



WILD WOMEN
expeditions

SCOTLAND HIKING ADVENTURE

8 DAYS



EXPERIENCE SCOTLAND

The Scottish Highlands are easy to visualize. Misty moors, lush glens, ancient castles and the rapture of folklore (or is it folklore?) surrounding mythic sea creatures. The verdant isles, jagged coastline, shimmering cities and deep lochs are the views that a dram of whisky were designed for!

Plockton. Old Man of Storr. Kelpie. Black Cuillin. These names are like a roll call of spirits. Cheeky and curious red squirrels chatter away in the woods. Shaggy Highland cattle set the scene. Elusive wildlife like the tabby-like Scottish wildcat, pine marten, red deer and capercaillies (the largest member of the grouse family) surprise the quiet hiker.

As we hike and paddle our way through the dramatic scenery it's easy to feel as though you've been pulled into the depths of a watercolour. Hillsides blur purple with Scottish heather. A cool mist clings to bare skin and clothes with a reassuring weight. Golden eagles circle, turning dizzying shadows on the ground below.

This is a place to recalibrate and be consumed by all that the Highlands have to offer. Scotland wants to tell you a story, and it wants you to pay attention.

The tundra-like landscape gives way to remote beaches, still lakes and the hulking shadows of Ben Nevis Mountain.

We'll glide kayaks through the glass-like serenity of Loch Carron. There will be castle ruins, rural villages, seafood hooked fresh from the denim waters.

Invite your inner warrior to the challenge and transformation that can only be found in our Highlands Hiking adventure!



Mid-morning, meet your guide and fellow Wild Women crew in Inverness. We will head south to the fabled Loch Ness for a high-speed zodiac boat ride. Our skipper will stop at notable places of interest to share secret tidbits and tall tales along the way (about the one that got away, no doubt!). After the thrill of the boat trip and goosebumpy accounts of the submarine serpent, we'll have an authentic lunch at a local cafe before making our way to the tiny coastal

village of Plockton (population: 468!). En route, we will stop at the iconic and instantly recognizable Eilean Donan Castle, one Scotland's most treasured attractions. Situated on an island where three great sea lochs (lakes) converge, four different versions of the castle have been built and rebuilt since the 13th century.

Meals Included: Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: The Plockton Inn



The twee fishing village of Plockton sits on the shores of Loch Carron. The painted cottages, pines and palms make for a curious mix. Yachties love this sheltered bay. Highland cattle, blooming heather and painters transfixed by the scene are a predictable sight.

Today, our hike takes you inland to two freshwater lochs. If the group is game, we can incorporate a summit of Cam a Bhealaich Mhoir (343m/1,125ft above sea level)

to marvel at the stunning views across Loch Carron. Though not visible from 343m (1,125ft), Loch Carron is a Marine Protected Area as fishing activity (from bottom trawls and dredges) disturbed the flame shell beds. The brightly coloured mollusks (250 million of them) are the largest flame shell colony in the world!

On our return loop, we'll pass Duncraig Castle, built in the 1860s by Sir Alexander Matheson. He was also involved in the construction of the West Highland Railway line and conveniently, a station was provided for him close to his new home.

Our remarkable day will draw to a close as we hike along the coastline and snap pics of Plockton's harbour. Look for the local boats coming into the Old Pier around 3pm with fresh fish and prawns. A fish van also visits the village every week with a selection of fresh and smoked fish. A butcher's van trundles through on Wednesdays, selling Aberdeen Angus beef and local lamb.

It might be time for a pint! Established in 2007, Plockton Brewery's flagship pint is a Best Bitter loved by locals and visitors alike. There's also "Fiddler's Fancy", an English Bitter or the whimsical "Hitched." First brewed in 2010 before the night of a wedding, the beer was first dubbed "Half-Hitched" and was re-named "About Time" the day of the wedding and became "Hitched" when it went commercial. Say "I do" to that!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: The Plockton Inn

The skinny on today's hike:

- Flexible distance of 9-14 km (6-9 miles), 3.5-5 hours, 435m (1,427ft) ascent. The paths are easy to navigate though can be muddy and rough in places.



