

WALKING THE WEST HIGHLAND WAY & HEBRIDEAN ISLANDS

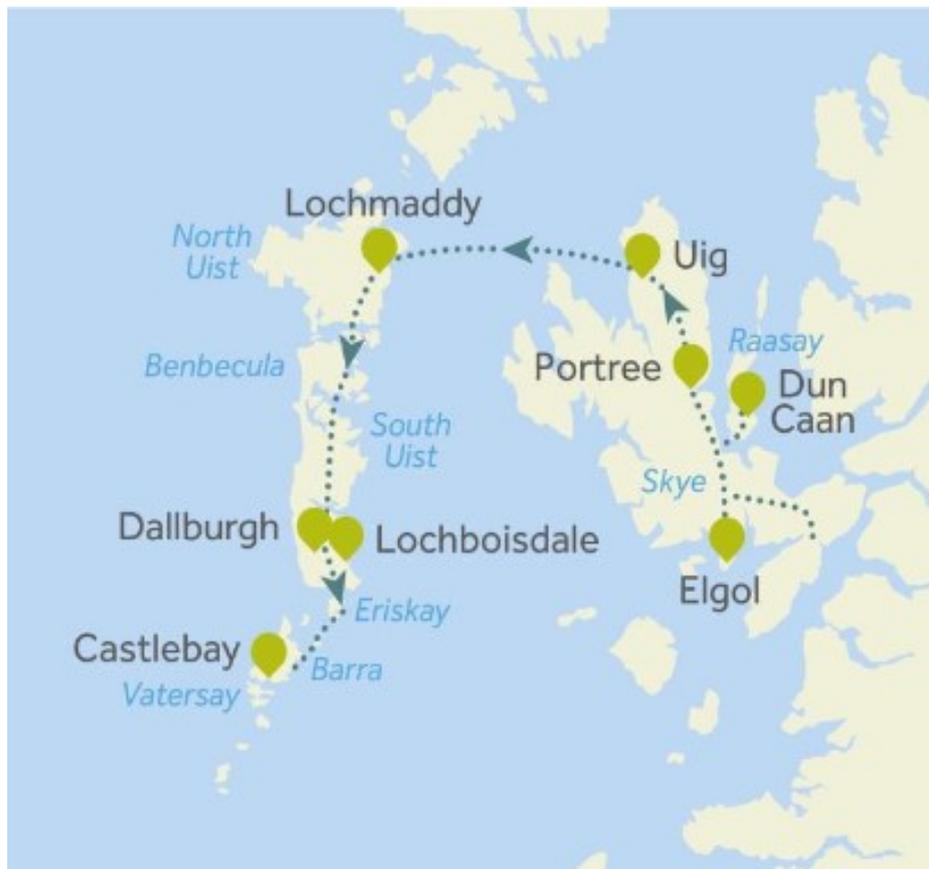
Thursday 30 July - Friday 21 August 2020

22 nights

TOUR OVERVIEW

The Hebridean Islands of Skye, Raasay, South Uist and Barra form a diverse chain of islands with their own unique culture and way of life. They all offer fine walking. We begin our journey on the Isle of Skye. Between the two extremes of coast and mountain range lie scenes of unspoilt natural splendour, rare wildlife, ancient forests and a treasure trove of archeological artefacts. Across Little Minch from Skye, the linked islands of North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay are broken by a lochan-studded landscape. The islands of Barra and Vatersay are so small and compact that the sea is rarely out of sight. From the stark magnificence of the Cuillin mountains, to Barra's beautiful cockle-shell beaches, the walks will take you to peaceful havens, with each island having a distinct individuality. Daily walks will range in distance from 5-15 kms.

The second part of the tour is a stunning long-distance walk of about 150 kms over 8 days, from Milngavie north of Glasgow to Fort William. The West Highland Way showcases some of the best scenery that Scotland has to offer, from the shores of Loch Lomond to the wilderness of Rannoch Moor. Pass by whisky distilleries, the charming villages of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, with spectacular walking along the 'bonnie waters'. Tyndrum and Inveroran punctuate the trail on the way to Kings House Hotel which lies on the remote Rannoch Moor. Our walk continues via the 'Devil's Staircase' before finally reaching Ben Nevis and Fort William, Scotland's outdoor capital situated at the head of Loch Linnhe. The uncrowded walks will introduce us to a complex tapestry of life, geology, Celtic culture, history and folklore. Staying in country inns, B&B's and small hotels, we will find ourselves immersed in the heartfelt warmth that is Scotland.



