



The Tour of the Haggis

We think this is the one true tour of Scotland: a loop from Edinburgh through the gloriously quiet southern Highlands across to the western Isles and up to northerly Cape Wrath's beaches, then back down to Edinburgh past Loch Ness and over the Cairngorms. Can be ridden in stages.

FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 Edinburgh

Arrive at the hotel in Edinburgh and meet everyone.

DAY 2 Edinburgh – Dumfries (approx 86 miles)

We head south from Edinburgh and, while still in view of the city and the Firth of Forth, find ourselves on the first of the many quiet, rural, single-lane roads which characterize this tour. Today's highlights are climbing the small pass into Dumfries & Galloway with its stunning descent and riding the roller-coaster road along the Moffat Valley past Gray Mare's Tail waterfall. And Moffat, if you love toffee!

DAY 3 Dumfries – Ayr (approx 94 miles)

Scotland's glorious southern highlands are a highly underrated corner of the UK and perfect for cyclists as the climbs are steady, the hills are shapely and there is very little traffic. We head further west on more tiny roads through Wild Goat Park and the Galloway Forest before turning north into Ayrshire and some long climbs (and descents) to our hotel with its sea views over the Firth of Clyde.

DAY 4 Ayr – Lochgilphead (approx 75 miles)

Today we start getting into the stride of Scotland's highlands and islands with a morning ride to Ardrossan where we have lunch on board the ferry to the mountainous Isle of Arran. We ride past the distinctive peak of Goat Fell and sun-bathing seals near the village of Corrie to the northern tip of the island to catch our second ferry of the day to the Argyll peninsula. The day finishes with a straight run up the coast through pretty fishing villages to Lochgilphead.

DAY 5 Lochgilphead – Ballachulish (approx 73 miles)

We start the day by loch-hopping between Lochgilphead and Oban, along a gorgeous road with views out to the mountains of Jura piling up on each other in the distance and conifers mirrored perfectly in the loch waters. The road passes through Oban and its busy harbour before heading out on a steep climb towards Fort William, past Dunstaffnage Castle and the magnificent Castle Stalker near Appin to finish at Ballachulish.

DAY 6 Ballachulish – Mallaig (approx 73 miles)

We take the road less travelled today and head west on the tiniest ferry yet to epic-sounding Moidart and Ardgour. The cycling is quite tiring with endless ups and downs along Loch Sunart but the views are great and the road opens out at Kinlochmoidart to the fantastic road to Mallaig alongside the track of the Hogwarts Express.

DAY 7 Mallaig – Torridon (approx 67 miles)

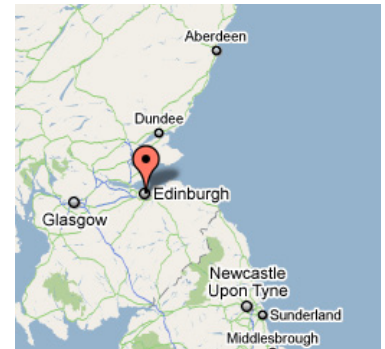
Today is one of those wonderful cycling days of long steady climbs and descents with great rhythm and spectacular scenery. We cross the sound of Sleat to the Isle of Skye and ride north on smooth roads with gorgeous views of the formidable Cuillin range to the left and the peaks of Scalpay and Raasay dead ahead. After crossing the famous Skye Bridge to the Kyle of Lochalsh we ride up to Loch Carron and through its golf course and pretty village lined along the loch shore. More views await as we skirt the Applecross peninsula and head up through open pastureland amid a natural amphitheatre of peaks to Torridon, one of Scotland's outdoor adventure hotspots.

DAY 8 Torridon – Ullapool (approx 90 miles)

We climb alongside Glen Torridon and spin along the shores of Loch Maree and over a hill to Gairloch, Loch Ewe and the romantic-sounding Isle of Ewe, (base of the Arctic Convoys in WW2). Gruinard Bay also has a military history but we leave these behind as we ride along Little Loch Broom past the formidable bulk of An Teallach ('The Forge') (1062m). A steady climb from here along the Dundonnell Forest brings us face to face with Sgurr Mòr (1109m) before dropping to the fast last section into the vibrant fishing town of Ullapool.

