

The Highlands Expedition (Scotland)



The Highlands Expedition is a self-sufficient, self-propelled expedition through some of the most beautiful and remote areas of the Western Highlands. It is 19 full days of adventure that will put you on top of some of the UK's highest mountains, paddling on some of the most picturesque lochs and camping in the most scenic areas of Scotland. You and your group will be challenged, both physically and emotionally, under the guidance of a highly experienced instructor, in order to give you an experience that you will never forget! This course is also a designated Duke of Edinburgh's Award course, and could qualify for the residential, final practice journey and qualifying venture of the Gold Expedition section [depending on what you have completed previously and if it fits within the awards guidelines].

Sample Itinerary [Guideline Only]

Day 1

Evening meal is provided on arrival. Your instructors will welcome you and your group members to the centre. We will guide you through the best way to pack your rucksack. You will then spend the first night camping in the grounds of Loch Eil.

Day 2

After an early start we introduce you to the art of kayaking. You will be in single or double boats, and will learn about basic strokes, safety equipment and finally a capsizing drill. After a hot shower, the rest of the morning will be put aside for striking camp and route preparation. Shortly after lunch your journey



begins, as you head off towards Glen Loy where you set up camp for the night.

Day 3

Leaving civilisation behind, you will make your way north towards the shores of Loch Arkaig. En-route you will be introduced to teambuilding, navigation and how to care for your feet!

Day 4

Today you will be introduced to one of the most complicated aspects of expedition life – the re-supply. Here, you exchange boots and rucksacks for kayaks and paddles, as well as stocking up on fuel and food! You then continue your journey by kayak, heading west towards Glen Camgharaidh, where you set up camp in time to watch the sunset!

Day 5-7

You continue by kayak westwards reaching the end of Loch Arkaig in time for our second re-supply. You then head towards the remote peninsula of Knoydart on foot, finally setting up camp in Glen Dessarry for 2 nights. Leaving the tents at the campsite and taking only the necessary kit you will make an attempt to reach the summit of Sgurr na Ciche, focusing on the challenges of mountain climbing and navigation.

Day 8

Leaving Glen Dessarry behind you then head towards Glenfinnan where you will spend the day resting, reflecting on your first week and planning for the next.

Day 9

Today you will have the opportunity to put your new skills into practice as you attempt to climb Streak or the horseshoe at Corryhully.

Day 10

Again you swap boots for paddles and continue down Loch Shiel. As a group you will be expected to lead the expedition, as your instructor guides you through safety procedures.

Day 11-12

Having paddled a majority of the loch already – today will be fairly relaxed! Each member of the group will have the opportunity to relax and reflect on the journey so far, this takes place in the form of a Solo.



Day 13-14

Another re-supply as you head off on foot towards Ardgour. There are many ways to cross the peninsula but the usual way is towards the rugged mountain Garbh Beinn, where you will set up camp for the evening. The following day you may find yourselves working in the community, perhaps with National Park wardens or the National Trust.

Day 15

A long day lies ahead as you leave Ardgour and head via the Corran ferry to the Mamores.

Day 16-17

After 2 weeks on expedition you will feel fitter than ever and ready for another challenge as you head uphill again towards the Mamore Ridge to reach camp 1000 metres above sea level.

Day 18-19

After an early start you make your descent towards Glen Nevis, as you head for the impressive North walls and ridges of Ben Nevis for your final base camp.

Day 20

Today you will make an ascent of Ben Nevis [the highest mountain in the UK]. It is up to the group to decide which route to take. After a day of climbing you will then head back to camp, where you will spend time reviewing and reflecting, as your expedition draws to a close.

Day 21

It is now time to return to the centre for your first shower in 3 weeks! Time will be spent reviewing, filling out reports and swapping phone numbers, before settling down for your final evening meal.

Day 22

Depart after breakfast.

Why the Highlands Expedition Scotland?