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk in spectacular Highland and Hebridean Island scenery, far from the hustle and bustle of city life on trails steeped in Scottish history and folklore
- Explore remote island communities where you will be warmly welcomed by the locals
- Wander amongst the eerie pinnacles of the Quiraing on Skye
- Soak up scenes from Whisky Galore on Barra's and Vatersay's white sandy beaches
- Enjoy stunning views of Ben Nevis, the bonnie banks of Loch Lomond and the wild landscape of Rannoch Moor while walking the West Highland Way
- Arrive in Fort William after completing the long distance walk with a real sense of achievement and joy!

TOUR MANAGER

John Matheson will be your tour manager. John is as an active traveller who enjoys walking as a rewarding way to discover places in depth. Every year since 2005 John, accompanied by his wife Rosanne, has taken groups of people on walking tours through the picturesque countryside in the UK and Europe, staying in small villages and sampling local food and wine. The benefit of his experience and history in these regions is that he knows where to go, what hidden gems to point out along the way, and how to tailor elements of the tour to the particular interests of the participants whenever possible. Both sides of John's family come from the Western Highlands of Scotland, so this is a part of the world which holds special significance to him. He has travelled to Scotland quite a number of times and is looking forward to sharing some of the beautiful places he knows.



TOUR PRICE *Ex Auckland*

Share twin per person NZD\$12,899

Single supplement (limited availability) NZD\$ 975

Please contact Calder & Lawson Tours if you are interested in a single occupancy place.

GROUP SIZE Minimum 10, maximum 14

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL We can make arrangements for any travel you would like to do before or after this tour, or book business class seats for the flights. Please contact us.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- The services of a Calder & Lawson Tours tour manager
- Economy class airfares
- 2 nights accommodation in Dubai
- 18 nights accommodation in Scotland
- Breakfast daily, other meals as specified in the itinerary
- Luggage transfers between accommodation on walks
- All group transfers
- Admissions as detailed in the itinerary
- All tips for national and local guides
- Pre-tour material

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Airline taxes
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Hotel portorage

IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

In the first week in the Hebridean Islands, most walks/hikes are on good paths and tracks, but on Skye and Raasay in particular, some sections are rough and steep in places, and the stepping stones across the river at Coruisk on day 3 can be challenging. There can also be some boggy sections. You will require a good level of fitness as you will be walking every day.

On the West Highland Way, there is some challenging terrain with some sections being rough, boggy and muddy. It is described as 'moderate' walking. An average of 19 kms with a maximum daily distance of 25 kms. The walk requires no specialist experience; however it is a long distance trail and the higher your level of fitness, the more you will enjoy the experience. Terrain is varied from low moorland, forest, woodland, rolling hills and more rugged mountainous terrain. The first half of the route crosses valley floor terrain or traverses their sides and only occasionally rises to 300m. North of Tyndrum, the terrain is a little more challenging as 'The Way' covers open countryside – Rannoch Moor, 450 metres, the Devils Staircase, 560 metres and the Lairigmor, 330 metres.

Walking through the Scottish Highlands also means that we need to be prepared for abrupt changes in weather. The walking day is normally 6-7 hours, so in order to manage the daily mileage and ascent and get the most out of your tour, you need to have prepared well beforehand with a number of longer walks on hilly terrain over a 6-month period before the tour.

DAILY ITINERARY

Thursday 30 July 2020

Auckland – Dubai

Meals: In flight

Flight: 17 hours

Overnight: Dubai

Depart early evening on your non-stop overnight flight to Dubai.

Friday 31 July

Dubai

Meals: B

Overnight: Dubai

We will arrive early in the morning and check into our hotel. There will be an afternoon sightseeing tour of this interesting city.

