

# Land's End To John O'Groats Cycle



Duration: 13 days

Cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats, the furthest possible distance in the British Isles, is a classic challenge that many dream of. Starting at Land's End on the south-westerly tip of England, we pedal our way through Cornwall, over Dartmoor and north along the Welsh border, skirting the Lake District into Scotland, via lochs and the Highlands to the North Coast and John O'Groats.

In all we will cover just over 1000 miles, passing through some of the most stunning and remote countryside in the British Isles. This is a tough challenge but a fabulous way to see the country, and one of the most rewarding things you will ever do!

**The exact route, distances and night-stops are subject to change based on accommodation restrictions, and will be confirmed closer to departure; the daily descriptions shown are very typical.**

## DETAILED ITINERARY

**Day 1: Land's End - Liskeard** Stunningly situated on the southwestern-most tip of England, Land's End's rocky cliffs and pounding seas make a fabulous backdrop for the obligatory photos before we start! We head towards Penzance on winding Cornish roads, passing St Michael's Mount. The terrain is mainly undulating but there are a few longer climbs and some short steep ones! Inland again, we take winding back-roads before joining a quiet main road to Truro and St Austell, and on towards Liskeard. Night hotel.

*(Breakfast not included)*

**Cycle approx. 76 miles**

**Day 2: Liskeard - Taunton** Today we cross Dartmoor, one of the most challenging sections of our ride. We cycle over rolling hills into Devon and through Tavistock, where we have a steep climb onto Dartmoor itself,

towards the village of Two Bridges. The views are fabulous if it's a clear day, though it can often be foggy in this wild part of southwest England. There is a great descent into Postbridge, with its well-known stone Clapper Bridge, and then we climb again. By the time we reach the small town of Moretonhampstead the hardest climbs are behind us. The road winds its way to the edge of Dartmoor, where it's downhill all the way to Exeter; we then follow a quiet road north to Taunton. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 91 miles**

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**Day 3: Taunton - Chepstow** Now in Somerset, we cycle mainly on quiet, rural roads, enjoying the typically English rural scenery as we head towards Cheddar. A few short hills warm us up before the day's highlight - climbing the steep, stunning road that winds up through Cheddar Gorge itself. We near the Severn estuary as we approach the outskirts of Bristol, and take the Avon Gorge cycle path through Avonmouth to the Severn Bridge. We cross the bridge on the cycle path and celebrate our arrival in Wales! Our hotel is only a short distance away.

**Cycle approx. 79 miles**

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**Day 4: Chepstow - Shrewsbury** We enjoy one of the most scenic parts of our route as we follow the rolling road through the forested Wye Valley, passing the beautiful ruin of Tintern Abbey. We follow the Wye River to Monmouth and cross back into England, over long, fairly gentle hills towards Hereford. Here we see the Wye for the last time, and ride through the cathedral city with its red sandstone buildings. Quiet, undulating country lanes take us through small villages into Shropshire and through the lovely scenery of the Hope Valley. We re-join the main road just south of Shrewsbury, where we have a short run-in to our hotel. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 94 miles**

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**Day 5: Shrewsbury - Preston** Our morning starts with a gentle cycle through the medieval town of Shrewsbury, with its historic black and white timbered buildings, and we cross the River Severn - much smaller than when we crossed it two days ago! We head north, turning onto a quiet country road and passing through the small market towns of Wem and Whitchurch. Our route is mainly flat and the miles pass quickly. We head through a quiet corner of Cheshire on main roads into the most built-up area of our journey, by-passing busy Warrington and Wigan as we cycle on fast flat roads into Lancashire and on to our hotel just below Preston. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 94 miles**

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**Day 6: Preston - Carlisle** Our last day on English soil! We cross Preston early, avoiding the morning traffic, and take quiet roads through Garstang and alongside the impressive Bowland Forest. The roads are primarily flat as we ride through historic Lancaster, cross into Cumbria, and pedal on through Kendal, renowned for its energy-boosting mint cake! The hills of the Lake District rise to our left as we head towards Shap Fell; at over 1000ft our most notable climb since Dartmoor. It's a long climb, but not steep. A fabulous long, twisting descent takes us almost to Penrith, where we cycle past the castle and on to Carlisle. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 99 miles**

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**Day 7: Carlisle - Kilmarnock** We head north to the border with Scotland, and pass the famous blacksmith's forge at Gretna Green, elopement capital of the world. We then ride mainly rolling, quiet back-roads

west, bypassing the pretty town of Dumfries. The morning's ride is very picturesque with the lush green hills of the Southern Uplands to each side as we cycle northeast through small towns and villages. There are some long but fairly gentle climbs and descents as we cycle through this beautiful countryside. We pass through the small town of Sanquar, home to Britain's oldest post-office, and a great old toll booth; look out for memorials and plaques in this region commemorating the Covenanters who rebelled against the religious dictates of the Stuart Kings in the late 1600s. Nearing Kilmarnock, the roads grow busier but our hotel lies close by. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 98 miles**

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**Day 8: Kilmarnock - Inveraray** We turn onto quieter roads as we head west to the Firth of Clyde.

