highlands with its Caledonian Pine Forest, hidden fresh water lochs, mountain views, and vast array of hiking trails. Along the way we overnight in cozy inns and hotels (many of them family-run), visit historic Eilean Donan Castle and tour the Talisker whisky distillery for a taste of Scotland's most famous beverage. Our trip begins in Glasgow and ends in Edinburgh.

TRIP DETAILS

Moderate ▶ 8 days moderate hiking; 10 nights hotels and inns

ITINERARY

(You will need to leave the U.S. on Sept. 1 in order to arrive in Glasgow on Sept. 2.)

Day 1, Sept. 2 ▶ Arrive in Glasgow

Arrive at the Glasgow airport, Scotland. Transfer on your own to the Ibis Styles Hotel, a modern hotel in the heart of the city centre. In the evening, you will meet with your trip leader, Cathy Ann Taylor for a trip briefing.

Meals on your own...Ibis Styles Hotel (or similar)

Note: A transfer from the airport to the hotel can be arranged on an individual basis at additional cost. Please call for details.



Day 2, Sept. 3 ▶ The West Highland Way: Crianlarich to Bridge of Orchy

After tucking into a traditional Scottish breakfast, our local Scottish hiking guides will meet us and transfer us to Auchtertyre, a few miles north of Crianlarich, the mid-way point of the West Highland Way. Today's hike brings us along an old military road, with glimpses of the viaducts of the famous West Highland Line railway coming in and out of view. At one point, we pass under the railway line by means of a "sheep creep," which was added during the construction of the railway so sheep could pass safely from one side of the track to the other. We pass the remains of St. Fillan's Chapel which

was raised to a Priory by Robert the Bruce in 1318. We'll also see the great conical mountain of Beinn Dorain ahead as we hike. Overnight at Bridge of Orchy Hotel (or similar) in the Central Highlands.

B,L,D...Bridge of Orchy Hotel (or similar)

Hiking Details: 12.2 miles, 5 hours, some ascent and descent



Day 3, Sept. 4 ▶ The West Highland Way: Bridge of Orchy to Kings House

On this fantastic day of hiking, we pass through some of the finest scenery of the Highlands (as well as some famous old pubs and inns!) as we head across the wilderness of Rannoch Moor, one of Britain's largest and wildest moors. Our trail is an old cattle drover road and we pass Loch Tulla, with its *crannogs* (remains of ancient loch dwellings). We finish the day at historic Kings House, the location of a traditional coaching inn popular with hill walkers. Glencoe is perhaps best known as the site of the famous Massacre of

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Glencoe in 1692, during which 38 members of the Clan MacDonald were killed by forces serving King William III, but it is one of Scotland's most lovely and beautiful glens, a not-to-be-missed scenic experience. Once at our hotel, we can revive ourselves with a drink at the inn's atmospheric bar. Overnight at Kinghouse Hotel.

B,L,D...Kinghouse Hotel (or similar)

Hiking Details: 11.6 miles, 5-6 hours, some ascent and descent



Day 4, Sept. 5 ▶ Classic hiking in Glencoe

Today with your local guides and trip leader you will hike one of Glencoe's classic hikes. There are some great options to choose from including the dramatic mountains of Buachaille Etive Beag and Buachaille Etive Mor, the iconic Pap of Glencoe, or a woodland valley hike into the Lost Valley.

B,L,D...Kinghouse Hotel (or similar)

Hiking Details: Flexible options

Day 5, Sept. 6 ▶ Glen Nevis

We transfer to Fort William to enjoy a relaxed hike into the beautiful glaciated valley of Glen Nevis, set in the shadow of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis. Our riverside walk—arguably one of the best short hikes in Scotland—leads us into the valley where a tumbling waterfall comes into view. Later this afternoon we transfer to the Isle of Skye, the largest island of the Inner Hebrides, our base for the next three nights.

B,L,D...Uig Hotel (or similar)

Distance: 2.14 miles, 2 hours, clear path but very rough terrain in places



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Day 6, Sept. 7 ▶ Hiking in Northern Skye

The Isle of Skye offers wonderful hiking, with its rugged landscapes of mountains, lochs, and misty moors. Our options for a full day's hike include the Trotternish Peninsula, where we may hike amid the Quirang, an area of dramatic rock formations, Neist Point and its lighthouse, and the Coral Beaches. Afterwards, we visit the Talisker Distillery, which produces a variety of premium whiskies, including the Isle of Skye's only single malt. We'll be sure to have a taste of this golden elixir, beloved by Scotland's countrymen. Overnight at hotel.

