



John Muir Way

Summary

The John Muir Way is a coast to coast biking route like no other where breath-taking landscapes and thrilling gravel biking trails await! Starting from Helensburgh on the Forth of Clyde, and finishing in Dunbar, on the North Sea coast, you'll encounter all types of off-road trail from canal toe paths to ancient drove roads and serene coastal cycle paths.

Highlights

Breath-taking views over Loch Lomond and the surrounding mountains
Visiting the Falkirk Wheel, the world's only rotating boat lift
Exploring the historic Scottish capital city, Edinburgh
Experiencing the beauty of the East Lothian coastline with its sandy beaches

Example 3-Day Itinerary

Day 1. You arrive in Helensburgh or Dunbar. You can travel by train to Helensburgh via Glasgow Queen Street station or you can drive to Dunbar where we'll transport you over to the west coast (approximately 2 and half hours). We can also collect you from a different convenient location to transport you and your bikes to Helensburgh, nestled on the Firth of Clyde (an additional charge may apply).

Day 2. Bike from Helensburgh to Kilsyth – 65km/40 miles; 780 metres of ascent. Beginning in Helensburgh, the trail winds through tranquil woodlands and rolling farmland and around picturesque lochs. As it progresses eastward, it traces the iconic Forth and Clyde Canal, passing through historic landmarks and quaint villages. The route incorporates sections of old railway lines, providing perfect terrain for gravel or mountain bikes. Stay in a nice hotel by the canal.

Day 3. Bike from Kilsyth to Edinburgh – 81km/50 miles; 625 metres of ascent. Starting in Kilsyth, nestled at the foot of the Campsie Fells, the trail meanders through rolling countryside, woodlands, and along the tranquil Union Canal. As you progress, you'll encounter the enchanting Linlithgow Palace, the iconic Falkirk Wheel and impressive landmarks like the Forth Rail and Road Bridges. Your day concludes in the captivating city of Edinburgh, where you'll be rewarded with a night in the vibrant Scottish capital city.

Day 4. Bike from Edinburgh to Dunbar – 68km/42 miles; 250 metres of climbing. The trail today begins by winding through Edinburgh, predominantly on traffic-free tracks and trails. You'll enjoy gorgeous views of some of the most beautiful beaches in Scotland along the East Lothian coast. The route today doesn't have any significant climbs at all, so you'll have plenty of time to enjoy the coastal vistas, go for a swim in the North Sea and stroll around the streets of on of the lovely villages you'll cycle through. Finish the trip in 'sunny Dunny' where you can spend a celebratory evening or you can catch the train or drive home.

Duration:

3 or 4 nights' comfortable accommodation
3 days of adventurous biking

Total Distance:

219 km or 135 miles

Self guided trip includes:

- 3 days of superb gravel riding
- 4 nights' accommodation
- Baggage transfers
- One-way transfer between Dunbar and Helensburgh
- Comprehensive maps, GPX files & list of services along the route
- Phone support from us

Available on request:

- Pick up and drop off from other public transport links
- Bike hire

Grade:

Technical Grading: **Blue**

Dates:

Self-guided or Fully Supported trips are available between April and September for groups of 2 or more. Contact us with the dates you have in mind.

What bike?

The trails on the John Muir Way can be ridden on a Gravel bike, Cyclocross bike, hardtail MTB or hybrid bike. In short, any kind of bike that is ok with gravel roads!

To make a booking or for more information:

Email us: info@trailbrakes.co.uk
Phone us: +44 (0)7922 653327
or +44 (0)141 6286676



John Muir Way – Further Information

Accommodation and food

We use only tried and tested accommodation providers on our trips so that we know that you will receive an excellent level of service. They provide everything you could need after a long day in the saddle from bike storage to hot showers, hearty breakfasts and comfortable beds. Accommodation in bed and breakfasts and hotels are always on a bed and breakfast basis and trip prices are based on two people sharing a room, unless otherwise arranged. If you would prefer hostel or bunkhouse style accommodation, breakfast is not included although most hostels can provide meals at an additional charge. Hostels will often have cooking facilities so that you can prepare your own meals if you'd prefer. Wherever you stay you will be able to get an evening meal within walking distance. Lunches can usually be bought during the course of the day as you will be passing through towns or villages. It is advisable to carry plenty of snacks with you each day to keep the energy levels up!