DAY 9 Ullapool – Durness (approx 70 miles)

If you like wild scenery, remoteness and peaks then today is for you. We ride through the gorgeous lochs and peaks of Assynt up through wide glacial valleys to the very northwest of Scotland, past Loch a' Chairn Bhair where the X-craft were based during WW2. The landscape is at times Central Asian, at other times Scandinavian and this region (Sutherland) still carries many Norse names. We finish with a fast roll into Durness, past felt-like fields of peat and the sandy shores of the Kyle of Durness.



Date

Sat 8 – Fri 21 May 2010
Sat 11 – Fri 24 September 2010

Duration

13 days riding

Distance

1565km (973 miles)

Costs

£2250 (excludes flights)

Difficulty

7/10. Long days.

Average daily distance

120km (75 miles)

Maximum daily distance

151km (94 miles)

On-road / off-road

100% on-road





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DAY 10 Durness – Lairg (approx 68 miles)

We turn east along the very top of Scotland, past coves of white sand and turquoise seawater, such as the wonderfully-named Poca Smoo. The road loops around Loch Eriboll to the village of Hope, beyond which lies wonderful views of Ben Hope. There's a steep climb to Tongue then we head south on a gorgeously quiet road past Ben Hope itself to Altnaharra and, at the end of the road, the small highland town of Lairg.

DAY 11 Lairg – Inverness (approx 59 miles)

From Lairg we ride over Bonar Bridge to climb through the Ardross Forest, with lovely views over the Dornoch Firth. We cross the Ness River to the Highland capital of Inverness, and as this is a quick easy day you could fit in some monster spotting!

DAY 12 Inverness – Braemar (approx 83 miles)

A few miles out of Inverness the traffic falls away and by the time you reach Culloden Battlefield it's pretty quiet. This is where the French-supported Jacobite army (mostly Highland Scots led by Bonnie Prince Charlie) was dealt its final defeat by the troops of the Hanoverian British government in 1746. We continue past the magnificent Cawdor Castle onto a tiny road through gorse and pine into 'Whisky Country' – the Glenlivet estate. After lunch the climbing begins into the Cairngorms, past Lech ski resort, then down along the edge of Balmoral to Braemar, the highest and most mountainous parish in the UK.

DAY 13 Braemar – Crieff (approx 73 miles)

We start with a gentle descent along Glen Clunie – perfect for warming up legs tired from yesterday's highland efforts. But once you see chair lifts, the climbing starts again up to Glenshee's ski station. There's a fantastic swooping descent into the Spittal of Glenshee before the road twists and turns down into Pitlochry. We stop for lunch at the Aberfeldy Distillery then ride over the bleak but beautiful Glen Almond for our descent to Crieff.

DAY 14 Crieff – Edinburgh (approx 62 miles)

We put off cycling on busy roads for as long as possible by wiggling through small villages on little roads all the way past Stirling and its castle. After negotiating its outskirts we follow the River Forth all the way to the famous Forth Railway Bridge, past the pretty houses of South Queensferry and into Edinburgh proper. Congratulations! Time for drinks, a shower and a celebratory party!

What's included

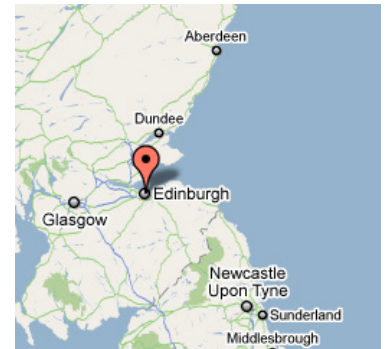
£2250 per person (including £250 non-refundable booking deposit)

What's included

Transfers
Full board accommodation – twin room sharing
Full on the road support
Maps and GPS support

- Any person wishing to fly at a different time or from another airport/country does so at their own additional expense, including transfers. Greenrock can however make the arrangements for them.
- All prices are subject to change due to fluctuations in the exchange rate, seasonal variations and supplier tariff revisions.
- All bookings and travel arrangements are subject to Greenrock Limited standard terms and conditions.
- All travellers must carry full personal medical and travel insurance before leaving for any trip.
- All cyclists must bring their own bike.
- Greenrock withholds the right to change the route based on the weather or any other changeable factors.
- Single room rates available on request.

Min Cyclists – 10 Max Cyclists – 30



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