West Highland Way Women's Trek

July 10 - 21, 2019

With Sheri Goodwin of Transformational Journeys



"*The West Highland Way is arguably the most famous walking route in Scotland. Steeped in history, this wonderful long distance path takes you north, from the bustling commuter town of Milngavie (pronounced mul-guy), to the Highland tourist hub of Fort William, nestled in the shadow of Britain's highest mountain, Ben Nevis (1,344 meters).*

From the rolling East Dunbartonshire countryside and the waterside paths of Loch Lomond, to the remote, wide open spaces of Rannoch Moor and the stunning mountain range of Glencoe; the variety of landscapes along the way makes this one of Scotland's premier walking routes.

The route is very well signposted, with well-maintained paths and tracks throughout. Accommodations including B&Bs, small country inns, and guest houses, as well as services and refreshments are strategically located from start to finish, providing opportunities for a comfortable and relaxing end to a tough day's walking." —Ross Mackey, Walk Across Scotland



Typical lodging



View from lodging



Typical lodging



Sign posts and sheep

Trip Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrive in Glasgow by plane and take the train to Milngavie, then taxi or walk to the hotel (address and directions for the hotel will be given to you). If you arrive early, you will have time to explore the small town of Milngavie on your own. We will meet as a group for the first time at 4:30PM at our hotel, then head to dinner at 5 p.m.

Meals - D

WHW 96-MILE 9-DAY TREK	**DISTANCE**
Milngavie to Drymen (6-7 hours)	**13.0 miles**
Drymen to Balmaha (4.5 hours)	**7.5 miles**
Balmaha to Rowardennan (4.5 hours)	**7.5 miles**
Rowardennan to Ardlui Crossing (6-7 hours)	**11.0 miles**
Ardlui Crossing to Tyndrum (8 hours)	**15.0 miles**
Tyndrum to Inveroran (4.5 hours)	**9.0 miles**
Inveroran to Kings House Hotel (5 hours)	**10.0 miles**
Kings House Hotel to Kinlochleven (5 hours)	**9.0 miles**
Kinlochleven to Fort William (8 hours)	**15.0 miles**

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





DAY 2: MILNGAVIE TO DRYMEN

DISTANCE: *19.5 KM / 13 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *140 METERS / 460 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *271 METERS / 889 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *265 METERS / 869 FEET*

We will rise early for our first day on the trail, pick-up our trail passports, (small booklets that are stamped at every town we walk through, which will be used at the end of our journey to receive a certificate of completion) and be on our way. The walk starts at the obelisk in the Milngavie town center, (where we will take group and individual photos), and follows the Allander Water through patches of woodland, before heading into Mugdock Country Park and Craigallian Loch. The rolling hills and countryside of the Campsie Fells soon come into view, with the mountains of the Highlands on the distant

horizon. The route towards Drymen follows a quaint, hedge lined country lane, before leaving the West Highland Way (WHW) down into the village of Drymen, a half mile from the trail.

Meals - B, D

DAY 3: DRYMEN TO BALMAHA



DISTANCE: *12.07 KM / **7.5** MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *315 METERS / 1,033 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *380 METERS / 1,246 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *417 METERS / 1,368 FEET*

Today's walk is shorter, but hillier than day one. We will have a leisurely breakfast and be on our way. To start our hike we head back to the WHW trail after a slight detour into Drymen. The route soon enters the Garadhban Forest, where there are two options for walkers; the first being an easier walk into Milton of Buchanan, where the road is followed into Balmaha, sitting on the banks of the loch (lake). The second option is a more strenuous, but ultimately much more rewarding route, as the climb up Conic Hill gives rise to fabulous views over Loch Lomond. After descending from Conic Hill we will eat our packed lunch and then check into our hotel. You will have the afternoon to relax, enjoy the loch views, journal, read or hang out with the gang!

Meals - B, D

DAY 4: BALMAHA to ROWARDENNAN



DISTANCE: *12.07 KM / 7.5 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *90 METERS / 295 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *301 METERS / 987 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *300 METERS / 984 FEET*

We have another short day that will help us gear up and be well rested for our next two longer and tougher days. From Balmaha, the route flirts with the water's edge along Loch Lomond. This is a lovely, low level stage as it meanders through pebble beaches, caravan & camping sites, and forested trails. However, there are a number of rolling hills, that make for a moderately challenging 7.5 mile hike. Reaching Rowardennan marks the spot where many walkers choose to climb Ben Lomond, one of Scotland's tallest mountains.