Check-in at your accommodation will ordinarily be between 4 pm and 9 pm. Please telephone your first night's accommodation to let them know at what time you're planning to arrive. If you require an early check-in, most accommodation providers will try to adapt to your requirements but please phone ahead to ensure that an early check-in is possible. Sole occupancy rooms are usually available in hotels or guest houses so please ask us if you'd prefer to have your own room. A single supplement of at least £30 per person, per night will apply depending on your dates.

Clothing and kit

Southern Scotland receives a generally mild climate all year round with the Gulf Stream passing our western coastline. There are even palm trees growing in the region! The east is generally a bit drier but cooler than the west, however conditions can and do change quickly especially on higher and more exposed areas. It can rain at any time of year, sometimes all day and we often get four seasons in a day, so come prepared! A full kit list is available on our website (<http://www.trailbrakes.co.uk/kit-list-equipment-recommendations>) and a list of useful items will also be sent to you when you book your trip with us. General climatic information for Scotland is available here: <http://www.scotlandinfo.eu/weather-climate.html>. Up-to-the-minute weather forecasts for specific regions of the UK are available at the met office website (<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/>).

It is advisable to bring a small back-pack (between 15 and 20 litre capacity) with you on your trip, in which you can carry spare clothes and basic spares and tools that you might need during the course of a day on the bikes. In some cases, where we will be riding in wilderness for the full day, food and drink will also need to be carried.

Midges!

Midges (small biting insects) can be a pest in Scotland but are usually not a problem when you're on the move. If you decide to stop for a break in a sheltered spot where there is no wind and there are trees and water in the vicinity, there will always be midges around. They rarely cause a serious problem, they're more of a nuisance, but some people react badly to their bites and develop an itchy red spot which can be irritating. Some insect repellent is advisable, those containing DEET being the most effective, and cream is available in pharmacies that relieve the irritation of the bites.

The trails

There is almost every type of trail imaginable on this trip, from purpose built cycle paths to old drove roads, forestry trails and superb single-track. The surfaces are all generally hard packed or rocky. Some parts are technically challenging so some off-road experience will be required. This trip has a **Fitness Grading of 5** which means that you should have a good level of fitness and stamina from regularly taking part in cycling-based activities. You are comfortable riding for up to 6 hours per day. The route will include sections of physically demanding terrain including short, steep climbs. This trip has a **Technical Grading of Blue**, meaning that the route is suitable for people with some off-road experience. There will be no large rocks or technical trail features just bumpier and uneven terrain, sometimes on narrower tracks.

Self-guided trips

Our self-guided trips are the most popular choice and are designed for cyclists who are comfortable carrying their own basic tools and spares along with them each day so that they can fix any minor technical issues encountered along the route (punctures etc.). For our self-guided trips we will provide you with everything included in our fully supported trips except the vehicle back-up service. We will organise quality accommodation, bag transfers each day, detailed information about the route, official maps of the route, pick-up and drop-off at locations convenient for your travel plans and a comprehensive list of bike shops that are located along the route. We will always be only a phone call away should you require any additional advice/support so you'll never be truly on your own!

Transport and baggage transfers

We are always happy to help you to get to where you need to be as quickly and easily as possible. We can provide transfers from any local airport, train or bus station or ferry terminal to your accommodation at the beginning of your trip and back again at the end. Just let us know where and how you intend to arrive at your destination and we will arrange a pick-up for you. Please note that an extra charge may apply to cover fuel costs.

We transport your bags between each night's accommodation during your trip, leaving you free to carry a small day-pack containing some spare clothes, food and drink. Please note that baggage should be limited to one bag per person, not exceeding 20kg per bag.

Any questions?

If you'd like some further information or want to ask us anything at all about our biking trips please don't hesitate to contact us on the details below:

Email: info@trailbrakes.co.uk

Phone: +44 (0)7922 653327 or +44 (0)141 6286676