

## Walking the West Highland Way Scotland

A week *on the road* including a mini cruise, one of the most beautiful multi-day hikes in Europe and also one of the most beautiful train trips in the world?

You can add all that when you walk the West Highland Way in Scotland. Coming from the Continent: take the night boat IJmuiden-Newcastle, here the train to Glasgow (2.5 hours), then the train to Milngavie (30 min) and walk to Fort William in seven days. Here you take the train back to Glasgow: to experience all the beauty you have seen along the way on this classic walking route. Through the train window. Summarized in about 3.5 hours. The train journey of a lifetime.....

**Photos:** - Loch Lomond & the Trossachs NP Authority,  
- Highland Council and Hans Plas



**Beinn Dorain, near Bridge of Orchy**

### **The West Highland Way**

The route is a classic one. For those who like long distance walks a *must*. 155 km long. Through the heart of the Scottish Highlands. The start is in Milngavie, on the edge of the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park. The terminus is at Fort William, in the Ben Nevis range. The route (opened in 1980) is designed in such a way that you can fully absorb the grandeur of the Highlands while still remaining a "light" walk. You don't go over every bump. And the trails are well maintained. With good markings, including the poles with the symbol of the Way: the thistle in hexagonal shape. Due to the prevailing wind direction, southwesterly, the route is often walked from south to north. The route goes through forests, over hills, past streams, waterfalls, vast rugged peat and heather plateaus, through meadows and with frequent views of the majestic mountains around.



**Dumgoyne Hill**

The narrow paths along Loch Lomond, at the beginning of the route, impress at altitude, when you see the lake far below you. Or, once at the top of Conic Hill, after 200 meters of ascent, the phenomenal view of this lake and of the starting "real" highlands. The Highland Fells. You already know - how reassuring - that the route will mostly go through the valleys.

And in those valleys, you'll be amazed. The colors! The light! Of an indescribable beauty. All shades of green, brown, blue, grey and yellow. With a rain shower, everything is different. And when the sun comes back after a shower, your wonder knows no bounds. Especially when clouds create shadows that rush over the mountain walls. We also saw it on the [Western Way](#) in Ireland. Mysterious is weakly expressed. As you move further north, your wildest expectations are exceeded. Rennoch Moor, marshy moors with plenty of rocks, wild and unspoilt. Beinn Dorain, a kind of pyramid mountain. Bridge of Orchy is a great place, in a beautiful valley, to start climbing the dominant peaks of Beinn Dorain and Beinn an Dothaidh.

The peaks of the Blackmount range, hills that run in a continuous line to Glencoe. Yes..... Glencoe..... on the Loch Leven. Is this glen a valley? A gap? In any case, the most dramatic valley in Scotland. In the sense of ultimate beauty and of the life-and-death battles between two clans (in 1692). The reason for this was the, in the opinion of the Campbells clan, the "slow recognition by the MacDonalds of William III of Orange as the new king".





**View of Loch Lomond from Conic Hill**

After a climb that has been given the name "*devil's staircase*", the descent to Kinlochleven is started. A church and a few houses. From the B&B in one of those houses the next day the last stage to Fort William starts. With a final climb through a forest, mostly on an old "military road" and with a constant view of that beautiful blue? gray? Yellow? green" mountains..... In this region is also the highest mountain in Scotland and the United Kingdom: Ben Nevis. 1344 metres. If you are in the area and you want to get "everything" out of this trip: go up that mountain. Via a wide path. As thousands went before you. Keep in mind that the weather can suddenly change. And that this 1344 meters starts almost at sea level. Don't forget to take a picture of the sign in Fort William with the text: *You have now reached the end of the West Highland Way.*



**Ben Nevis 1345m**

### General tips for the route

- Wild camping is only allowed at signs stating that it is allowed.
- Hotel or B&B reservations desired. The Way is crowded.
- The markings are fine. Nevertheless, we recommend purchasing a hiking guide of the route, which contains good hiking maps. For example , The Official Route Map HMSO 1:50,000, widely available on site, incl. booklet.
- Rain is a common phenomenon in Scotland. Keep that in mind when packing your backpack.
- The further north the more beautiful the route becomes. If you don't have seven days at your disposal, start after the Loch Lomond. For example.
- Best period for the route: April to October.