Meals - B, D

DAY 5: ROWARDENNAN to INVERSNAID to ARDLUI CROSSING

DISTANCE: *17.7 KM / 11 MILES (Rowardennan to Inversnaid 11.3km / 7 miles, Inversnaid to Ardlui Crossing 6.4km / 4 miles)*

HIGHEST POINT: *131 METERS / 430 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *438 METERS / 1,437 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *440 METERS / 1,443 FEET*



From Rowardennan, the path heads into thick woodland, where the way is quiet, peaceful and remote. There are two options here: the easier being the wide forest track, which follows the contours up and down the hill, or the more time consuming, narrow path which skirts over rocks and exposed tree roots along the banks of the loch. We will have lunch at Inversnaid, then start the second part of the day. This section is rocky, uneven, hilly, and at times muddy, making 4.2 miles feel more like 7 miles. The trail follows along the loch, hugging the water's edge amidst a fabulous and ancient oak forest. Towards the end of the loch, we leave the WHW trail and head down to the water via the Ardlui crossing trail. A water taxi will take us to our final destination of the day: Ardlui Hotel.

Meals - B, D

DAY 6: ARDLUI CROSSING to INVERARNAN, CRIANLARICH and TYNDRUM

DISTANCE: *23.3 KM / 14.5 MILES (4km / 2.5 miles to Inverarnan, 9.7km / 6 miles to Crianlarich, 9.7km / 6 miles to Tyndrum)*

HIGHEST POINT: *335 METERS / 1,100 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *684 METERS / 2,244 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *531 METERS / 1,742 FEET*



Today is our second longest day of the trek -14.5 miles. We will rise early, eat breakfast and be on our way. We will take the same water taxi we took the night before to take us back to where we left the WHW trail. Shortly after hopping back on the trail, the loch becomes noticeably narrower and soon disappears as the path approaches Inverarnan. The forest eventually clears, exposing a more open stretch of countryside, which descends down the hill into the Beinglas Farm at Inverarnan where we can have a snack and bathroom break. Soon after leaving Inverarnan, the path runs alongside the picturesque, fast flowing River Falloch, and then onto a long stretch on an old military road. The route here closely follows the West Highland railway and eventually passes underneath the tracks as the path nears a coniferous forest. The path splits here, with the option of continuing along the WHW trail towards Tyndrum or taking a half mile detour into Crianlarich. Following the WHW route, it continues through the forest, with the path winding and undulating through the contours, albeit not too far from the main road. The path crosses



through the road and the River Fillin once or twice en-route to Tyndrum. The views from the valley are wonderful, with an almost 360 degree, panoramic view of the surrounding mountains. A well maintained path follows the River Cononish before reaching Tyndrum.

Meals - B, D

DAY 7: TYNDRUM TO INVERORAN



DISTANCE: *14.5 KM / 9 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *330 METERS / 1082 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *321 METERS / 1,053 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *379 METERS / 1,243 FEET*

From Tyndrum, the route closely follows the railway and the road, although it continues to maintain its own unique qualities. By this stage, you are firmly in the Scottish Highlands and the view will be spectacular from here, all the way to Fort William. The path uses an old military road throughout this stage and continues right across Rannoch Moor. This is also the most exposed section of the route so far, with little protection from the elements. From Bridge of Orchy, the final two miles negotiates a climb which gradually leads to spectacular views across Loch Tulla, Rannoch Moor and the distant Glencoe mountains, before descending into Inveroran at the foot of the hill.

Meals - B, D

DAY 8: INVERORAN TO KINGS HOUSE HOTEL



DISTANCE: *16.1 KM / 10 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *445 METERS / 1459 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *314 METERS / 1,030 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *217 METERS / 711 FEET*

From Inveroran, the trail follows a minor road for a mile or so before heading onto the hillside for the long stretch across the edge of the barren and remote Rannoch Moor, one of Europe's last remaining areas of genuine wilderness. The route continues along the old military road as the trail closes in on the stunning Glencoe Mountains, passing the Glencoe Ski Resort and onto the

Kings House Hotel.