B,L,D...Uig Hotel (or similar)

Hiking Details: Flexible options

Day 7, Sept. 8 ▶ Hiking in Southern Skye

Today's hiking options include the Clearance Villages of Boreraig and Suisnish, Glen Sligachan, or Glen Brittle. The Highland Clearances, which took place during the 18th and 19th centuries, were essentially evictions of land tenants, making way for sheep rearing instead of traditional farming. Alternatively we can take the ferry over to the



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neighbouring island of Raasay and hike the flat peak of Dun Caan for 360 degree views of the islands and mountains, as far as the eye can see. We return to the main town of Portree in the afternoon to visit the Isle of Skye Baking Company, with its lovely mix of excellent baked goods (try the shortbreads and oatcakes) and local artwork in the gallery upstairs!

B,L,D...Uig Hotel (or similar)

Hiking Details: Flexible options



Day 8, Sept. 9 ▶ Eilean Donan – Aviemore, Cairngorms National Park

This morning we transfer to the village of Aviemore in the Cairngorms National Park, stopping on route at Eilean Donan Castle. Upon arrival in Aviemore we can enjoy a beautiful afternoon hike before checking into the hotel in the centre of the village. Overnight in Aviemore.

B,L,D...Cairngorms Hotel, Aviemore (or similar)

Day 9, Sept. 10 ▶ Hiking in the Cairngorms National Park

In the Cairngorms National Park in the Central Highlands, we find a setting of Caledonian pine forests, hidden freshwater lochs, and wonderful mountain views. We have a variety of hikes to choose from including an ascent of a small mountain in the Glenmore Forest, or a circuit of the Northern Corries and Cairngorm Mountain. Return to Aviemore for overnight.

B,L,D...Cairngorms Hotel, Aviemore (or similar)

Hiking Details: Flexible options

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Day 10, Sept. 11 ▶ Edinburgh

Today we transfer to Edinburgh. After dropping luggage at our hotel we head out on a guided afternoon walking tour of the city's beautiful Old Town with its hidden alleyways and cobbled lanes. We venture back in time to Mary King's Close, a subterranean street that was built underneath the Royal Mile. We will see how people lived in the dark and murky apartments centuries ago. B,L,D...Cairngorms Hotel, Aviemore (or similar)

Day 11, Sept. 12 ▶ Depart from Edinburgh

In the morning, your guide will provide one transfer to the Edinburgh airport as required. If you are departing in the afternoon, the transfer is on your own, but it is easy to arrange a taxi or transfer on public transport.

B...

LAND COST

\$6595 per person (12-15 members)

\$6695 per person (9-11 members)

\$6895 per person (5 - 8 members)

\$1000 single supplement

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations. A maximum of 2 single occupancy rooms are available.

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*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3.5%, the fee we incur from the bank.

Note—Prices listed are subject to change. We are occasionally faced with unavoidable cost increases due to fuel increases, costs of services or currency fluctuations that we cannot absorb. We will, however, do everything we can to keep prices the same as published.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership (including Cathy Ann and a local guide/s)
- Accommodations in hotels and inns (based on double occupancy)
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- One drink per meal (wine, beer, cider, or soda)
- Transfer from Glasgow to Auchtertyre on the West Highland Way
- Ground transportation days 4 – 11(2 vehicles for a group of 7 or more)
- Luggage transfers on the West Highland Way (**one** piece of luggage per person)
- Sightseeing as noted (Talisker Whisky Distillery Tour and tasting, Eilean Castle entry, Mary King’s Close Tour)

LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Glasgow and return from Edinburgh; transfers from/to the airport except morning of Day 11 (one airport transfer in Edinburgh); trip insurance (we urge you purchase trip insurance to include emergency evacuation and trip cancellation); meals not noted on the itinerary; optional tipping to leader and local guide/s; excess baggage charges (transfers for additional items of luggage on the West Highland Way (at an additional cost of £10, please advise in advance if required); cost of medical immunizations & COVID – 19 testing; and items of a personal nature (extra sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
until 90 days prior to departure25% of land cost
89-60 days prior to departure.....50% of land cost
59 days or fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.

