Land’s End to John O Groats Cycle

Cycling from Land’s End to John O’ Groats, the entire length of mainland Britain is a classic cycling challenge. 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 Loch Ness and the Highlands to the North Coast and John O’Groats.

We will cover almost 1000 miles in 12 days, passing through some of the most stunning and remote countryside in the British Isles. This fully supported challenge allows you to enjoy some of the best cycling the British Isles have to offer.

**Day 1 - Lands End – Liskeard**

Liskeard Land’s End is stunningly situated on the most south-westerly tip of England. Its rocky cliffs and pounding seas make a fabulous backdrop for the obligatory photos before we start! Then we gather at the start line and begin our challenge. Our journey starts initially along the coast from Land’s end to Penzance, passing the smallest city in England, Truro, before heading inland. We overnight in Liskard. Today is mainly undulating but with a few longer climbs and some shorter steep ones!

Approximate Mileage: 78 Miles

NB We will start fairly early from Land’s End, so you will probably find it more practical to arrive the night before. We can arrange transport from the nearest mainline railway station, Penzance, the night before as well as hostel accommodation in St Just (approx 5 miles away.)

**Day 2 Liskard – Exeter**

Make sure that you have a hearty breakfast today as we cross Dartmoor, which is generally recognised to be the most challenging section of the ride. We cycle over rolling hills into Devon and through Tavistock, where we have a steep climb onto Dartmoor itself. The views are fabulous if it’s a clear day, though it can often be foggy in this wild part of Southwest England, there are still a few short sharp hills as the road winds its way to the edge of Dartmoor, where it’s downhill all the way to Exeter for our overnight stay. Approximate Mileage: 75 Miles

**Day 3 Exeter – Chepstow**

Continuing north, we cycle mainly on quiet, flat roads, as we cross into Somerset and pass Wellington. On back-roads again, we cycle towards Cheddar, cycling through lovely countryside and small villages enjoying the typically English rural scenery. There are a few short hills but we avoid the steep Gorge itself. We near the Severn Estuary as we approach the outskirts of Bristol, and take the Avon Gorge cycle path for a short stretch as we take the busy roads through Avonmouth and up to the Severn Bridge. We cross the bridge, and celebrate our arrival in Wales!

Approximate Mileage: 84 miles

**Day 4 Chepstow-Shrewsbury**

Today we follow the River Wye and head north leaving Wales behind. The long, gentle gradients are still with us as we ride north towards the town of Hereford, with its striking cathedral and red sandstone buildings. Here we see the Wye for the last time, crossing into Shropshire, we cycle on undulating country lanes, passing fields and small villages, and 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 hotel.

Approximate Mileage: 100 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 before heading north onto quiet country roads passing through the small market town of Bishops Castle. Our route is mainly flat and the miles pass quickly, during the afternoon there’s dramatic change in scenery as we pass through some of the more urban and industrial areas of England by passing Warrington we cycle on fast flat roads into Lancashire and on to our hotel just below Preston.
Approximate Mileage: 92 miles

Day 6 Preston – Carlisle
Today is a long day, but it will be our last ride on English soil for the trip! We cross Preston early, avoiding the morning traffic, and break free of the urban areas and head for the stunning open country heading north on quiet roads once more through along the edge of the impressive Bowland Forest. The roads are primarily flat as we cross into Cumbria, and pedal on through Kendal, The hills of the Lake District rise to our left as we head towards Shap Fell, at over 1000ft the most notable climb since Dartmoor. The climb is long but the gradient is fairly gradual. A fabulous descent now awaits almost all the way to Penrith, where we cycle past the castle and on to Carlisle.
Approximate Mileage: 90 miles

Day 7 Carlisle – Kilmarnock
Crossing over into Scotland. Our first day on Scottish roads will be enjoying a traffic free ride on mainly flat, quiet back roads bypassing the pretty town of Dumfries. The morning’s ride is very picturesque with the lush green rolling hills of the Southern Uplands to either side as we cycle northeast through small towns and villages. There are some long but fairly gentle climbs and descents as we pass through this beautiful countryside. We pass through the small town of Sanquar, home to Britain’s oldest post-office, and a great old Tolbooth, look out for memorials and plaques commemorating the Covenanters who rebelled against the religious dictates of the Stuart Kings in the late 1600s. Nearing Kilmarnock our hotel lies just out of town.
Approximate Mileage: 101 miles

