River Spey Descent

Join us for an open canoeing expedition as we paddle through Speyside in the scenic North East Highlands. This classic Scottish river trip descends the famous River Spey passing by pine forests, heather-covered hills and Scotland’s most celebrated whisky region. The canoeing becomes more challenging as we travel downstream through several fun and exciting rapids. It is not just the character of the river which changes - the pine forests on the riverbanks take on a new character with each season. These forests are home to a diverse range of wildlife including red deer and capercaillie, and there’s always the chance of spotting golden eagles and other large birds of prey overhead. Adventurous days on the river will be balanced by tranquil nights in the campsites where we prepare tasty meals each evening leaving you ready for the challenges of the next day.

Highlights

• Paddle one of Scotland’s most famous rivers, from the Cairngorms to the sea
• Enjoy the challenge of Grade 2 rapids. Fun and easy, but still exciting!
• A journey by canoe, paddling by day and camping by the river at night

Book with confidence

• We guarantee this trip will run as soon as 2 people have booked
• Maximum of 8 places available per departure

PLEASE NOTE – The itinerary may be subject to change at the discretion of the Wilderness Scotland Guide with regard to weather conditions and other factors.
Planned Itinerary

Day 1 | Canoeing near Aviemore
Day 2 | Boat of Garten to Boat of Balliefurth
Day 3 | Boat of Balliefurth to Blacksboat
Day 4 | Blacksboat to Craigellachie
Day 5 | Craigellachie to Spey Bay

Arrival Info

• Your Guide will meet you at Aviemore train station
• 10.00am on Day 1 of your trip

Departure Info

• You will be returned to Aviemore Railway Station
• 4:00pm on the final day of your trip

PLEASE NOTE – The itinerary may be subject to change at the discretion of the Wilderness Scotland Guide with regard to weather conditions and other factors.
Day 1 | Canoeing near Aviemore
This morning you meet your guide and the rest of the group at the train station in Aviemore. After introductions and a welcome brief you will transfer a short distance to one of the beautiful lochs in the Cairngorms National Park. Today you will enjoy a loch paddle to refresh your canoe strokes and get warmed up for the journey that starts tomorrow. We spend our first night at a comfortable accommodation in Aviemore. (L)

Day 2 | Boat of Garten to Boat of Balliefurth
This morning we load the boats with everything we need for four days on the river. We cast off down the gently moving water learning a few paddle strokes as we move north-east, passing the village of Boat of Garten and the Abernethy Forest. Looking back, there are superb views of the Cairngorms Plateau. We camp on the edge of the forest and if we are lucky we might spy some red squirrels in the trees this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 3 | Boat of Balliefurth to Blacksboat
Following breakfast we’ll paddle into the heart of malt whisky country. As we reach the edge of Grantown-on-Spey we’ll pass under a couple of road bridges. There is time to work on the skills that will be essential when negotiating the rapids that lie ahead in the second half of the journey. We’ll put these skills to use at the end of the day with a trip through the short but exciting rapid known as the ‘Washing Machine’ before we reach our next camp. (B, L, D)
Day 4 | Blacksboat to Craigellachie

Our moving water skills are tested today as we meet unforgettable rapids such as the Station Pool of Knockando, and numerous shorter rapids. We’ll also pass by a few small villages (most of which have a whisky distillery!) before finishing close to the village of Craigellachie near the mouth of the River Fiddich. (B, L, D)

Day 5 | Craigellachie to Spey Bay

We canoe along the final stretch of the Spey, where the valley widens as we approach the sea. We will put our new skills to good use on this stretch where the Spey twists its way through rolling rural farmland. We pass many beautiful pools and small islands before passing under a road bridge at Fochabers, where the coastal plain emerges and we travel alongside gravel banks before reaching our journey’s end at Spey Bay. We transfer back to Aviemore, through the Spey Valley, for the end of the trip. (B, L)
Trip Grading | Blue 5

This Blue graded canoeing trip is only suitable for people with some previous canoeing experience and a good level of fitness. Since we are paddling on moving river waters, including rapids up to Grade 2, competence steering the canoe is an essential skill from the beginning of the trip. You can expect up to 7 hours of paddling a day plus breaks. Overnight you will camp beside the river in informal campsites.

If our guides feel that you are not able to complete a scheduled activity they may ask you not to join in that day. If you have any questions about the grading, then please do give our Adventure Consultants a call to chat through your experience and suitability for this trip.

It is your responsibility to ensure you are appropriately fit and capable of doing the described activities. Please refer to the grading section on our website for more details. If you are unsure we encourage you to speak to us first.
Accommodation and Meals

On the first night of the trip accommodation is in a comfortable B&B in a choice of double or twin ensuite rooms. Once the expedition starts we camp beside the river each night. We provide tents and also carry a base camp tipi, which means that we can all gather together for dinner and a hot drink.