Saturday 1 August

Dubai - Glasgow

Meals: B/in flight/D

Overnight: Glasgow

Leave Dubai on an early morning flight and arrive early afternoon. Transfer to our hotel in Glasgow for a two night stay. There will be time for a walk and relaxation before a welcome dinner.

Sunday 2 August

Glasgow

Meals: B

Overnight: Glasgow

Enjoy a morning walking tour of Glasgow and a free afternoon to explore Glasgow, a UNESCO City of Music. This evening will be free.

Monday 3 August

Glasgow - Skye

Meals: B/D

Overnight: Skligachan

This morning, we take the magical West Highland train and go north to Mallaig. En-route we cross the start of the Caledonian Canal with a view of the famous eight loch Neptune's Staircase. This trip is recognised as one of the world's best train journeys. From there we catch a ferry to Armadale on Skye, and transfer to our hotel for three nights at Sligachan. This evening we will get a tour briefing explaining the week ahead.

Tuesday 4 August

Sligachan to Dun Cann on the Isle of Raasay

Meals: B/L/D

Walking: 14.5 km with 525 m ascent

Overnight: Skligachan

This morning, we take a short ferry crossing to the Isle of Raasay. The island is one of the most geographically diverse land masses in the world. We follow a sometimes-boggy path up to the distinctive summit of Dun Caan, at 443m the highest point on Raasay. From here, 360° panoramas give us views west to the Cuillin Ranges, and east to the Applecross and Torridon hills on the mainland. Return to Sligachan.

Wednesday 5 August

Loch Coruisk to Sligachan

Meals: B/L/D

Walking: 12 km with 410 m ascent

Overnight: Skligachan

Join a short cruise from Elgol to Loch Coruisk where we are almost certain to see seals en-route. Leaving the boat, we cross the river on stepping stones and ascend to the saddle below Sgurr Hain for fantastic views across to the Cuillins. From here we descend Glen Sligachan for a well-deserved wee dram. An alternative walk will be taken if the weather is too poor for the boat from Elgol to run.

Thursday 6 August

The Quiraing - Daliburgh

Meals: B/L/D

Walking: 5 km with 380 m ascent

Overnight: Daliburgh

Our final walk on Skye is amidst the eerie pinnacles of the Quiraing. This supernatural landscape is often used in films, and we make the classic circuit through the geological giants of 'The Needle', 'The Table' and 'The Prison'. In the afternoon the ferry takes us to North Uist. We continue south, across the island of Benbecula to our hotel at Daliburgh, South Uist, for two nights.

Friday 7 August

Daliburgh to Pollachar

Meals: B/L/D

Walking: 12.5 km with negligible ascent

Overnight: Daliburgh

We walk from the hotel out to the beach, and then follow the coast southwards, sometimes by the beach, sometimes on the machair, the fertile grassland so distinctive of these islands. With carpet flowers, including orchids, this environment is a favourite feeding ground for the numerous protected birds. Our walk ends at the Pollachar Inn where we can savour the scent of a peat fire. The island of South Uist is owned by the residents and is renowned as a stronghold for the Gaelic language. Return to Daliburgh.

Saturday 8 August

Eriksay - Barra, Vatersay Island

Meals: B/L/D

Island hopping again, to Eriksay and on by ferry to Barra. From here we visit Vatersay, the southernmost of the inhabited Western Isles, with its fascinating history. The Government bought the island in 1909 and divided it into 58

Walking: 7 km with 140 m ascent
Overnight: Castlebay

Sunday 9 August
Barra - Eoligarry and Heaval

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 13 km with 230 m ascent,
plus for Heaval, 4.5 km with 275 m
ascent.
Overnight: Castlebay

Monday 10 August
Barra - Glasgow

Meals: B/D
Flight: 1 hour 10 minutes
Overnight: Glasgow

Tuesday 11 August
Milngavie to Drymen

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 21 km with 150 m ascent
Overnight: Drymen

Wednesday 12 August
Drymen to Rowardennan

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 24 km with 450 m ascent
Overnight: Drymen

Thursday 13 August
Rowardennan to Ardlui

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 8.5 km with 450 m ascent
Overnight: Ardlui

Friday 14 August
Ardlui to Tyndrum

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 23 km with 600 m ascent
Overnight: Ardlui

crofts. It became known mostly for rearing beef, and for lobster fishing. Cattle were transported to market by ferry from Castlebay, but they first had to swim the 250 metre Sound of Vatersay to Barra. Construction began on a 250 metre causeway in 1989, and it officially came into use in July 1991. We stay at Castlebay on Barra for two nights.

