SCOTLAND - NE & CAIRNGORMS - £570

5th September 2020 - 13th September 2020 (9 days)

The tour starts and finishes in Dundee and visits the often-overlooked northeast of Scotland - Dundee, Angus, Moray and Aberdeenshire, following the coast and enjoying seascapes, fishing villages and tea and cake shops. There is one rest day to allow a visit to the Findhorn Ecovillage before climbing through the Cairngorm mountains and into the ski areas. Suitable for fit cyclists who are willing to keep going at a steady pace and don’t mind ascending, descending and possibly challenging weather including headwinds. 50 plus miles most days, carrying your own luggage. Staying in hotels, a guesthouse and hostels, mainly self catering.

HOLIDAY TYPE: Guided
TOUR MANAGER: Gary Cummins
GRADE: Challenging
BOOKING STATUS: Places Available
ACCOMMODATION: Hotel, Guesthouse & Hostel
BOARD BASIS: Some Meals
TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS: Land Only
ROAD / OFF ROAD: Road
HOLIDAY STYLE: Moving-on
VEHICLE SUPPORT: Carry Own Luggage
HOLIDAY REF NO: 03473

Holiday Itinerary

Saturday 5th September
Meet at the hotel in Dundee for a briefing and dinner at 7pm. Dundee is famous for Captain Scott's RSS Discovery, HMS Unicorn, the V&A Dundee which opened in September 2018 and Verdant Works, the excellent operating jute factory. Stay 1 night (hotel). Meals: D

Sunday 6th September
Today we enjoy cycling alongside the River Tay, passing multiple golf courses including Monifieth and the famous Carnoustie. After lunch in Montrose we continue along the coast and pass the gates of the dramatic and unforgettable Dunnochter Castle, before we overnight in Stonehaven. 57 miles. Stay 1 night (hotel). Meals: B

Monday 7th September
Today we leave the coastline and head through some very remote countryside to Huntley, a small Scottish town and typical of those in this very overlooked part of Scotland. The area forms part of the Speyside Whisky Trail, and Huntley is home to Dean's shortbread bakery. 50 miles. Stay 1 night (hostel). Meals: B

Tuesday 8th September
Another very remote day as we head for the Moray coastline. We cross the River Spey, passing the sites of some WW2 airbases and two still very active RAF bases. We cycle through Elgin and pass the spectacular ruins of Elgin Cathedral, then on to Findhorn. 57 miles. Stay 2 nights (hostel). Meals: None
Wednesday 9th September
Rest day and an optional visit to the Findhorn Ecovillage for a guided tour. There is also the opportunity for sightseeing along the Moray Firth. Meals: None

Thursday 10th September
Today we take an easier and very rural and scenic ride, much of it through rolling countryside alongside the famous River Spey to Grantown-on-Spey. 30 miles. Stay 1 night (guesthouse). Meals: None

Friday 11th September
We begin our ride into the Cairngorms with some long if not particularly steep climbs. We’ll tackle the famous Lecht Pass and enjoy some good descents too. We end the day by riding alongside the River Dee, past Balmoral and into Braemar. 50 miles. Stay 1 night (hostel). Meals: B

Saturday 12th September
Today’s ride has big steady climbs and long enjoyable descents, including the famous Glenshee climb. There are also some exceptional cafes and we may have time for afternoon tea in Alyth prior to the last very lumpy 20 miles into Dundee. 55 miles. Stay 1 night (hotel). Meals: D

Sunday 13th September
The tour ends after breakfast. Meals: B

Meals: B = Breakfast   D = Dinner

Holiday Summary

Accommodation & Meals
Two nights are spent in a 4-star hotel, one night in a 3-star hotel and one night in a 4-star guesthouse, sharing rooms. Breakfast is provided each day and dinner at the 4-star hotel. Vegetarian meals are available if requested when booking. The other four nights are spent in hostels, one night in a SYHA hostel and three in independent hostels, all self catering.

Vehicle Support
No vehicle support is provided and participants will need to carry their own luggage.

Travel Insurance
Obtaining travel insurance is optional for UK residents as your Cycling UK membership provides third party cover. However, this does not cover any other risks such as cancellation charges, personal injury or lost property. We therefore strongly recommend that suitable insurance is taken out to safeguard against such risks. Members who do not reside in the UK are not covered for third party and are advised to obtain suitable cover before leaving their normal residence. If you already have an annual policy, you may need to confirm that it will cover a UK holiday or make provision for it to do so.

