Great Glen Way Scouting Trek

July 19 - July 29, 2019

With Sheri Goodwin of Transformational Journeys



Photo Credit: walkhighlands.co.uk

The stunning landscape surrounding the Great Glen Way could be described as very unique; featuring a 'ruler straight' deep scar in the landscape stretching coast to coast from west to east, effectively splitting the Highlands into a geological north/south divide.

Over millions of years, this natural thoroughfare has produced some wonderful landscapes, with deep filled lochs (lakes) and rivers, surrounded by mountains and age old pine forests. More recently (the 1800's), modern engineering was such that a series of canals were constructed to connect Scotland's east and west coasts, allowing boats to travel through the landscape, rather than attempt the treacherous sail around the north coast. Loch Ness, Loch Lochy and Loch Oich were all utilized, with the canals effectively connecting each body of water to produce the Great Caledonian Canal as it is known today.

The 75-mile Great Glen Way provides a wonderfully scenic route as it follows the general course of this famous waterway. The new 'high route' offers fantastic views of the Highlands and lochs. Be sure to keep a watchful eye out for the Loch Ness Monster! - Ross Mackey, Walk Across Scotland



Typical lodging



View from lodging



Typical lodging



Sign posts in blue

Trip Itinerary

DAY 1: ARRIVE IN FORT WILLIAM

Arrive in Fort William via the West Highland Way Trek or by train from Glasgow or Edinburgh; get settled into the B&B. If you arrive early, explore Fort William on your own. Your leader will be finishing the West Highland Way trek and will be arriving between 3:30PM and 5PM. We will meet as a group at 5:30 at our B&B. Dinner will be on your own this first night. There are several restaurants to choose from just down the street from our B&B.

DAY 2: FORT WILLIAM

Breakfast at B&B. This morning during breakfast you will meet the West Highland Way group. You will have the morning to explore the old town of Fort William where there are fun shopping opportunities. Lunch will be on your own today. In the afternoon everyone will re-group and visit the whiskey distillery. We will meet for dinner around 5 p.m.

Meals - B, D



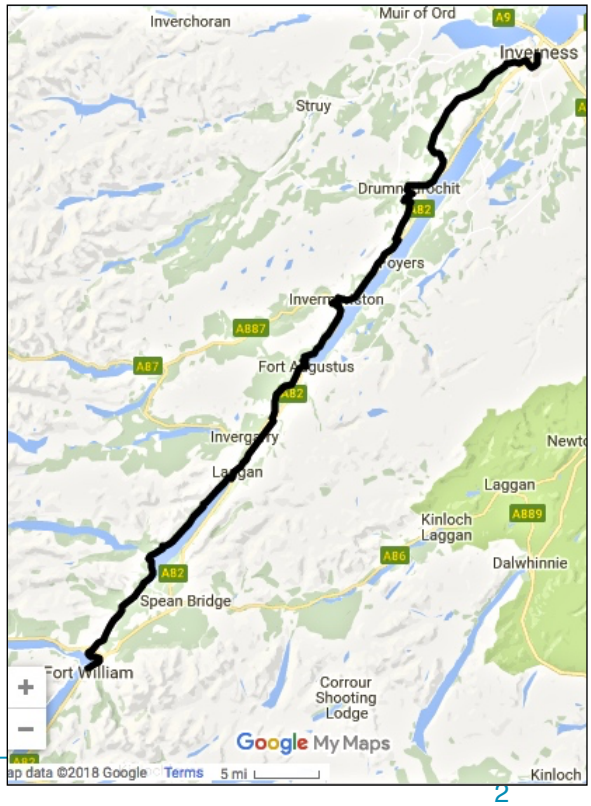




GGW 75-MILE 7-DAY TREK	**DISTANCE**
(1) Fort William to Gairlochy (5.5 hours)	**10.75 miles**
(2) Gairlochy to Junction by Laggan Locks (6 hours)	**12.00 miles**
(3) Laggan Locks to Fort Augustus (5.5 hours)	**10.75 miles**
(4) Fort Augustus to Invermoriston (4 hours)	**7.50 miles**
(5) Invermoriston to Drumnadrochit (7 hours)	**14.0 miles**
(6) Drumnadrochit to Blackfold (5.5 hours)	**11.0 miles**
(7) Blackfold to Inverness (4 hours)	**8.0 miles**

*The hour estimates assume an approximate 3 mph pace on flatter areas and a 2.0-2.5 mph pace on hillier and more rugged sections, plus includes lunch and breaks on the trail.