Meals - B, D



DAY 9: KINGS HOUSE HOTEL TO KINLOCHLEVEN

DISTANCE: *14.5 KM / 9 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *550 METERS / 1,804 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *417 METERS / 1,368 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *650 METERS / 2,132 FEET*

This stage of the West Highland Way includes the infamous Devil's Staircase, the steepest climb of the route. Here we reach the highest point of the entire 96-mile journey. The views from the top are spectacular. Continuing on, the trail leads us away from the Devil's Staircase and provides fresh expansive views of the highlands. The picturesque path, rocky at times, gradually descends to the cute highland town of Kinlochleven.

Meals - B, D

DAY 10: KINLOCHLEVEN TO FORT WILLIAM



DISTANCE: *24.2 KM / 15 MILES*

HIGHEST POINT: *330 METERS / 1,083 FEET*

TOTAL CLIMB: *621 METERS / 2,037 FEET*

TOTAL DECENT: *623 METERS / 2,043 FEET*



We end our journey with our longest day yet, a 15-mile challenge. After our previous eight days of trekking we will be ready! The climb out of Kinlochleven is a steep ascent through a beautiful little forest. The top of the climb provides fabulous views down to Loch Leven and the village. The old military road then passes through a wide valley on the edge of Mamore mountain range, known as Lairigmor, before turning towards Glen Nevis through a variety of forested areas. One forested area has recently been logged - an unfortunate sight. However the rest of the way is quite picturesque with views of Glen Nevis. The path gradually descends as it approaches Fort William, with a final stretch along the road into Fort William Center. We finish

our West Highland Way journey at Gordon Square. After taking time to clean up at our hotel we rejoin our group for dinner and celebrate our accomplishments.

Meals - B, D



2017 WHW Women's Group at the end of our journey in Fort William!

DAY 11: FORT WILLIAM

Fortunately, we have a whole day in Fort William, allowing us to relax after the long trek and enjoy all the town has to offer. After breakfast you can choose to explore old town Fort William and shop or relax and hang out at our B&B enjoying the waterfront view. In the afternoon we will take a taxi 2.5 miles out of town to the Ben Nevis Whiskey Distillery for a tour and tasting. After our tour, we'll head back to the main town for dinner.

Meals - B, D



DAY 12: THE GREAT GLEN WAY or HOMEWARD BOUND!

After breakfast, we say goodbye to those heading home on the morning train back to Glasgow or Edinburgh. The rest of us will start our Great Glen Way adventure! Woohoo! :)

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

- **West Highland Way (11 nights)** = $2890 USD
- **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 are a possibility, but not guaranteed. Feel free to enquire 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. (WHW = $550, 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 & dinner daily
- All accommodations - 11 nights
- Daily transfer of luggage to next accommodation during the trek
- Tour of Ben Nevis Distillery in Fort William + transportation to the Distillery
- WHW Trek passport and certificate of completion
- Guide book that includes maps of the journey
- Leader Sheri Goodwin

Cost Does Not Include

- International airfare
- Train ride to Mulngavie or train ride from Fort William back to the airport after the trek
- 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)
    - 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.

A Bit More About this Trekking Adventure

The West Highland Way 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 9-day trek, walking from town to town through the highlands of Scotland. The WHW 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 well marked footpaths are a mixture of comfortable soft dirt, rocky uneven paths, and slow to maneuver paths, as well as undulating/rolling and steeper hills. 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 exists due to the popularity of the West Highland Way. **Paces naturally differ within groups, so we will re-group at designated breaks, lunch, and of course at our place of stay each day.** 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. It is imperative that all group members follow Sheri's instructions at all times. If she feels the safety of a member of the group or herself are being put in jeopardy due to the behavior of one individual that individual may be asked to leave the group.

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. They 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 place of stay or purchasing food at a local store. You will also be encouraged to bring energy/protein bars from home for snacks on the trail.

Is this the right trek for me?

Walking pace necessary for this trek: This adventure has three long mileage days (two 15-mile days and one 13-mile day) plus some days with lower mileage that are quite rugged, hilly and strenuous. The longer days are not without hills. **Due to these long mileage days and some of the rugged and hilly days on the trail, 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!