TRIP LEADER



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking & cultural guide for the last 32 years will be leading this trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc—six times, The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, Tour of Monte Rosa, Scotland—two times, and the Dolomites—two times), the Georgian Caucasus—five times, South America (19 trips in Peru, 3 in Patagonia), and Uganda & Rwanda—five times. A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of nineteen remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in universities in India, Nepal, and the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners and has participated in sixteen expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Mount Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer. Cat’s special trekking program, Sacred Treks, benefits Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly the Breast Cancer Fund). Past trips include Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, Dolomites, Cordillera Blanca, and Annapurna Sanctuary treks (she has raised \$1,400,000 to date!). Cathy Ann has also been active in the American Himalayan Foundation and has helped raised \$21,000 for their STOP Girl Trafficking project. She has also raised over \$15,000 for Lama Pasang’s Himalayan Children’s Care Home which houses 87 children from Mustang, Nepal, and \$35,000 for the National MS Society. She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500’) in Nepal and Argentina’s Aconcagua (22,834’), the highest peak in South America. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine’s Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

You should be an experienced hiker in good physical condition. This trip is rated moderate, as you will be hiking long distances each day, from 6-12 miles. The terrain is hilly with some steep slopes, boggy areas, and narrow trails in places with tree roots. There are also gravel roads and there is some tarmac walking. For physical preparation, we recommend regular cardiovascular exercise for one hour at least 4-5 times a week. We suggest stair climbing, running, and mountain biking on hills, squats, and lunges or elliptical or treadmill training in the gym. And, of course, the best way to train

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for a trek is to go hiking! We recommend you get out on the trails at least once a week. Wear your boots and daypack and pick some trails with hills so you can strengthen your leg muscles and build up your stamina. We believe other important pre-requisites are a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

You will need a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip. No visas are required for this trip. You will need proof of vaccination and likely a negative Covid – 19 test within 72 hours of your flight (these restrictions may change).

Note—it's a good idea to make a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carry it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Extra passport photos can also be helpful to have just in case.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Plan your arrival in Glasgow anytime on Day 1 and depart Edinburgh on Day 11. Many travelers elect to use their “frequent flyer” miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the trek (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, pain killers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions (especially epipens if you are allergic to bee stings). Moleskin or Second Skin for blisters is also recommended, as well as Band-Aids and antibiotic ointment. Consult your doctor about bringing other medications, such as antibiotics like Cipro. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies, but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

The currency of Scotland is the Pound Sterling. You will want to check the current rate of exchange just before traveling when planning how much cash to bring with you. As of August 30, 2021 the exchange rate is 1.38.

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few items like aperitifs, extra beverages, and the like (most of your meals are included in the cost of the trip). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$500 should be plenty for incidentals and souvenirs. You should bring an additional amount for gratuities to the trip leader and local guide/s. At least US \$450 per guest is recommended for the trip leader and \$125 for the local guide/s (91 Great British Pounds). It's best if you present your gratuities to your leader and local guide/s individually.

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We suggest you withdraw money from an ATM in Glasgow before the trek begins, as there are few ATMs along the way while trekking. Some of the inns and hotels will accept Visa and MasterCard. US dollars are not accepted along the way.

WEATHER & CLIMATE

The weather in the Scottish Highlands is notoriously unpredictable, so each day on the trail you need to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions. The Western Highlands are among the wettest and windiest places in Europe. For that reason, you will carry your raingear and jacket in your daypack every day, even if the morning starts out bright and hot. Dressing in layers that can be adjusted to suit the prevailing conditions is highly recommended. Daytime temperatures in September for this area range from low of 47 degrees and high of 70 degrees and the average monthly precipitation is 6.1". As the old Scottish saying goes, "there's no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!"

WHILE ON THE TRIP

Our accommodations are the best available nearest to the trails we take each day. Located in mountain or valley villages, they are generally small simple inns that accommodate hikers in the summer months, and closed during the winter. They have a homey atmosphere and serve delicious food that is reflective of the region. While comfortable, some of them do not sport all the amenities, such as hair dryers, internet access, and the like. We are confident you will enjoy the experience.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: You will not really have time to have your laundry done during the hike except for in Isle of Sky or Aviemore. You can hand wash a few items and hang them to dry in your room. Synthetic, quick drying fabrics are best (see the equipment list).

