



WalkingWomen Late Summer in the Cairngorms, Scotland

Dates: Sunday Sept 22nd to Friday September 27th 2024

Duration: 5 nights

Goat guide: 2 goats

Price: £1400

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About this trip

We continue to offer our very popular Cairngorms holiday - the place loved by Nan Shepherd who wandered and explored every inch and wrote her beautiful books. We introduce you , or bring you back to, this wonderful part of Scotland. Walk in the stunning Cairngorms mountains and in the evening relax in the bustling local town of Aviemore. This holiday has a very varied programme and gives you lots of difference experiences to get a true taste of the area.

The Cairngorms are the UK's largest national park (it is twice the size of the Lake District National Park and bigger than the whole of Luxembourg) and they are home to 4 of the 5 highest mountains in the British Isles as well as the largest Caledonian forests. With more high-level mountain ground than anywhere else in Britain and Ireland, the National Park offers a vital habitat for rare mountain plants and other scarce wildlife. Its beauty is breath-taking and has inspired many a mountaineer and poet.

The Scottish poet Nan Shepherd had a lifelong fascination for The Cairngorms and many will be familiar with her poetic prose, especially showcased in her work 'The Living Mountain':

"Yet often the mountain gives itself most completely when I have no destination, when I reach nowhere in particular, but have gone out merely to be with the mountain as one visits a friend with no intention but to be with him."

— Nan Shepherd, *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*

The gateway into the Cairngorms is Aviemore which is a year-round destination with snow sports being the popular winter activity and walking, climbing, biking, and a whole host of other activities the main summer draw. Our hotel will be in the bustling heart of it all, making the surrounding areas easily accessible.

Our walks will give you a special introduction to the diverse landscapes of the Cairngorms. On our day trip to the Morayshire Coast and through Whisky Country, the views will change again. There will be time to sample local food and drinks.

Trip Overview

Dates: Sunday Sept 22nd to Friday September 27th – 5 nights and 5 walks

Guide: Sue Blaikie

Walking Grade: 2 Goats with some walks at the top end of Goat 2 as you walk onto the Cairngorms Plateau an ascent of 600m.

Base: The Cairngorms Guest House, Aviemore – family-run 13-room traditional Scottish guesthouse with hearty breakfasts to set you up for the day. A perfect location for exploring the Cairngorms National Park. The train station is a short bus, taxi ride away or a 15-minute walk. Shops and restaurants are 10 minutes away.

Please arrive on Sunday by 3 p.m. for a briefing and a short orientation walk

There is a train station in Aviemore and the nearest airport is Inverness about 45 minutes' drive away. There is a connecting train between Inverness and Aviemore.

We would encourage people to travel by public transport. Why not try the Caledonian Sleeper from London to Aviemore details in this link: [Sleeper train](#). Your adventure begins from the moment you board the train. The overnight train arrives into Aviemore at approx 8 – 9 am on Day 1.

Departure is after a morning walk on the last day.

Price

£1400 per person solo occupancy ensuite and including:

The price has increased from 2023 due to including evening meals. If you bring a partner/friend and share a room there is a **£200 discount so £1200** per person.

- Ensuite Bed & Breakfast accommodation for 5 nights
- All evening meals in Aviemore
- Specialist guiding
- Local Transport is required for walks including a trip on the local steam railway (if it is running)

Not Included:

Return travel to Aviemore, packed lunches which can be bought from local nearby shops, drinks, anything not mentioned in the itinerary.

Itinerary

Itineraries are subject to change at the discretion of the guide and depending on the weather. Your guide will brief you each morning about the day as walks may change to maximise getting the best views and the best experiences.

Day 1: Sunday ARRIVAL around 3pm (if you can)

Arrival and settle in. You will meet with your guide, Sue, for a briefing at 3pm ish with a local walk before your evening meal together

Day 2: Monday AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CAIRNGORMS

This morning we will take public transport into the heart of the Glenmore Forest Park. Our walk today is a great way of introducing you to the views and wonders of the Cairngorms by climbing the corbett (Scottish mountains over 800m) Meall A'Bhuachaille. The name means in Gaelic 'hill of the shepherd' and Sue will happily explain why. The hill gives some fine vistas over the Cairngorms, its surrounding forest parks and Highland lochs. 9km, 550m of ascent

Day 3: Tuesday INTO THE CAIRNGORMS

After yesterday's warm up, we are venturing further onto the Cairngorm plateau and we'll literally wander in the footsteps of the Scottish poet, Nan Shepherd. Nan roamed the Cairngorm hills all her life and her beautiful words from her book 'The Living Mountain' will be accompanying us. Depending on snow conditions, we might tackle a higher vantage point. 16km, 600m of ascent

Day 4: Wednesday STRATHSPEY RAILWAY

Choo choo – we are off on a steam train today! The Strathspey Steam Railway was brought back to life in 1978 and runs between Aviemore and Broomhill in Strathspey. We'll enjoy the blast from the past and alight at the quaint Highland village of Boat of Garten for a wee explore. We join the well-known long-distance path, The Speyside Way, and return to Aviemore on foot. Afterwards there is some free time to relax, enjoy the local spa, do some shopping or go for another wander. 10km, 50m ascent.

Day 5: Thursday SPEYSIDE WHISKY COUNTRY & MORAYSHIRE COAST

We take a day trip today through Speyside Whisky Country on our excursion to the coast. Either if you like to sample a dram, two or if you have not been converted yet, whisky is the lifeblood of Scotland and part of its history, heritage and pride. We take a scenic drive through the rolling Speyside hills, past many familiar-sounding whisky distilleries, following the River Spey. We are heading for the coast where we will explore the Morayshire Coast which is dubbed 'The Scottish Riviera' with its mild climate and stunning sandy beaches. On our outing today, we will do at least two walks of approx. 5km each with minimal ascent.

If you are interested in the adventures of Anne Lister (English lesbian diarist, business woman and landowner from the 1800's): she travelled Scotland extensively in 1828 with her companion, Scottish noble woman Sibella MacLean and explored Morayshire as part of their 3 month long journey. Stef is currently busy piecing together a new Highland tour of Anne & Sibella's journey and might give you a wee taster of what's to come.

Day 6: Friday Departure

Departure with time for a local morning walk

The Caledonian Sleeper train leaves in the evening from Aviemore.



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