



LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS CYCLE

UK • CYCLE • **ORANGE 3**

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

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 roughly 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!

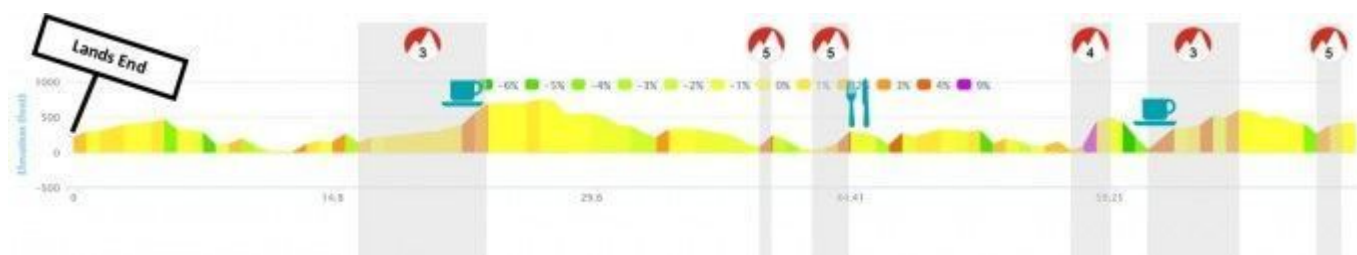
LAND'S END TO JOHN O'GROATS CYCLE • 13 DAYS

Day 1: Land's End - Liskeard

Land's End is stunningly situated on the southwestern-most 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 on winding Cornish roads as we head east towards Penzance, cycling along the sea for a short stretch as we pass the famous monument of St Michael's Mount. The terrain is mainly undulating but there are a few longer climbs and some shorter steep ones! Inland again, we take winding back-roads before joining a quiet main road to Truro and St Austell, passing close to the Eden Project, before cycling on towards Liskeard. Night hotel. *(Breakfast not included)*

Cycle approx 80 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 2: Liskeard - Tiverton

Today 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 a little foggy in this wild part of southwest England, so we take it easy as we climb towards the village of Two Bridges.

There is a great descent into Postbridge, site of the well-known stone Clapper Bridge, and then we climb again. By the time we reach the small town of Moretonhampstead the harder climbs are over, though 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. Crossing the centre of Exeter as a group, we follow a quiet road north to Tiverton. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 77 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 3: Tiverton - Chepstow

Continuing north, we cycle mainly on quiet, rural roads as we cross into Somerset, passing Wellington and the busy town

of Taunton. On back-roads again, we cycle towards Cheddar, 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 head up through Avonmouth to the Severn Bridge. We cross the bridge using the cycle path and celebrate our arrival in Wales! Our hotel on the edge of Chepstow is only a short distance away.

Cycle approx 87 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 4: Chepstow - Shrewsbury

Our day begins with one of the most scenic parts of our route as we follow the rolling road through the forested Wye Valley, enjoying the fabulous views, including the beautiful ruin of Tintern Abbey. We follow the Wye River to Monmouth, where we head north into Herefordshire, leaving Wales behind. The long, fairly gentle gradients are still with us though, 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 as we cross it going into the city. We head out of town on a quiet road heading to the small village of Leintwardine, crossing into Shropshire a few miles further on. 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 our hotel. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 93 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



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 92 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 6: Preston - Carlisle

Today is long, but our last full day on English soil! We cross Preston early, avoiding the morning traffic, and head north on quiet roads once more through Garstang and along the edge of the impressive Bowland Forest. The roads are primarily flat as we follow our route through the attractive town of 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 it's the most notable climb since Dartmoor. The climb is long but the gradient is fairly gradual. From the top there are great views of hills and rolling green valleys. A fabulous long twisting descent now takes us almost all the way to Penrith, where we cycle past the castle and on to Carlisle. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 90 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 7: Carlisle - Kilmarnock

We head north from Carlisle through the small village of Longtown, just before the border with Scotland. Crossing over into Scotland, we pass the famous blacksmith's forge at Gretna Green, elopement capital of the world, and head through the village. Our first day on Scottish roads takes us on mainly rolling, quiet back-roads west, 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 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. In Sanquar, along with Cumnock and New Cumnock a few miles ahead, 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, the roads grow busier but our hotel lies close by. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 100 miles

ROUTE PROFILE

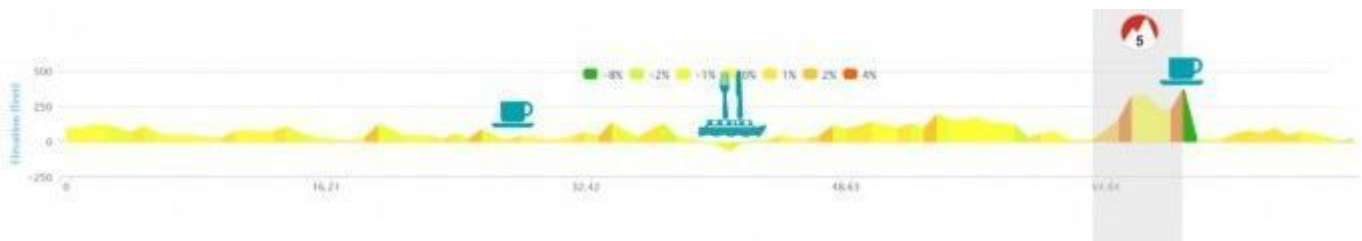


Day 8: Kilmarnock - Inveraray

We turn onto quieter roads as we head west 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 coast to Gourock, where we take the ferry across the short strait to Dunoon. We cycle north through beautiful forest and along the shores of Loch Eck; sometimes hidden from view by the trees, at other times we cycle right beside the water. This section is mainly flat, until we reach the shores of Loch Fyne, where from the small village of Creggans we have a stiff climb to the top of the loch. There are tempting views of Inveraray a short distance away (as the crow flies) on the opposite side of the loch, but we have to cycle the long way round! We pass the world-renowned oyster-beds of Loch Fyne and approach Inveraray on flatter roads. Look out for the fairy-tale towers of the castle among the trees to your right just before the town. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 80 miles