DAY 3: FORT WILLIAM to GAIRLOCHY

DISTANCE: *17.3 KM / 10.75 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *35 METERS / 115 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *105 METERS / 344 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *80 METERS / 262 FEET*

After breakfast at the hotel, we begin the Great Glen Way. The walk starts by the remains of the old Fort William fort and soon takes you along River Lochy, which opens out to the sea at Loch Linnhe. We will take a short 2 minute detour to find the ruins of Old Inverlochy Castle before heading into the small town of Caol. Leaving Caol the trail follows Loch Linnhe and then Loch Eil. The path eventually joins the start of the Caledonian Canal. We will follow along this canal until Gairlochy. Our accommodation is likely to be in Spean Bridge, which is a further 3 mile walk from Gairlochy. Instead of walking, a pick up service will be provided for all to Spean Bridge.

Meals - B, D

DAY 4: GAIRLOCHY to LAGGAN LOCHS

DISTANCE: *19.3 KM / 12 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *95 METERS / 312 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *475 METERS / 1558 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *400 METERS / 1312 FEET*

From Gairlochy, the trail soon leaves the canal and meets Loch Lochy, where you are never too far from its shores. Loch Lochy is the third deepest Loch in Scotland and said to be home of the Loch Ness Monster's sister, Lizzie. The path makes its way through woodland (birch and beech trees) as it undulates across the hillside towards Laggan Locks. Pine martens (an animal native to Northern Europe) can be seen in these forested areas. At the locks, we will be picked up and driven to our accommodations for the evening at Forest Lodge Guest House.

Meals - B, D

DAY 5: LAGGAN LOCHS to FORT AUGUSTUS

DISTANCE: *17.3 KM / 10.75 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *70 METERS / 230 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *110 METERS / 360 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *130 METERS / 425 FEET*

After breakfast transportation will take us to where we left off yesterday at Laggan Lochs. We will continue along the lochs, then make our way through a forested pathway with views of the canal. During the second part of our day we will be following along the eastern side of Loch Oich and along the way we will find a picnic area with great views of the ruins of Invergarry Castle. At the end of the loch the route follows the Caledonian Canal to reach the Aberchalder Swing Bridge. We can take a short detour over the bridge to view the Old Bridge of Oich, maintained by Historic Scotland. After our detour the trail follows the canal which will take us all the way to Fort Augustus. This stage of the trail offers some fantastic distant views of the surrounding mountains.

Meals - B, D

DAY 6: FORT AUGUSTUS TO INVERMORISTON

DISTANCE: *12.00 KM / 7.5 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: 316 METERS / 1037 FEET

TOTAL CLIMB: *560 METERS / 1837 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *455 METERS / 1493 FEET*

If we are lucky with the weather and it's a nice day we will take the high route to enjoy the spectacular views of Loch Ness and the mountains to the north. If it is a rainy day we will most likely take the low route where a broad track takes hikers through the forest with views of Loch Lomond. The high route trail initially climbs out of Fort Augustus through a forested area onto the open hillside high above the lochs and canals below. The trail continues at high level for much of this stage, descending until it connects with the low route for the final stretch to the village of Invermoriston.

Meals - B, D

DAY 7: INVERMORISTON TO DRUMNADROCHIT

DISTANCE: *22.5KM / 14 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *423 METERS / 1388 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *710 METERS / 2,329 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *650 METERS / 2133 FEET*

Today's hike is much like yesterday's with options of a high route and low route. However, today's high route is more varied and said to be more spectacular. The high route quickly climbs out of Invermoriston, eventually providing fantastic views of Loch Ness and the

surrounding mountains with old native pine forests in route. The trail eventually makes its way back down to a main road, but the ups and downs of hills are not quite finished. After finally finishing up with the hills, the last part of the day's walk is mostly on flatter roads (about 3 miles) until we reach Drumnadrochit (the capital of all things 'Nessie'). The low route is a bit longer at 15 1/4 miles and passes through the forestry plantation. We will plan on doing the high route unless the weather is terrible! Once in Drumnadrochit we will decide whether and when we want to visit the Lochness Center and Exhibition (http://www.lochness.com/) as well as the Urquhart Castle (https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/urquhart-castle/). Both are open from 9:30AM-6PM. We will be spending 2 nights in Drumnadrochit as there are no accommodations in Blackfold, our next day's destination.

Meals - B, D

DAY 8: DRUMNADROCHIT to BLACKFOLD

DISTANCE: *17.5 KM / 11.0 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *380 METERS / 1247 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *500 METERS / 1640 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *235 METERS / 771 FEET*

The trail leaves Drumnadrochit by following the main road for a short distance before heading onto a wooded hillside. This is the final significant climb of the GGW, up through a heavily forested area. Blackfold is not long after the highest point on the trail between Drumnadrochit and Inverness. The approach to Blackfold is much more on the open hillside with wider views across the area. We will be picked up in Blackfold and driven to our previous accommodation in Drumnadrochit.