Day 8 Kilmarnock – Inverary
We cycle through Kilmarnock and turn onto quieter B-roads we will be greeted with some amazing scenery as we head north east to the Firth of Clyde via Irvine and Kilwinning. 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 west coast where we take the ferry across the Hort strait to Dunoon. We cycle north through beautiful forest and along the shores of Loch Eck, with tempting views of Inverary a short distance away (as the crow flies) on the opposite side of the loch! We pass the world-renowned oyster-beds of Loch Fyne and approach Inverary. Look out for the fairy-tale towers of the castle among the trees to your right just before the town.
Approximate Mileage: 80 miles
Day 9 Inveraray – Spean Bridge
Our day starts with a long but fairly gentle climb out of Inverary, and we start to feel as though we are really in the Highlands! After a few miles we reach the shores of Loch Awe, admiring the ruins of Castle Kilchurn at its head. Heading east we cross over 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. 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, 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 good weather we may get good views of Ben Nevis and the surrounding high peaks. We cycle an undulating route alongside Loch Lochy to our hostel at Spean Bridge.
Approximate Mileage 82 miles

Day 10 Spean Bridge – Invershin
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! We follow the Caledonian Canal to Fort Augustus, with its impressive ladder of canal locks, and the foot of Loch Ness, which will be our companion for many miles. We pass the ancient Urquhart Castle, very picturesque against the backdrop of the loch. At Drumnadrochit we leave Loch Ness and head north again, uphill, to Beauly, skirting the end of the Moray Firth, and on to Dingwall. Just out of Dingwall brings another ascent onto what the locals call the ‘Struie’. As we reach the top of the ‘Struie’ we will be amply rewarded with impressive views of the Dornoch Firth and away in the distance Loch Shin. The roads are flatter here but we start to climb again as we take the back-roads from Alness across bleak but beautiful moorlands to the Dornoch Firth. From the great viewpoint above the Firth we have a fantastic descent to Bonar Bridge, before our arrival at Invershin.
Approximate Mileage: 86 miles

Day 11 Invershin - Thurso
Leaving Invershin, we head due north once more, passing through Lairg at the foot of Loch Shin and encountering our first long climb of the day. Now in northern Scotland, the Highlands are behind us and the landscape is much bleaker, with rich peaty moorlands and clear rivers. A few miles from Lairg we turn onto single-carriageway road, 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. After 23 miles we stop at The Crask Inn for homemade cake and hot drinks. This C17th Inn is the remotest of havens for travellers in the far north with a very warm welcome! We skirt the beautiful forest of Naver turn right at Altnaharra and cycle along its beautiful Loch Naver heading north. This is the most sparsely populated region in Northern Europe, and after enjoying some of the finest cycling of the whole trip we arrive at the Atlantic Ocean on the North Coast at Betty Hill for a well-deserved lunch. Before a stunning undulating ride to our overnight stay in Thurso.
Approximate Mileage: 85 miles

Day 12 Thurso – John O’Groats
A few miles out of Thurso, our road passes through the high sand-dunes of Dunnet Bay, with its beautiful white-sand beach and renowned bird-life. On this our final day we will first visit the most northerly point in the UK, Dunnet Head, and then pedal the remaining miles along a mainly flat road to John O’Groats and our finish line! We then have time to collect our thoughts as we are transferred down to Inverness in plenty of time for a Large Celebration!!
Approximate Mileage: 26 miles
Included in the price of the trip
- 3* Hotel and B&B Accommodation
- Transfer from Penzance to Land’s End
- Transfer from John O Groats to Inverness
- Experienced Cycle Leaders
- Bike Mechanic
- Fully equipped support vehicle
- GPX files of the route

Not included in the price of the trip
- Transport to Penzance or from Inverness
- Personal drinks and snacks
- Celebration meal in Inverness
- Personal spending money
- Tipping (optional)

Weather & Safety
The weather in the U.K. can change very quickly especially in Scotland. The prevailing wind direction will have more of an impact on the cycling difficulty than rain. It is very important to be well equipped and prepared for all conditions. A good level of fitness is required.

Health
All our guides are first aid trained and carry fully equipped medical kits for serious medical emergencies.

Accommodation
Our accommodation is generally in larger hotels, though there may be some B&Bs. Due to the route we take, some nights are in Travel Lodge-style accommodation to minimise unnecessary extra mileage. Be prepared for variety! Accommodation is comfortable and well situated but not luxurious. Rooms are usually twin-share and have en-suite facilities. Due to accommodation restrictions in certain areas, the night-stops as shown in the itinerary may change in order to accommodate different-sized groups.

Insurance
We recommend you have bike insurance. Personal insurance is recommended, but optional.