A boat from Elgol will take us into the hidden Loch Coruisk whose haunting Gaelic name (Coire Uisg) means "Cauldron of Waters". This narrow freshwater loch lies at the foot of the Black Cuillin in the Isle of Skye. It's only accessible by boat or a 13km (8-mile) hike. The boat trip itself is a relaxed opportunity for wildlife-spotting as it is common to see porpoises, seals, minke whales and basking sharks in this area.

This lake is also the home of a "kelpie" or water horse—a shapeshifting creature that can assume human form. Most bodies of water in Scotland have something mystical lurking below. Dip your feet in the loch, if you dare!

Once we land at Loch Coruisk, we'll follow the shoreline of this magical place, hugged by the Cuillin Mountains. Our guide will decide which hiking route is best for us depending on the group's fitness level and comfort on terrain that is boggy with rocky sections. We might hike around the loch, make our way partially around it or make our way up a "wee hill" as they say, for an elevated view of the loch.

In the late afternoon, we'll settle into our new accommodation on the northwest of the island. Enjoy a hot shower and change of wool socks!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Loch Eyre House

The skinny on today's hike:

- Flexible distance up to 7km (4.5 miles), 3-4 hours, 122m (400ft) ascent. Expect boggy and rough path, rocky slopes in places and depending on the route, a river crossing over stepping stones.



Today our guide will lead us on one of Skye's classic routes, The Quirang. This route offers views of what appears to be the fortress walls of a prison, but the rock structure is 100% natural. Dare we say...it's jailhouse rock?

You will have free time in the evening to explore the former fishing village of Portree, the largest town and capital of Island of Skye. There may be an opportunity to chill out with pints and traditional live music in a local pub.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Loch Eyre House

The skinny on today's hike: 7.25km (4.5 miles), 3-5 hours, 340m (1,115ft) ascent. Note: The Quirang hike has narrow paths with steep sections and some slippery rocks.



This morning we will hike in one of the secluded glens to the north of the legendary Black Cuillin Mountains (known to be the UK's most challenging range). Rather than follow on the heels of seasoned climbers traversing the ridge, we will stick to the lower level pathways, a backdrop of craggy mountain peaks and sweet views of the Small Isles and Outer Hebrides.

In the late afternoon, we will leave the island's magic with a sigh and journey to Fort William, which has become known as the outdoor capital of Scotland and gateway to Ben Nevis. It's also loved by film directors, distillers and sunsetters who gather to celebrate the burning of the day with sundowners over the Isles of Frum, Eigg, Muck, Canna and Skye.

Our guest house is conveniently close to the town centre and tonight's dinner is independent. There are several tempting options to choose from in Fort William—Thai, Indian, vegan, traditional grub and community pubs serving heaps of comfort food with a dose of live music.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Guisachan Guest House in Fort William

The skinny on today's hike:

Option 1

- Glen Sligachan Hike: Flexible distance up to 16km (10 miles), 6 hours, 300m (984ft) ascent. A reasonable path through the glen. Can be rough and boggy in places.

Option 2

- Boreraig and Suisnish: 16.5km (10.25 miles), 5-6 hours. 350m (1,148ft) ascent. Mostly clear paths, tracks and minor roads. Boggy and wet underfoot in some places.