Electricity: Scotland is on the 220V system. Sockets accept type G plugs, the three rectangular prong variety. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer, electric shaver, camera battery, or phone charger, bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.).

Time Zones: Scotland is on Greenwich Mean Time, five hours ahead of New York and eight hours ahead of California.

Communications: While we discourage the use of cell phones on our trip, we can't deny the fact that you may want to be in touch with your friends or family. Please be sensitive to the needs of others and use them in the privacy of your room. Contact your cell phone service about international coverage.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and trekking boots in your carryon luggage.

Luggage

- Duffel bag, large enough to hold your trekking clothes and gear. It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access). Wheeled duffels are OK to bring, but hard-shelled suitcases are not advisable (they are difficult to load compactly in the vans).
- Daypack with a capacity of about 2,000-2,500 cubic inches, with a good padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag.*
- Spare roll-up duffel (optional). This is essential if you wish to bring home those great souvenirs! It should be lockable.

*Remember, you must carry your fleece jacket and rain gear with you every day on the trail, as well as your picnic lunch (a few of the days), 2 liters of water, sunscreen, warm hat, gloves, camera, and cover for daypack in case of rain.

Clothing Notes

You should be prepared for very unpredictable weather. Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from cold and possibly wet weather. Synthetic fabrics (such as polypropylene, capilene, or wool) are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. (Cotton garments are not good in cold or wet mountain conditions.)

When layering, your innermost layer should be a synthetic T-shirt or long underwear. The middle layer can be a synthetic turtleneck or wool shirt, and pants. The outermost layer should be a synthetic fleece jacket, and/or a good quality wind/rain jacket and rain pants.

We haven't included quantities for each item listed. Use your own judgment, based on the expected weather conditions, your personal needs, and the overall weight restrictions for your luggage.

Underwear

- Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Thermal underwear (lightweight), top and bottom.

Socks

- Casual socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your walking (not hiking) shoes.

- Light or mid-weight hiking socks (synthetic or wool/synthetic).
- Synthetic or silk sock liners—optional. Some people wear sock liners to help prevent blisters, and some wear the same pair of hiking socks for three days in a row and achieve the same result.

Shirts

- Long-sleeved, synthetic or wool shirt.
- Short-sleeved synthetic T-shirts.
- One heavier-weight fleece top (you can throw it on if it suddenly gets chilly).
- Shirts for non-hiking activities.

Pants

- Full-length synthetic hiking pants.
- Hiking shorts in case of warmer days.
- Casual pants for non-hiking activities.

Outerwear

- Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric, such as fleece.
- Rain/wind parka (must fit over bulky clothing).
- Rain/wind pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- Gloves (wool or fleece).
- Waterproof daypack cover (most packs have them built in now).
- Gaiters (optional)—these protect your lower legs from wet grass and are great for those warm-weather days when you want to keep your pants dry without having to wear rain pants.

Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- Fleece or wool hat
- Synthetic neck gaiter (such as a BUFF).
- Bandana. This is a generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- Medium-weight hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots must be waterproofed, well broken in, and suitable for prolonged walking on wet and rocky terrain. Running shoes are not appropriate for the trails you will encounter on this trip.
- Comfortable walking shoes to wear while in towns.

Other Items

- Water bottles, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure they are leak-proof. Bring 2 and mark them with your name or initials as several people may have the same bottle.

- Hiking poles—highly recommended. These are essential to relieve the impact on your knees during long days; they are also useful for crossing over uneven ground and streams. Practice with them before the trip.
- Toiletry kit—soap, toothbrush, body lotion, etc.
- Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- Toilet paper and a Ziploc bag (for stops along the trail).
- Personal medical kit, including blister protection, insect repellent.
- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB protected).
- Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- Sunscreen lotion and lip balm of SPF 25 or higher.
- Small padlocks or combination locks for your duffels.
- Heavyweight plastic garbage bag to help keep the contents of your daypack dry during hikes.
- Headlamp.

Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera and plenty of memory cards, and extra batteries.
- Plug adaptor.
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Pair of compact binoculars.
- Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- Midge/Mosquito net for your head (midges should be gone this time of year).
- Your favorite trail snacks or supplements, especially if you have dietary restrictions.
- Reading and writing material.
- Whistle (most newer backpacks have them built in on the chest strap).
- Sit upon for the trail (seat pad).

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