Following the coast road via the pretty waterside town of Largs, we enjoy fabulous views across the water to the Isles of Arran and Bute. The road continues to climb and descend as we cycle along the coast to Gourrock, where we take the ferry across the short strait to Dunoon. We cycle north through beautiful forest and along the shores of Loch Eck. This section is mainly flat, until we reach the shores of Loch Fyne, where we have a stiff but scenic climb to the top of the loch. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 81 miles**

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**Day 9: Inveraray - Loch Lochy** Leaving Inveraray behind our day begins with a long and steady climb as we start to feel as though we are really in the Highlands! Coming to Loch Awe, we admire the ruins of Castle Kilchurn as we ride around the head of the loch. Heading west to the coast again, we cross the iron bridge at Connell, with great views of Loch Etive to our right and the Isle of Mull across the sea on our left. Our route now is beautiful, as we follow the coast road with views of stunning desolate beaches, and hilly islands and peninsulas across the water. Inland, the higher peaks are visible in good weather. Skirting the forests of Appin, we head north again, still following the coast, to Ballachulish – where the road splits off to the famous Glencoe. We continue straight on, crossing Loch Leven, and cycle along the banks of Loch Linnhe, enjoying a much-deserved flat run into Fort William. In clear weather we may get good views of Ben Nevis and the surrounding high peaks. We climb out of the town towards Spean Bridge and the impressive Commando Memorial, and finish our day's ride on an undulating route alongside Loch Lochy. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 96 miles**

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**Day 10: Loch Lochy - Alness** Another day of beautiful Highland scenery awaits us as we head further north. We are nearing our destination now, taking the hills in our stride and our legs feel great! We follow the Caledonian Canal to Fort Augustus, with its impressive ladder of canal locks, and come to the foot of Loch Ness, which will be our companion for many miles. We pass Invermoriston and then the ancient Urquhart Castle, very picturesque against the backdrop of the loch. At Drumnadrochit we leave Loch Ness and head north again, uphill to Beaully, skirting the end of the Moray Firth, and on to Dingwall. Our hotel lies a few miles further north, in the small town of Alness. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 63 miles**

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**Day 11: Alness - Thurso** Our last full day of cycling – and it's a long one! The terrain is not easy, the moorland scenery is beautifully bleak, and the roads are almost deserted ... if we had a Queen stage, this would be it! With plenty of miles in your legs now, you should be feeling up for the challenge – and the end is in sight!

Starting with a climb through moorland, we are treated to a great early morning view above Dornoch Forth, and a fantastic descent to Bonar Bridge. Then our road goes up again, as we climb for over 30 miles through the moors. There are a few flat stretches which help to break up the terrain and it's not too steep; it can be quite exposed, but very beautiful. The landscape is bleaker here than in the Highlands, with rich peaty moorland and clear rivers. We will encounter very few vehicles on this road. Look out for herds of red deer and birds of prey such as osprey or even the elusive golden eagle. We pass several small lochs and some forested areas, and can simply enjoy the scenery. From the top of the climb it's a lovely descent to the North Coast, where we head east, enjoying glimpses of beautiful, deserted golden beaches. Our roads are flatter now but this short section can feel very tough in strong winds. We pass the power station at Dounreay and approach Thurso. This small town comes as a slight culture shock after all the miles we have cycled on near-deserted roads in the last two days. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 104 miles**

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**Day 12: Thurso - John O'Groats** From Thurso we pick up mileage signs for John O'Groats; the distance remaining, compared to how far you have come, is negligible! A few miles from Thurso we pass through the high sand-dunes of Dunnet Bay, with its beautiful white-sand beach and renowned birdlife. We take a short detour onto Dunnet Head, cycling the narrow road to Scotland's most northerly point, and enjoy claiming that achievement too! We then return and pedal the remaining miles along a fairly flat road to John O'Groats and our Finish Line! After time to celebrate and sign the official End to End book, we load up the bikes and head south to Inverness, where we celebrate our achievements! Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 30 miles**

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### Day 13: Depart Inverness

After breakfast we say our farewells and go our separate ways; there are good onward transport links from Inverness.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full vehicle support en-route
- All meals except where specified and accommodation
- Discover Adventure leader, mechanic and driver(s)
- Maps and route information
- Transfer from John O' Groats

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance (optional)
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Optional night's accommodation in Cornwall (before Day 1)
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Optional Discover Adventure bike courier return service
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions



## GRADE | ORANGE

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

# CHALLENGE INFORMATION

## DETAILED INFORMATION

### Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders and support crew, including mechanics. Our leaders are selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones and/or radios where appropriate, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary.

The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, making you lunch and sorting out any mechanical problems. Support vehicles are with the group all of the time, and carry all luggage and spares.

The route will be supplied as a GPX and TCX files and therefore there will be no route marking by way of orange arrows (helping us to reduce our carbon footprint). You will also have access to the route via Google Maps which will show where your position is relative to the route - therefore helping you get back on track if you go off course. This will also show you the location of upcoming climbs and water-stops.

### Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

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## Accommodation

We usually stay in hotels or lodges of a 2-3\* standard or equivalent. Standards may vary between the hotels but they are generally comfortable and convenient for our route. Hotels are often on the outskirts of towns to minimise unnecessary extra mileage and avoid traffic.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

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## Food & Dietary Requirements

We like to support local businesses and will source food locally wherever we can. Lunches will be a mix of restaurants along the route or supplies will be purchased from local shops; dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. For larger sized groups we may opt to cater the lunches ourselves with a buffet style provision. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Having said that, despite working very hard with the hotels, it doesn't always translate into what we'd like for you. If this is the case on your trip, please chat to the crew at the time and they will do their best to find a solution. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

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# PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

## Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your

fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

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## Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

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## Travel Insurance

Travel insurance for UK weekends and one-day events is not compulsory but you might like to consider taking out cover in case of cancellation or loss of belongings.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

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## Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

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## Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

**Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.**

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## Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 9 Jul 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.