Recently voted 'Britain's most beautiful isle'. Barra has stunning scenery, fantastic local produce, and an enviable sense of community, rooted in a rich clan history. We start our walk from Barra's tiny airport and explore the north of the island, taking in cockle shell beaches, fine views, and the medieval church of Cille Bharra. In the afternoon there is an option to climb Heaval, at 383 metres the highest point on Barra. Return to Castlebay.

Today we take a dramatic flight from Barra airport's unique runway on the beach. It is the only commercial beach landing in the world and the flight times are, of course, dictated by the tides. The flight itself is the stuff that scenic dreams are made of. Look down upon the wild beauty of the Highlands, the iconic colourful facades of Tobermory, and spectacular coastlines. We will arrive in Glasgow and check in to our hotel for one night. Tonight, we will discuss the next stage of our adventure – the West Highland Way.

This morning we transfer to the start of our walk at Milngavie, the official start of the West Highland Way is a granite obelisk in Douglas Street. Our walk begins in pleasant parkland, woods and fields. The first section to Drymen is an easy walk most of the way. Undulating at first, the path flattens out following the trackbed of the now disused railway line between Glasgow and Aberfoyle. We pass the Dumgoyach Standing Stones, thought to date from the Bronze Age, and the Glengoyne Distillery, which is well worth a visit if time allows. We pass stone cottages at the hamlet of Gartness, before some minor road walking leads us into the village of Drymen where we stay for two nights. Drymen dates back to the Middle Ages and was once a stronghold of one of the most powerful families in Scotland – the Grahams, who famously went head to head with Rob Roy MacGregor.

'The Way' enters Garadhban Forest and follows forest tracks, paths and minor roads through gently rolling countryside, gradually gaining views of the hills around us, including Ben Lomond to the north. The section over Conic Hill (361 metres), involves some 215 metres of ascent, but we are rewarded with fine views of Loch Lomond from the summit. Once past Balmaha we join woodland paths winding pleasantly by the shores of the loch, with a good chance of seeing ospreys. We end the day at the Rowardennan Hotel on the edge of the loch, where we'll have the chance to enjoy some refreshments. Return to our hotel in Drymen.

Although low level, this is a tough day. It is however, a beautiful walk along the side of Loch Lomond, below Ben Lomond. We have the option of the shore path to Inversnaid, rebuilt in 2014, or the higher forest path. We go through natural oak woodland, including the RSPB Inversnaid Reserve which is full of bird and animal wildlife. This is an area much associated with the outlaw Rob Roy MacGregor - the path passes close by 'Rob Roy's Prison' and 'Rob Roy's Cave'. At the north-east shore, we hail a ferry to take us across the loch to Ardlui and our hotel for two nights.

We re-cross the Loch on the ferry to rejoin the path and begin to really travel into the hills, but the walking is much easier. There are excellent views south over Loch Lomond from the side of the small hill of Cnap Mor. A gentle ascent takes us past the Falls of Falloch. Near the top of the pass, we join, for the first time, the old 18th century military road built by General Wade's successors. From now on the walking gets easier, as much of 'The Way' follows this military road almost through to Fort William. We stay high above Crianlarich which features interesting and varied tree species. We

maintain an openness, allowing good views out over Strath Fillan and the surrounding hills, before dropping down to Tyndrum, a small village, now a busy little tourist centre. The village originally became prosperous from lead mining and the spoil heaps are still clearly visible on the southern hill slopes. More recently it experienced renewed fame as a gold mining centre. Despite its small size it also has the distinction of possessing two railway stations, as the lines from Glasgow to Fort William and Oban diverge at this point. Return to our hotel at Ardlui.

