

**TRIP:** Duke's Gold

**ACCOMMODATION:** Forth Inn, Aberfoyle

**TECHNICAL GRADING:** 2

**ENDURANCE GRADING:** 3

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*For riders who love 'gravel', the Duke's Gold gravel tour slingshots you into one of Scotland's most magnificent areas of natural beauty - the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park where there is an abundance of great gravel trails along forest tracks, fire roads and dirt single tracks.*

**PLEASE READ THE NOTES BELOW TO ENSURE YOU KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT AND TO BRING.**

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**ITINERARY**(please use the [hyperlinks](#) for maps/directions)

## Friday

Your accommodation is in the traditional Forth Inn, Aberfoyle. You'll arrive at your accommodation in time for a light lunch and a chance to get to know the other 'gravellers'.

After a quick kit check it'll be time to head out and 'whet your whistle' with your introduction to the Trossachs. A nice mellow start to the weekend to let everyone 'stretch their legs' and explore some of the local trails straight into Rob Roy Country. A nice Wee snifter of a loop taking in some local classics and plenty of photo stops with Ben Lomond, Scotland's most southerly Munro taking centre stage. Back to base before sun down to sample some of the award-winning local ales, and some cracking pub and a recharge.

- 12:00: rendezvous at the bar area of your [accommodation](#)
- Parking: there is ample free parking adjacent to the Inn

## Saturday

After a hearty breakfast and a fresh coffee (of course!) you'll be going on your first big gravel day. The variety of riding here is simply huge. Rolling straight out of the Forth, hopefully not too bleary eyed, it's straight onto the Dukes Pass, where we begin to explore the vast network of gravel trails hugging the Lochs of Venachar and beyond.

As we journey between the lochs, glens and mountains of the Trossachs, we'll retrace the steps of the old cattle road past the historic Lochs of Achray and the world renowned Loch Katrine,

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Old Staging House, Millbank Road, Clovenfords, Selkirkshire, TD1 3LZ, Scotland, UK

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famous for Robert Burns.

Poetry and history lessons over for the day, it will be a merry dash back over the hill to a well earned feed and maybe a wee dram or two?! That evening, you'll no doubt try some more tasty Scottish ales, but for you gin lovers out there, there's an award winning selection to choose from too.

## Sunday

Just as you think you're getting on top of the riding, we'll see if we can't pull out a few more surprises to keep you on your toes! Straight out the door and heading out into the rolling foothills of Ben Lomond and the ever looming Highlands, you'll be picking up your second taste of what 'Gold' is on offer.

The legs will have a fair few miles in them by this stage, so we'll take it easy on the climbs, keeping plenty in the tank to keep you going all day. Rolling through one of the largest working forests in Scotland we'll be rewarded with a very different view. On the clearest days you can pick out the famous landmarks of Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument on the distant horizon. A beautiful return loop down past the picture postcard Lochard, and it's high fives and unfortunately teary goodbyes!

There will be many rewards, and regardless of whether the sun makes an appearance, you'll hopefully agree with us that we've found Scotland's beautiful gravel capital! There is gold in them there hills...

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## ACCOMMODATION

We use the best accommodation available to suit the trip. This trip is based at the Forth Inn, Aberfoyle on a twin room/shared dinner, bed and breakfast basis (unless otherwise requested). Towels and bedding are provided.

Forth Inn,  
Main St,  
Aberfoyle,  
Stirling FK8 3UQ

Location: <https://bit.ly/2NRsJFi>

Phone: 01877 382372

- facilities include: laundry, internet access and secure bike storage

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## FOOD & DRINK

Cycling in Scotland works up a healthy appetite and there are ample opportunities to enjoy great fresh Scottish fayre and of course a dram or two and a fine ale!

- **Breakfasts** Delicious breakfasts are included with lots of options available (dietary requirements are taken into account from your booking).
  - **Lunches** Packed lunch provisions to carry on the rides can be purchased in Aberfoyle, or, depending on routes we may enjoy a great cafe stop or lunch at a local inn (your guides will let you know the plan each day).
  - **Evening Meals** Evening meals at the Forth Inn are included on Friday and Saturday
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## DAILY SCHEDULE

Over dinner or breakfast we'll discuss what's in store for the day ahead.

Because the weather plays such a big part in which routes we ride, and for how long we'll be out riding, sometimes we have to modify the itinerary. For this reason, we do not provide fixed itineraries as we need a degree of flexibility built in. This allows our guides to select the best rides for the prevailing conditions, weather, trail conditions, group fatigue etc and because ascent/descent/distance figures are largely meaningless for the terrain you will encounter.

Your guides are experts in these areas, and have extensive experience; and from the feedback provided by our clientele - providing you with hard and fast trail statistics can be misleading. For that reason, please refer to our own trip gradings for guidance.