How to Book your Trip
The easiest way to book your trip is online via the Adventurous Ewe website at www.adventurousewe.co.uk. You will need to pay a non-refundable deposit of £250 at the time of booking. It is possible to reserve a place on this trip by email to info@adventurousewe.co.uk, however you will need to pay your deposit of £250 to confirm your place on this trek together with completing a booking form.

The full balance is required to be paid no less than 4 weeks prior to departure.

Total Cost
DEPOSIT: £250.00 PER PERSON
FINAL BALANCE: £1,250.00 PER PERSON

Cycling Information
The cycling is mainly undulating over rolling countryside, though there are some longer, tougher climbs (primarily in Dartmoor and Scotland). Distances are fairly long, averaging approx 80 – 100 miles per day, with a shorter day at the end. You will cycle approximately 1000 miles on this trip overall. Participants should make sure they are fit enough to manage these distances over 12 consecutive days. This is not a ride which any cyclist should attempt without specific training. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we usually go through as a group.

Bikes
We strongly recommend that you ride a road /racing bike (rather than a mountain bike) for this trip due to the long distances involved on well-surfaced roads. It’s important that you ride the bike you have been training on so you are used to it. Although training in the gym is useful, there is no substitute for getting out into all weathers and getting to know your bike – especially the range of your gears.

Bike Repairs
Our support vehicles will carry a range of spares along with a full tool kit. However it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality so it is vital that you check your own bike is in good working order before departure. It is a condition of travel that you supply your own helmet and wear it at all times while cycling, with the straps done up!

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with us at info@adventurousewe.co.uk or call 01492 588069.
**Land’s End to John O Groats**

**Q&A’s**

**How big is the group?**
The minimum size group is 6 with a maximum of 16.

**What’s the luggage allowance?**
Two items of luggage are required for this trip; one large duffle type bag or back pack of approximately 60-80 litres in size (no wheels), which will contain all your kit and casual clothes. For the second bag we recommend a day pack of approximately 10-15 litres to carry all your personal belongings such as water proofs and snacks and mobile phone.

**What will the accommodation be like?**
Our accommodation will be a mix of hotels and B&Bs. Be prepared for variety! Accommodation is comfortable and well situated but not luxurious. Rooms are usually twin-share and have en-suite facilities. Due to accommodation restrictions in certain areas, the night-stops as shown in the itinerary may change in order to accommodate different-sized groups. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let us know in advance.

**Will my valuables be safe?**
While we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery. We recommend your bike is also insured.

**Who will be leading the group?**
We employ experienced cycle leaders. The leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading cycling expeditions throughout the world. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying full safety equipment including first aid kits at all times.

**What about other equipment/clothing?**
You will need to bring your own helmet so that the fit will be perfect. You will not be allowed to ride unless you wear a helmet. We recommend you bring your own gloves too. They are an essential piece of kit that will relieve strain and abrasions in the event of a fall. You must also bring your own padded cycle shorts and stiff soled sports shoes are recommended if you are not wearing SPDs. Please refer to the kit list for more details.

**How fit do I need to be?**
This challenge is suitable for all levels. If you have never cycled before, this ride is still achievable with the correct ride preparation. Start at least 5 months ahead of the ride with some short distances at weekends and whenever you can during the week. 5-10miles is not a great distance and will help your bottom and legs get used to it all. By 3 months prior to departure, you should be able to take on some long rides, up to 30-40miles in a day, and if you live in a flat area it is well worth getting out and finding some hills. They may hurt, but the more of these you do the easier you will find the ride and the rest of your training. If you cannot maintain a steady average speed of 9 miles per hour you are unlikely to be able to complete each days cycling. You may therefore be asked to get in the van and not be able to complete the challenge. If possible try to train with a group, as it will make it much easier to get motivated.

**What is the terrain likely to be?**
The cycling is a mixture of steep climbs and sharp descents as the route undulates across the country. Distances are challenging for the terrain, varying between 70 to 100 miles per day, you should make fit enough to manage these distances and climbs in all weathers. This is not a ride which any cyclist should attempt without specific training. Traffic is light on most of the roads but when we pass through large towns we usually go through as a group.
What if I can’t keep up?
The ride is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people’s cycling ability. This is allowed for. If we find somebody is unable to cycle at all due to illness or injury, then we can transport him/her from one location to the next in the support vehicle.