Meals - B, D

DAY 9 - JULY 29: BLACKFOLD to INVERNESS

DISTANCE: *12.8 KM / 8 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *310 METERS / 1017 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *50 METERS / 164 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *335 METERS / 1099 FEET*

After breakfast we will be transferred to Blackfold, where we ended our journey yesterday. Soon after Blackfold, the trail gradually descends towards Inverness, eventually entering a forested area, but not before more excellent views across the Highlands. The forested area eventually leads to the outskirts of Inverness, where we make our way to the Caledonian Canal and then to Inverness Castle in the city center.

Meals - B, D

DAY 10: EXPLORE INVERNESS

After breakfast we will explore Inverness - The Capitol of the Scottish Highlands. We could choose to start our day off with a historical city tour that delves into the world of Jacobite's, Slavery, Fairies and much more that can be found here: (https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/inverness-historical-tours-p1563991). We can also walk from the River Ness to the historic Inverness Castle, to St. Andrews Cathedral, and beyond to the events at Eden Court and the busy Victorian Market. We can continue wandering through the streets to find great museums, galleries and shopping. To give us more ideas the following website highlights 15 things to do while in Inverness and makes you think that we should be staying longer than two nights and one full day: http://www.visitinvernesslochness.com/blog/top-10-things-to-do-in-inverness.aspx. Since this is an exploratory trek we will discuss our options and decide on our day's activities upon arrival in Inverness. If the group wants to split up or explore on their own this will be an option as well.

Meals - B, D

DAY 11: HOMEWARD BOUND

After breakfast we say our goodbyes. Inverness has an international airport if you are looking to fly to your next destination. Trains or busses can take you to your next destination as well.

Meals - B



Footpath just outside Fort William along Caledonian Canal



Nessie, our trekking mascot!

Trip Cost for 2019 (All prices are for shared accommodations)

- **Great Glen Way (10 nights)** = $2490 USD
  (Price includes a $300 dollar price break as this is a scouting trek.)
- **West Highland Way + Great Glen Way (19 nights)** = $4990 USD
  (Price includes an $80 price break for choosing to go on both treks.)

Single supplements:
Single supplements are a possibility, but not guaranteed. Feel free to inquire if you do want your own room. If we have an odd number for this trip and you are the last to sign up, you may be asked to pay the single supplement cost. (GGW = $500, WHW + GGW = $950)

Trip Cost Includes

- A 6-month training plan: includes proper build up of walking/hiking mileage until the start of trek
- Two group training hikes starting in April for those in the Seattle area
- Packing list + pre-departure handouts
- Group conference call to answer packing and pre-departure questions
- Breakfast and Dinner daily
- All accommodations (10 nights)
- Daily transfer of luggage to next accommodation during the trek
- Tour of Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William + transportation to the distillery
- Urquhart Castle admission + transportation
- Transportation at the start or end of a day's trek, when required as stated in trip itinerary
- Loch Ness Center and Exhibition
- Guide book that includes maps of the journey
- Leader Sheri Goodwin

Cost Does Not Include

- International airfare
- Lunch - purchased at our accommodations or at local stores the night before
- Travel insurance: Ask Pam Perry: pam@grandasianjourneys.com for more information
- Personal equipment (a suggested list will be emailed to you)
- Other expenses of a personal nature (soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, mineral water, laundry, phone calls, internet, snacks, bars for trail, etc.)

To Book This Trip

1. **Complete Reservation Form, Terms and Conditions Form and the Agreement Form:** Contact Sheri of Transformational Journeys by email (sheri@transformtrekking.com) or phone (206-465-1795) to ensure that spots are available and that this trek is the right fit for you. At that

point, Sheri will email you the three forms stated above. You will need to return the three forms along with a deposit check made out to Transformational Journeys for $800 per person for WHW or $1500 for both WHW & GGW.

2. **Payment:** Payment must be made by personal checks. Balance payment must be made 12 weeks prior to departure.
3. **Cancellation:** If you wish to cancel, you must notify Transformational Journeys in writing. Cancellations and refunds are subject to the following restrictions:

    - More than 12 weeks prior to departure: deposit is forfeited, the remainder is refunded
    - 12 weeks to 9 weeks prior to departure: 50% of tour cost subject to refund (not including the deposit)
    - Within 9 weeks prior to departure: no refunds.
    - While on trek: no refunds for any unused services

Travel insurance with emergency medical & emergency evacuation coverage is REQUIRED: I usually use Travelex and highly recommend their coverage. My friend Pam Perry with Grand Asian Journeys is an agent for Travelex and can help you obtain travel insurance. You can get a quote at TravelexInsurance.com, and use her location number 47-0136. Or you can email Pam directly to ask her questions: pam@grandasianjourneys.com. If you plan to insure your entire trip, not just emergency medical and evacuation, and you know you have a pre-existing condition that you also want insured, then you will need to purchase your insurance within 15 -21 days (depending on what insurance company you go with) of paying for the first part of the trip. Generally the first payment would be your deposit for the trip.