Price
The price of £570 is based on a minimum number of 12 people taking part in the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 27th June 2020, we will contact you and return all monies paid, although in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price Includes
- 3 nights hotel, 1 night guesthouse, 4 nights hostel, sharing room/dormitory
- 4 breakfasts, 2 dinners
- Guided tour of Findhorn Ecovillage
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price Does Not Include
- Travel to the start and finish in Dundee
- Drinks with dinner
- Lunches or other refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any other attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel insurance

Payment Schedule
A deposit of £200 per person is payable upon booking, with the final balance of £370 per person to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 27th June 2020.

Cancellations
Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Written notice received:</th>
<th>Cancellation charge:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before 27th June 2020</td>
<td>Deposit (£200)</td>
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<td>From 27th June 2020 through to departure</td>
<td>100% (£570)</td>
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Area Covered By The Holiday

Often overlooked in favour of the more popular west coast, the northeast of Scotland is equally appealing to cycle tourists. From Dundee we follow the Angus and Aberdeenshire coastline. We'll pass fishing villages, giving us the opportunity to sample delicious local food such as Cullen Skink and Arbroath smokies and, of course, distilleries. We bypass Aberdeen, and most of the associated heavy traffic by sticking to much quieter roads where we can. We then climb into the Cairngorm Mountains and hopefully see red squirrels up close, followed by some thrilling descents back down into the green rolling countryside of Angus as we head back to Dundee.

Rides & Rest Days

Most of each day will be spent cycling, probably riding in loose groups at around 10-12mph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. Inevitably, parts of this route are very hilly, and there is no backup vehicle to carry your luggage. You do need to be fit to get the most out of this tour and it is essential to get out on your bike and do some 60 or 70 mile hilly rides before the tour starts. There are some very steep descents too, so you should be comfortable that you are able to negotiate these safely. It may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly as things do not always go as planned.

Most of the roads used are also used by rural/tourist traffic, although we will need to use some A-roads, particularly as we head in and out of Dundee, but for the most part these are surprisingly lightly trafficked. At times we'll also make use of National Cycle Network (NCN) routes and the variable surfaces that they offer.

On our rest day at Findhorn we can enjoy a guided tour of the remarkable Findhorn Ecovillage, an entire community living on a former air force base. Here residents grow their own food, process their own waste and have over 100 ecologically benign buildings on site, some constructed from recycled whisky vats. http://www.ecovillagefindhorn.com/

Accommodation & Meals

At the SYHA hostel the standard dormitory arrangements will apply, but at the three independent hostels the usual division of male and female dormitories may not be strictly adhered to. Sheet sleeping bags or sheets and pillowcases will be provided at all hostels. All have self catering kitchens.

Dinner is only included at the hotel in Dundee, but on other nights there will be somewhere nearby where we can get dinner, or you may self cater at the hostels.

Group Information

The maximum group size will be 16 including the Tour Manager(s).

Weather & Clothing

Scottish weather is well known for being very variable so there is a possibility of both heat waves and cold wet weather, and some very strong winds. On one day we will be cycling up into what are called subarctic climate zones, but in early autumn rather than winter, so good lightweight clothing, suitable for a range of temperatures, is needed. Good waterproofs that you can wear all day are a must, as is warmer clothing for the evenings. Hopefully sun cream will also be useful. We'll be near the sea on one day so you might even want to bring swimming gear.

Cycles & Equipment

A lightweight hybrid bike or touring cycle with low gears (e.g. a small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended. Your bike must be in good working order, especially the brakes, and spare brake pads must be carried. Lights should not be needed, but it may be an idea to bring them in case we ride out in the evening. Mudguards should be fitted or you may be unpopular with other riders. You should have ridden your cycle before the tour with a similar amount of luggage to what you intend to come on the tour with to ensure you are happy with its handling. You are expected to carry tools and spares to deal with punctures and minor repairs, including two new inner tubes.

Maps & Guides

Route descriptions will be supplied by email. You should bring your own maps and will find the OS Travelmap Road series nos 1 and 3 useful. Taking pages from a Road Atlas is an alternative (and cheaper) option, but note some minor tracks and National Cycle Network routes, which we will be using, will not appear on these. Links for GPX files will also be sent out.

Tour Manager’s Contact Details

If you require any assistance, or have any queries, please don’t hesitate to contact the Tour Manager using the information provided below.

Gary Cummins

Email: garyphillipcummins@gmail.com

Mobile: 07906 447489