Saturday 15 August
Tyndrum to Inveroran

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 14.5 km with 300 m ascent
Overnight: Onich

This is an easy day, mostly along the good tracks of the military road. From Tyndrum we head up over the top of the pass to face the magnificent Beinn Dorain, an imposing hill rising almost 915 metres from the valley floor in a single steep and craggy slope. We descend to the wide flat valley floor where we are likely to meet the Highland cattle of the Auch Estate and enjoy easy walking to Bridge of Orchy. We see the last of the railway line to Fort William here as it departs north-eastwards across lonely and uninhabited stretches of Rannoch Moor. A short ascent through forestry takes us out into the open for superb views of the mountains of the Black Mount to the north, before we drop down to Inveroran. Transfer to our hotel at Onich for four nights.

Sunday 16 August
Inveroran to Kingshouse

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 16 km with 300 m ascent
Overnight: Onich

This morning we transfer back to Inveroran. We encounter the longest and most exposed stretch of the whole Way, reaching an altitude of almost 450 metres amongst the open country of Rannoch Moor. We walk over a landscape of wild, open moorland, scenery of heather, rocks and lochans, always with the chance to spot an eagle. In good weather it can be a beautiful, if lonely, place, with clear views for miles around and encircled by mountains. Eventually we drop down to The Kingshouse Hotel, newly built on the site of what is believed to be one of Scotland's oldest licensed inns. The original inn was built in the eighteenth century. Return to our hotel at Onich.

Monday 17 August
Kingshouse to Kinlochleven

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 14.5 km with 360 m ascent
Overnight: Onich

Transfer back to Kingshouse. We are now in the upper end of Glencoe, which is guarded by the imposing rocky mountain of Buachaille Etive Mor (the Great Herdsman of Etive). This is magnificent scenery, which we can take time to admire as we climb the 'Devil's Staircase'; a zig-zag track winding its way upwards. The high point of 560 metres at the Staircase summit is the highest point of the whole West Highland Way and offers impressive views northwards to the Mamore Mountains. The path from the top to Kinlochleven holds a sting in the tail; it is a hard road which seems to double back away from Kinlochleven. We descend to Kinlochleven, the former site of Britain's second aluminium smelting plant. The complex was built between 1904 and 1909, although the first aluminium was produced in 1908, in a small temporary factory. On the way we pass close by the water conduit and pipelines bringing water down from Blackwater Reservoir to power the former plant by hydro-electricity. Return to our hotel at Onich.

Tuesday 18 August
Kinlochleven to Fort William

Meals: B/L/D
Walking: 25.5 km with 480 m ascent
Overnight: Onich

Transfer back to Kinlochleven. A steep but short climb takes us on to easy walking through Lairigmor. There are magnificent mountains on both sides before a final ascent through forestry, cuts across the hillsides bringing us out above Glen Nevis, with spectacular Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain at 1,346 metres, immediately opposite. We then continue down the glen to the end of the walk in Fort William. Return to our hotel at Onich. Our farewell dinner will be held tonight.

Wednesday 19 August
Onich - Glasgow - Dubai

Meals: B
Overnight: Dubai

This morning we transfer by bus to Glasgow Airport for the early afternoon flight to Dubai. We'll arrive late evening into Dubai and check into our hotel within Dubai Airport.

Thursday 20 August
Dubai - Auckland

Depart this morning for our nonstop flight to Auckland, arriving mid morning on **Friday 21 August**.



HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of \$1,000 is required to secure your place on the tour. When minimum numbers are reached, the tour will become a 'confirmed departure'. At that point we will advise when tour payments will be due.

- [Click here](#) to complete the online registration form, pay the \$1000 deposit and your place in this tour is secured.
- Or you can complete a paper registration form. You can download one from the website www.calderandlawsonstours.co.nz or give us a call and we will email or post one to you.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Can be found on the website www.calderandlawsonstours.co.nz, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration.

VARIATIONS

This itinerary is Version 1 dated 17/07/2019 and is subject to change. Exchange rate fluctuations may result in a change to the tour price.