Great food is essential to all our trips and expeditions are no different. While the guide will co-ordinate the cooking and help out, everyone is asked to lend a hand as this ensures the best meals in the shortest possible time after long days. We will carry plenty of food to cater a varied and satisfying menu throughout the trip, and some of these may be prepared on an open fire. Dietary requirements can still be catered for but please ensure we know at the time of booking.

Single Rooms and Tents

There is no supplement charged to solo travellers, however you will be required to share a room with another person of the same sex on the first night.

During the expedition we will provide you with a single tent if you require, but we do ask that those who are happy to share a tent with other travellers do so. This helps to keep our camp size small, giving us more options of where to pitch and reducing our environmental impact on these precious places.
Inclusions

This trip includes the following:

• 3 nights wild camping (2 people per tent) and 1 night B&B accommodation
• Most meals, from lunch on day of arrival through to lunch on day of departure. Dinner on the first evening is NOT included. *(Meals included indicated as B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)*
• All transport throughout the trip, starting and finishing in Aviemore
• The services of at least one experienced and knowledgeable canoe guide / driver throughout your trip. (If group is more than 4 there will be 2 guides)
• All group equipment including tents, group safety equipment and cooking / eating equipment and utensils. Please note that sleeping bags are not included but are available for hire.
• All specialist open canoe equipment, including canoes and buoyancy aids.
Great expedition where camaraderie and banter was quickly generated between all the paddlers - both customers and staff. Amazing food (from local producers), magically generated from barrels and dry bags split up between canoes, prepared and served up in the communal teepee mess tent. The guidance was superlative, no mishaps or turtle turns, excellent lines avoiding hazards - thoroughly enjoyable and thoroughly recommended.

Simon Cain ★★★★★
Your Guide

During this trip you will be accompanied and led by one of our professional guides. Our guides are among the most highly experienced and qualified in the country. Defined by their passion for Scotland’s wild places, they have an intimate knowledge of the natural and social history of this land which they will be delighted to share with you. For more info and to meet the team please see our [Guide Pages](#).

Sustainable Travel

Wilderness Scotland is committed to the principles of ecotourism. We work very hard to ensure our engagements with local communities, wild lands and wildlife are positive.

We are a proud partner of the Leave No Trace Centre for Outdoor Ethics, which enhances our commitment to responsible activity in Scotland’s wild lands, as enshrined in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC).

We are also proud to be a John Muir Trust Peak Partner. Thanks in part to the generosity of our clients though our [Conservation Contribution scheme](#) the John Muir Trust can rely on our investment to go towards conservation projects that have a deep connection to Wilderness Scotland and the areas we adventure in.

You can learn more about the work we’re doing with the John Muir Trust and the other ways we care for the wild places we love [here](#).
Equipment List
Check out our guide on what to wear when adventuring in Scotland.
www.wildernessscotland.com/blog/what-to-wear-open-canoeing-in-scotland

Eat | Stay | See
Looking for accommodation for before or after your adventure with us?
Check out our list of where to stay and what to do
Eat – Stay – See – Aviemore.pdf

General Info – Scotland
From food and drink to the Loch Ness Monster, our General Info for Scotland guide has got you covered for all your need to to know facts.
General-Info-Scotland.pdf
Travel Insurance

It is your responsibility to take out appropriate travel insurance to cover you during your trip. This should include cover for cancellation prior to the trip, the activities undertaken (i.e. hiking), curtailment, and adequate medical insurance for sickness/injury and medical repatriation. We also strongly recommend you have cover for your other travel arrangements such as flights, and your personal possessions.

We suggest you do your own research to find the best insurance cover for you however the following companies offer suitable policies.

Campbell Irvine Direct – campbellirvinedirect.com
Journeyman Insurance Services – journeyman-services.com/travelInsurance

If you cancel your holiday charges will apply. Please see section 2 of our terms and conditions for a breakdown:
wildernessscotland.com/make-a-booking/booking-conditions

Travel With Confidence

You can book with us in complete confidence that all trip payments made to us are fully protected.

Wilderness Scotland Ltd is a licensed and bonded tour operator. Your financial security is guaranteed through our membership and bonding with ABTA.
FAQs
Looking for more information? Check out our frequently asked questions page.

wildernessscotland.com/faq

Questions To Ask? Ready to Book?

If you want to get in touch please send us an email or give us a call. We accept bookings online, by email, or over the phone. A deposit of 25% is required at the time of booking to secure the trip with the balance payable 8 weeks (56 days) before departure. If booking less than 56 days before the trip start date, full payment of the trip price is required immediately.

We accept payment by credit or debit card, or bank transfer.

e-mail: info@wildernessscotland.com
Tel (UK and Europe): +44(0)1479 420 020
Tel (US and Canada): 866-740-3890