ROUTE PROFILE

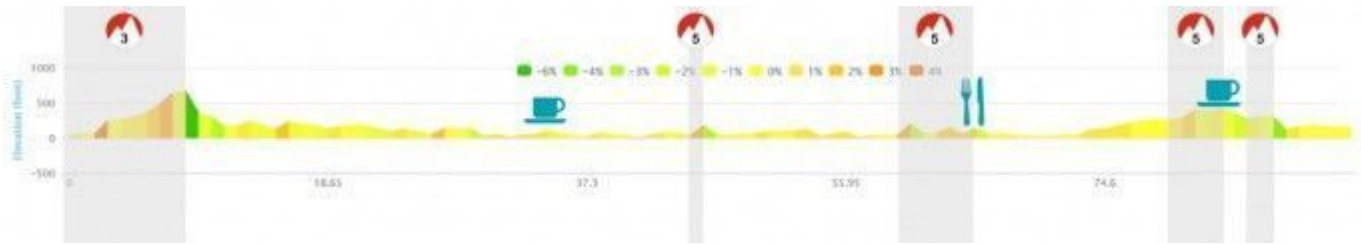


Day 9: Inveraray - Loch Lochy

Our day starts with a long climb out of Inveraray, and we start to feel as though we are really in the Highlands! After a few miles we reach the shores of Loch Awe and cycle around the top of it, admiring the ruins of Castle Kilchurn at its head. Heading west to the coast again, 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. 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 good 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 95 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 10: Loch Lochy - Brora

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 Beaulieu, skirting the end of the Moray Firth, and on to Dingwall. Look out for seals as we pass alongside Cromarty Firth. A short climb takes us through Alness, then our road undulates through farmland until we drop downhill to the Dornoch Firth and Tain, the oldest Royal burgh in Scotland and home to the Glenmorangie whisky distillery. We then cross the Dornoch Forth Bridge and ride alongside the coast for a few miles on undulating roads to Brora. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 97 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 11: Brora - Thurso

Today's terrain is not easy but it's a shorter day and this is our last full day of cycling – we're almost there! We set off, the undulating coast road taking us north-east and providing a great warm-up for what comes next! After a few miles we reach the small town of Helmsdale and head north, leaving the coast behind. As soon as we turn inland our road goes up, and 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.

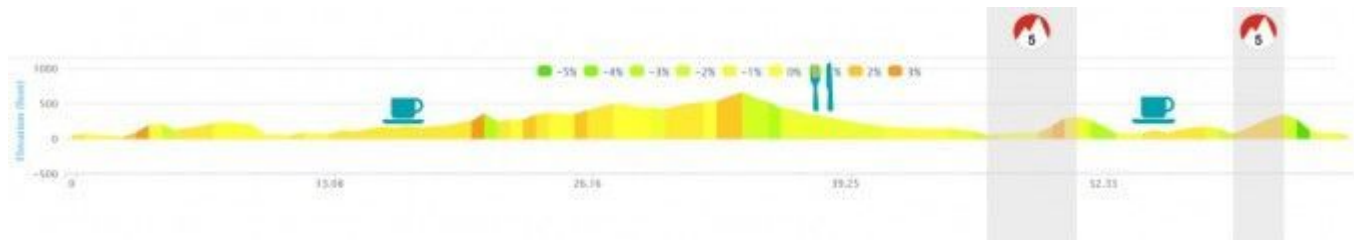
The landscape is bleaker here than in the Highlands, with rich peaty moorland and clear rivers. We will encounter very few vehicles on this road. Look out for herds of red deer and birds of prey such as osprey or even the elusive golden eagle, as this area is very untouched. We pass several small lochs 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. We cycle roughly parallel to the coast; 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 65 miles

ROUTE PROFILE



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 mainly 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

ROUTE PROFILE



Day 13: Depart Inverness

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

The exact route, distances and night-stops in Northern Scotland are subject to change based on accommodation restrictions, and will be confirmed closer to departure; the description shown is very typical.

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

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful and will give you plenty of energy. Lunches are generally buffet-style while dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. 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.

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, ensuring your route is well-marked, 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.

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.

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 20-30 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.

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 post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees, amendment fees and insurance premiums 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.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Clothing

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, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

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.

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.

You can obtain a quote with Insure to Travel from our website at: <https://www.discoveradventure.com/essential-information#/buy-travel-insurance>, or you may choose to take out your own travel insurance.

CYCLE TRAINING WEEKENDS

£180 Special Offer - Only when you book at the same time as registering for your main challenge

Discover Adventure Cycle Training Weekends take place in and around the valleys and ridges of the chalk downs around Salisbury. They are designed to gauge your fitness so that you can be confident you are well prepared for the challenge ahead!

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](#)



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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 23 Feb 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.