Today, we will have the option to trek to the summit or take the steady low road. For those with a bounce in their step and feeling adventurous, you can ascend Scotland's highest and most famous peaks, Ben Nevis. Rising to 1,344m (4,409ft) and starting from almost sea level, this one is not for the faint-hearted or flat-footed. The alternative hike for today will be the low level but equally as impressive Glen Nevis and Steall Falls route. The rugged beauty of this glen has been

captured in many films including the Harry Potter movies and Braveheart, so this majestic trek will not disappoint.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Guisachan in Fort William

The skinny on today's hike:

Option 1

- Ben Nevis Hike: 18 km (11 miles), 7 – 9 hours, 1352m (4,435ft) ascent. Steep path throughout, rough and rocky near the top, often snow-covered on the higher areas with some powder patches remaining in summer months.

Option 2

- Glen Nevis Hike: 3.5 km (2.25 miles), 1.5 – 2 hours, 220m (721ft) ascent. Clear path but very rough and rocky with steep drops in some places. Expect some rock and roll.



Taking to the water today, we will air our punky hiking boots for the day! In the morning we'll have a guided sea kayaking experience in the serene Sound of Arisaig. There are intimate coves, rock skerries and pristine sandy beaches to discover! There is also a resident colony of curious seals who may decide to come for a synchronized swim in our shadows.

After lunch, we can opt for a relaxed afternoon poking along the white sandy beaches of the Morar coastline on foot, searching for fascinating rock formations and tidal seaside creatures. Alternatively, we can hike out to the abandoned village of Peanmeanach with its 'bothy' (hiker's hut), beach and stellar views of the Small Isles.

This evening, we will make our way to a lively local pub to sample a dram or two of smoky Scotch whisky, a symbolic and authentic way to end the trip and celebrate the new friendships forged over mountains and moors!

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Tonight's Sweet Sleep: Guisachan in Fort William

The skinny on today's hike:

- Peanmeanach Village and Beach Hike: 11 km (7 miles), 3 – 4 hours, 386m (1,266ft) ascent. Clear path, rough and wet in some places.



Today will bring your Highlands Hiking Adventure to a close. But what a high it was! After a leisurely breakfast with your wooly Wild Women pack, you will be transferred back to your starting point in Inverness around 12:30 PM. Aren't you glad we told you to take a hike?

You will be dropped off at the Inverness Railway Station (in the city center around 12:30). Please do not book flights before 3:30 PM to allow for any potential delays.

Meals Included: Breakfast

IS THIS TRIP RIGHT FOR ME?

This is an active adventure travel trip. We would like you to be comfortable with the following:

- Hiking over rough and uneven terrain for an average of 2-10 hours (4-17km) per day
- Climbing uphill to heights of 1352m/4436ft for Ben Nevis Hike (optional activity)
- Carrying a 13-30 liter daypack each day
- Paddling (in single kayaks) for 2-4 hours
- Being in and on the water, as there may be unexpected swims.
- WWE must know if you're a non-swimmer!
- Physical Rating: 3.5 of 5. Moderate to Demanding > A good level of fitness required and be prepared for strenuous physical activity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Professional, AWESOME, female trip guide(s)
- Loch Ness Zodiac ride
- Entry to Eilean Donan Castle
- Scenic boat trip to Loch Coruisk
- All local ferries as required by itinerary
- Privately guided hikes in different regions of the Highlands and Islands
- Half-day guided sea kayak trip in the Arisaig Skerries
- (NOTE: Women will be expected to take turns in a tandem kayak and will have the opportunity to paddle solo as well)
- 7 nights shared accommodation in cozy hotels and gorgeous guesthouses
- 7 hearty breakfasts, 7 divine lunches, 6 amazing dinners
- Return local transportation from Inverness including local ferries
- Optional single room upgrade, subject to availability
- All applicable taxes are included in the trip price

ITINERARY DISCLAIMER

Wild Women Expeditions and our local partners intend to adhere to the described itinerary. This is only a general guide to follow on your tour of the region. Our itineraries are subject to change, as we cannot predict the weather or other environmental conditions. We are continually striving to make improvements to all our trips based on feedback from Wild Women members, guides, partners, and other research. We reserve the right to alter itineraries based on the above at any time.

*Itinerary version as of December 6, 2023