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## TRIP GRADING

Please read the following guidelines carefully to ensure the cycling holiday is suited to your skill and fitness. If you are unsure if the trip is right for you, please [contact us](#).

### TECHNICAL RATINGS

This trip is recommended for Level 2 riders. The goal of the Technical Rating is to understand the ability of the rider as it pertains to obstacles, conditions and trail design. This means it has nothing to do with your physical endurance, but is instead strictly a measure of your technical ability.

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## Rating: 2

You have been riding a mountain or gravel bike off-road for a season or two. You have consolidated basic bike handling skills and an appetite to progress to the next level. You are comfortable on a mixture of singletrack and landrover track, on uneven, loose and occasionally steep gradients, with some variation in trail surfaces from rocks to roots. You are comfortable on narrower trails approximately 18 inches wide that are mostly stable with some variability. You are comfortable traversing unavoidable obstacles such as roots, rocks and logs that are 8-10 inches tall.

## ENDURANCE RATINGS

This trip is recommended for Level 3. The goal of the Endurance Rating is to understand the ability of the rider as it pertains to overall physical endurance.

## Rating: 3

You are an avid mountain biker or off-roader riding twice a week or more, and the weather isn't a big factor for you. You are at an above-average fitness level, and regularly do other activities that qualify as exercise. You usually find yourself riding for 3 hours on the trails, you'll ride on consecutive days, and you ride at a moderate pace.

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## SUITABLE BIKES

We designed the Dukes Gold gravel tour not to favour one type of bike over another. Any bike with decent off-road tyres and brakes will be perfectly capable on this gravel adventure. Most of you might even have a suitable "Gravel" bike in the garage without realising it. Hardtail or rigid mountain bikes and Cyclocross bikes are very well suited and many hybrid and commuting bikes would be great if the tyres have a bit of off-road bite. For those using mountain bikes, we recommend running higher tyre pressures or slightly less chunky tyres (new tyres are not essential!).

Our take on the various permutations of suitable bikes available. A cyclocross bike will offer lightweight, fast rolling and an aerodynamic advantage over a mountain bike whilst the comfort and smoothing out of the trail by fatter MTB tyres and suspension will certainly help on occasions and you could well benefit from the improved handling of a MTB elsewhere too. You may even be the owner of one of a new breed of gravel bike which combine elements of Cross and MTB. They are not essential for the Dukes Gold gravel tour but they are awesome.

## RENTAL BIKES

If you've hired a bike, for your safety and comfort we always recommend bringing your own helmet and pedals.

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## ESSENTIAL GEAR

Our recommendations are based on many years experience of riding in Scotland, and regardless of season we recommend that you prepare for a wide range of conditions and temperatures – that way you'll be fully prepared and get the most from your trip. We are big fans of [ENDURA](#).

Please also note that mechanical failures do happen and spares are limited (if you're prone to breakages, please bring spares) - so here are our kit suggestions (please note the list is not exhaustive):

- Bike packing kit or panniers if you prefer to ride without backpack
- 16 - 20 litre+ backpack (i.e. sufficiently large for you to carry your gear and foodstuffs, plus any group shared kit that will be divided up e.g. storm shelter, long-range radios) e.g. [EVOC Enduro](#)
- Fully serviced bike in good working order with fresh brake pads
- Cash and credit card
- Cycling glasses / protective eyewear
- Cycling gloves
- Cycling shoes (with cleats) or flat pedal trainers (hire bikes come with flat pedals; if you want to use spd's please bring your pedals with you)
- [Helmet](#) is essential
- Inner tubes (\*\*correct size\*\*\* w/presta valves x 4 minimum) or spare sealant if running tubeless tyres
- Leggings or long trousers (not cotton) for riding
- [Padded cycling shorts](#)
- Personal first aid and medication you require (guide must be informed of relevant medical history prior to the tour)
- Pump
- Riding socks
- Snacks / energy bars / drinks
- Sufficient base layers including long sleeved tops
- Tools / spares / lubricants specific to your bike (including wet lube, brake pads x 2 sets minimum, chain power links, gear cables, replacement gear hangers, puncture repair kit including sturdy tyre levers, and tyre boot for repairing torn tyres)
- Tyres: dependable robust tyres are a must (please bring a spare); tubeless is recommended
- Warm clothes: fleece top, lightweight fleece jacket or gilet, warm fleece hat or buff
- Warm cycling gloves e.g. [Sealskinz](#)
- Water bottle or hydration system
- [Waterproof jacket](#)
- [Waterproof socks](#)
- Waterproof trousers / [shorts](#)

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## DESIRABLE GEAR

- Camera (waterproof case is a good idea)
  - Sun protection
  - Lip balm
  - Insect repellent (we suggest 'Smidge') and midge net (hood)
  - Torch or head torch
  - Waterproof overshoes
  - Earplugs (especially useful in group accommodation)
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