This course involves walking, mountaineering, sailing, kayaking and canoeing. It is a journey that will take you through some of the wildest areas of Scotland. It is an adventurous and challenging course suitable for anyone who is fit and interested in discovering Scotland. The Highlands Expedition attracts people from all walks of life, from all over the world, creating a varied, enthusiastic and motivated group. Highly experienced instructors will teach you mountaineering and kayaking skills, as well as the art of camp craft and navigation. They will also guide you through other challenges such as personal development, teambuilding and teamwork. One of the special features of this course is the Outward Bound report, which is written by the instructor and participant and reflects on the participant's involvement and learning throughout the course. This report is ideal to show a prospective employer, university lecturer, etc. You will also receive the coveted Outward Bound badge, which is a symbol of the commitment and enthusiasm shown by those completing the Highlands Expedition.

Is this course for you?

The Highlands Expedition is one of our most challenging courses. You should therefore be fit, motivated and enthusiastic. You should have a determined, yet flexible attitude, as this will help you through some of the more challenging times. The group is encouraged to make decisions, so a friendly and open approach is required, as you will have to work with others. Previous experience of hill walking, overnight camping, kayaking and carrying a fully packed 60-litre rucksack would be advantageous. Due to the length of the expedition, the size of



rucksacks and nature of the terrain we do advise you to have a high level of fitness.

Age Groups and Group Size

The Highlands Expedition is open to those between the ages of 16-24 years. Groups will be of approximately 12 people.

Clothing and Personal Items List

The centre provides all specialist equipment, including waterproofs and boots. [All damages and losses must be paid for, £10.00 deposit required.] You are welcome to bring your own kit and use it, providing it meets our safety requirements, especially your own boots and rucksack which will help with comfort on this long expedition.



You will need to bring:

- At least 5 pairs of walking socks
- 2 base/thermal layers [long sleeve]
- 3 jumpers [fleece or wool]
- 2 pairs of trousers [not denim]
- Shorts and a t-shirt
- Personal toiletries – Please note that aerosols may not be brought to the centre
- Swimwear
- Sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen
- 1 pair of lightweight shoes/trainers
- Hat and gloves
- Insect repellent, midge net, antihistamine cream
- Blister kit
- Any medication that you require. Your group tutor is not allowed to give out any medications, so please bring your own.

Your Questions Answered

What is included in the price?

All food, accommodation [tents], equipment and instruction. Food is usually dehydrated rations, as these are lightweight, quick to prepare, nutritious and tasty. Typical menu: breakfast - porridge or muesli; lunch - handy snacks that allow eating on the move; dinner - curry and rice or pasta and sauce. At times dehydrated food will be supplemented with fresh food or tinned food, which will give more variety over the three weeks.

What is the weather like?

The Highlands of Scotland are very varied when it comes to the weather. You may experience sun, rain, wind, hail or even snow! The trick is to come prepared for everything.

What are midges?

These are small biting insects that can be incredibly annoying. They appear between May and September and love warm wet areas. It is possible to minimise their impact with the help of repellents, nets, candles and burning coils. There are generally no problems when walking but unless there is a breeze at camp, camp life needs to be organised to minimise the midges' involvement.

Are there any toilets or showers?

No, this is a wild adventure. Your instructor will advise on the best ways to remain hygienic and clean whilst on expedition.

What is the The Highland Expedition really like?

Hard work, often carrying rucksacks that seem too big on days that are long. The rewards, however, are great: the sense of achievement, the chance to experience unspoilt scenery, companionship and compassion.

How far will we travel?

The journey will cover at least 250 kilometres or more over the three weeks. A strong team will climb more peaks and average a greater daily distance, while a not so fit team may choose fewer hill days or do shorter daily journeys.

General Information

We actively discourage smoking, those under 16 are not allowed to smoke. If you are over 16 and must smoke, your instructor will direct you to a designated smoking area. There is no smoking allowed on activities or on expedition. In addition consumption of alcohol during an Outward Bound course is banned at all centres.

Arrival and Departure Times

The course will start at 5.30pm on the first day of your course and will finish at 9.00am on the last day of your course. Please call the Loch Eil centre to inform them of your arrival and departure times. You are recommended to book your transport as close to start and finish times as possible. Why not take advantage of our Coach Transfer Service, see our website for details.

Further Information

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Fax: 01931 740001

Email: enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk

Web: www.outwardbound.org.uk