About this Exploratory Scouting Trek

This is an exploratory scouting trek led by Sheri Goodwin. Exploratory treks are well-thought out and organized with daily mileage, reserved accommodations, luggage transfer, pick-ups where needed and more. Despite this, "hiccups" can happen along the way. Trails may not be exactly like books or websites have described them and a different route than planned may need to be taken. And trails may not be perfectly marked. **In order to be part of this exploratory trek it is important that you are flexible and can go with the flow!** Basically you will learn how Sheri does it when she is out scouting various trails on her own. You may find out that it isn't always perfect. With that said, the Great Glen Way has a great reputation for being well marked, so chances of wrong turns or needing to change routes is very low. Sheri's number one priority during this trek will be safety of all group members. At intersections we will need to cross as a group to insure we all make the correct turn. Days on the trail will last from 4 hours to 7 hours. We will decide as a group whether or not to visit tourist attractions on route. On a non-scouting group trek these decisions would already be made for you, but due to the fact that Sheri has not been to these places, some decisions will be made during the trip.

A Bit More About this Trekking Adventure

The Great Glen Way (GGW) is a physically challenging yet rewarding adventure with gorgeous mountainous highland and loch (lake) views along the way. This is not a typical tour of a country where you are bussed from town to town and given history lessons in the towns we visit. Rather it is a 7-day trek walking from town to town through the highlands of Scotland and along the Caledonian

Canal. The GGW is a very physical journey, that can also potentially challenge us mentally and emotionally. Treks of this nature tend to teach us something about ourselves, and in this way, are a wonderful gift. Trekking for multiple days in the great outdoors, away from technology and the to-do lists of life, can help us re-connect with ourselves and nature. We might gain powerful insights and clarity about ourselves, that we can take back home and infuse into our lives. Excited yet? I hope so!

The footpaths are a mixture of comfortable soft dirt, harder surfaces such as canal pathways and forest tracks, some rocky uneven paths, and some slow to maneuver paths, as well as a few long climbs and descents. We will walk through very small towns and in some instances the place we are heading to is not a town, but a B&B or small hotel that exits due to the popularity of the trail. **Paces naturally differ within groups. This is fine, however since this is a scouting trek we will re-group more often then on a non-scouting trek. Our spread will never get so far apart that we can't see each other.** Your trip leader, Sheri Goodwin, will be looking out for everyone while on the trails. Safety of all will be Sheri's number one priority as she leads the group. If she feels the safety of a member of the group or herself is being put in jeopardy due to the behavior of one individual, that individual may be asked to leave the group when there is transportation available.

The accommodations (B&B's, small hotels, guest houses) are charming, comfortable, friendly and clean, yet not a 5-star hotel type experience that you might have in a big city. Our accommodations are unique with their own history and stories - a great cultural experience. **Breakfasts** are the typical full Scottish /English breakfasts (eggs, sausage, bacon, beans, cooked tomatoes, mushrooms, toast, potato scone, black pudding). **For dinner,** we will either eat at our accommodation or go into town to eat. The food is quite good and you will have a variety of food to choose from. **For lunch** you will have a choice of purchasing a boxed lunch from our accommodation or purchasing food at a local store when available. You will also be encouraged to bring energy/protein bars from home for snacks on the trail.

Is this the right trek for me?

Necessary walking pace: This trek includes a couple of long days and trails where we will most likely choose to climb up hill for the view, and could include some potential "hiccups" due to the fact that this is a scouting trek. **Therefore, it is important that you are able to stay close to a 3-mile per hour pace while walking on flat surfaces and at least a 2.0 - 2.5 mile per hour pace while hiking along hillier pathways**. **This will help ensure that the group will arrive to each day's B&B within the estimated time frame**. If you are unsure of your pace, walk on a track for 2-3 miles and see what pace you naturally fall into. Or find a 3 - 5 mile loop or course that is flat and time yourself to see what pace you walk.

Prior to sending in your deposit for this trek, Sheri will interview you over the phone, or in some instances in person, to be sure this trek is the right fit for you. It does require training and a decent level of fitness to successfully complete this trek. If you are not yet in shape, this could be the motivation you need to create an exercise program and get in tip top shape so you can hike in the Highlands of Scotland and be successful. You will receive a 6-month hikers training program to help you progressively build up your hiking mileage. It will also instruct you on when to start hiking with a backpack and when to increase weight in the backpack as you train. Sheri also offers individual and outdoor group training programs at a separate cost. Ask Sheri for more information about these fun programs!