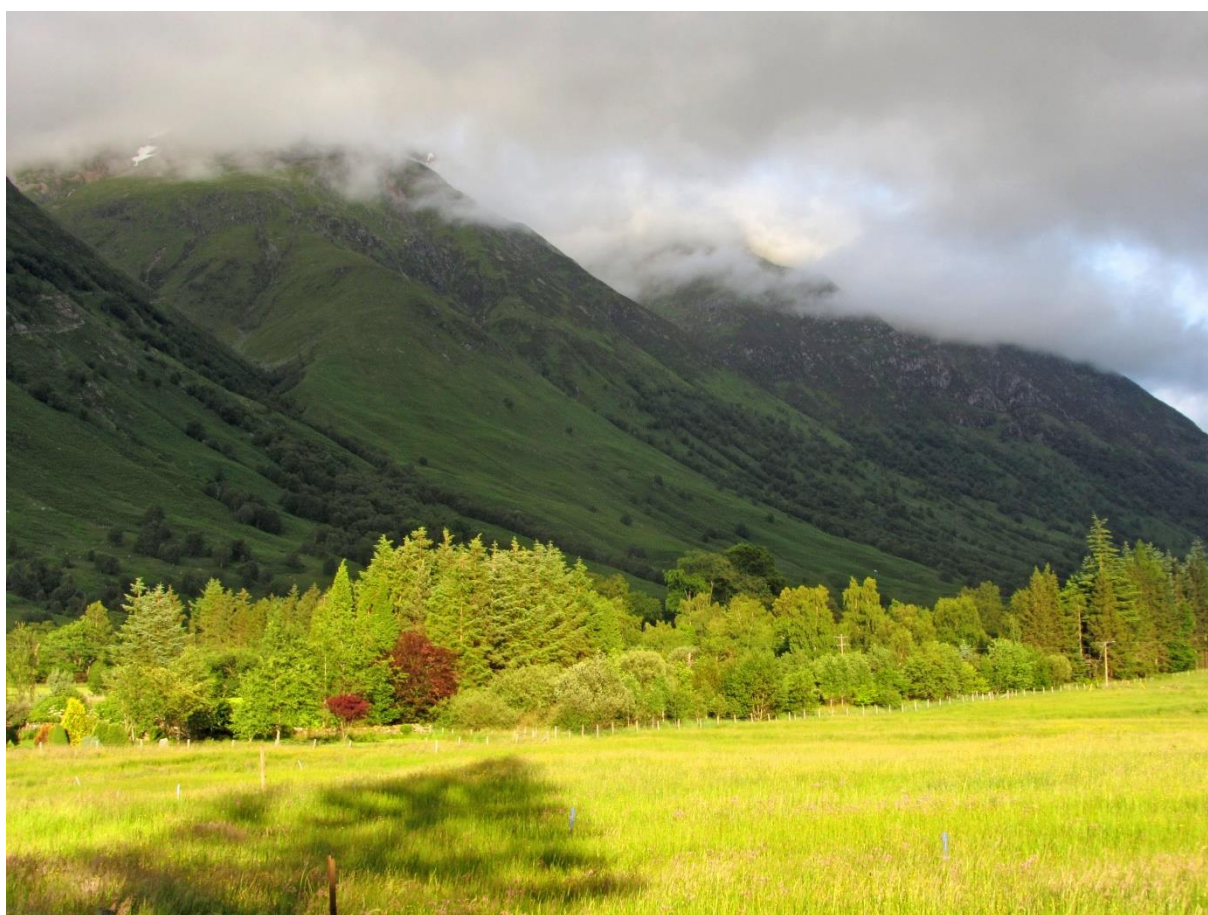


**Blackmount, in the heart of the Highlands**





**Coirre Ba Rannoch**



**Ben Nevis at 10:00 in the morning**