General wellbeing
The expedition leader will always keep the group together for maximum safety and set a sensible pace to help everyone complete this ride.
Please find below a few tips to remember while trekking:
- Hydration is important so please ensure you drink plenty of water. The natural glacial water is fantastic
- Eat plenty to keep your energy levels high
- Trekking poles are a great way to support the knees and provide stability, especially during the river crossing
- Be a team player. Support your team-mates and look out for them as well.
- Honesty, if you feeling unwell at any point please let someone know, we want to make sure everyone remains fit and healthy whilst cycling.

What do I need to carry on my bike and with me during the ride?
It is recommended that you carry the following items on you whilst riding (these can be attached to the bike, carried in a small day sack, bum bag or in a handle bar bag):
- Mobile phone
- Water bottles
- 2 x inner tubes
- Mini-puncture repair kit
- Waterproof/windproof lightweight jacket
- Snack bars
- Money

Do I need spares for my bike?
You should take 2 spare inner tubes and your own puncture repair kit. All of our guides are will also be able to look after repairs with the equipment from the support vehicles. On some of our events we carry spare bikes. If your bike requires any spare parts, you will need to pay for these at the end of the ride. We recommend having your bike checked and serviced at your local bike shop before departure.

Not included in the cost of the expedition?
The following items are not included in your expedition and will be at your own expense: activities or meals not mentioned in the itinerary, flights, personal spending money, snacks, and any drinks you may want over and above what is provided.

Weather conditions
The Weather in the U.K. even during the summer months can change very quickly, it is worth being prepared for 4 seasons in one day.

What do you do to protect the environment?
All Adventurous Ewe rides operate in a small group style which means you’ll stay under the radar, travel the local way and eat the local food. You’ll have the unsurpassed knowledge of your local leader, taking you out of the guidebooks and into a world of incredible landscapes and wildlife you’re waiting to discover. You can also play your part by ensuring all rubbish is disposed of responsibly and you leave no trace during your cycle challenge. Adventurous Ewe follow the local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect.
Land’s End to John O Groats Cycle
KIT LIST

Below are the items which are essential to pack for this Trip. Please note, the climate in the U.K. is ever changing on a daily basis so please ensure you are well prepared for all weather conditions including the heat, the cold, the wet and very windy conditions. Failure to have suitable clothing may seriously jeopardise your health and safety during this challenge.

- Cycling shoes/trainers
- Padded cycling gloves – recommended Padded cycling shorts/leggings
- Thermal/windproof top for cycling
- Waterproof/windproof jacket/cycling cape
- Cycling tops/breathable tops
- Sun block/Cream and lip salve
- Sunglasses (wraparound recommended)
- Vaseline/talcum powder/chamois cream (for saddle sore/rashes)
- Extra snacks/energy bars
- Rehydration salts/powders and energy drinks
- Hat/cap for sun protection  Small first aid kit
- Hi-Visibility jacket/top - compulsory
- Small towel
- Clothes and shoes for when not cycling including shorts just in case it’s sunny!
- Daypack for waterproofs/camera/first aid kit, etc.
- Camera, We recommend small digital cameras however the scenery is spectacular so if you use a SLR style camera if you are happy to carry this
- Go-Pro, If you have a Go-Pro or similar, again this is a film-makers dream ride, so feel free to bring this along as well

Your bike
- Front and rear lights
- 2 Water Bottles or camelback
- Bike Lock
- Pump  Puncture repair kit
- Full tool kit including inner tubes
- Bike insurance
- Bicycle bell
- Front and rear reflectors

You’re Daypack
- Mobile phone
- Camera
- Waterproofs
- Snacks or energy bars
- Rehydration sachets (e.g. Dioralyte, or sports powders) Recommended for replacing lost fluids
- Medication you regularly take while exercising
- Plasters
- Paracetamol/Nurofen
You’re Bike
Ideally you will already be familiar with your bike by the time you take part in the challenge. We recommend that you choose a road or hybrid bike. We strongly advise against a mountain bike, although the final decision is yours and you must be comfortable riding for long distances on it. In preparation for the event, and for your training, you must ensure that your bike is roadworthy. Have the bike serviced when you start training and again prior to the event. This will ensure that the bike is good enough to get you through your training and the challenge.

Nice to Have
- Ear plugs
- Favourite snacks, both sweet and savoury
- Something to flavour your drinking water ie. Robinson’s squash (mini 66ml size), Zero tablets etc.

Kit Hire
If you’re happy to purchase kit, Adventurous Ewe have a 15% discount code for the Cotswolds Outdoor Shop. There are stores located throughout the UK plus this code may be used online at www.cotswoldoutdoor.com/.

For more information or to book, please contact Adventurous Ewe
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