

Top to bottom: Loch Migdale, Kyle of Sutherland Hub, just outside Bonar Bridge, Carbisdale Castle entrance

Weekender

Kyle of Sutherland explorer

Lochs, scenic forests and tranquil gravel trails are on your doorstep in the Scottish Highlands. Cycling UK's **Amanda Wagstaffe** and **Nicola Lloyd** are your guides

This ride is on quiet single track roads, woodland tracks and gravelled forestry fire roads, with views all over the Kyle of Sutherland, which is on the county boundary with Ross-shire. The area comes within the East Sutherland Bothy Project, a Cycling UK behaviour change initiative which supports people to replace local car journeys with walking or cycling. Free e-bike loans are offered to help achieve this, along with organised led rides from the Kyle of Sutherland Hub.

The Kyle of Sutherland is rich with cycle routes for all abilities of rider, on road and off. It is a gateway to the north and west Highlands, and there are many established cycle events and routes that run through it, such as Land's End to John o' Groats, the Pictish Trail and Croick to Ullapool.

It is accessible by train, with four

stations in the area. Ardgay is the closest to the Kyle of Sutherland when travelling from the south. Heaven Bikes, in nearby Bonar Bridge, is handy for any spares, repairs or purchases. Cycle-friendly cafés can be found at Kyle of Sutherland Hub, situated between Ardgay and Bonar Bridge, and at the Falls of Shin (The Salt and Salmon), where you might spot said salmon leaping. There's also The Pier in Lairg.

Kyle of Sutherland Hub has a bike maintenance and repair station. Part of the route is on Forestry and Land Scotland MTB trails at Balblair (forestryandland.gov.scot). There are plenty of opportunities to ride other marked routes in the area, such as those at Carbisdale Castle. Halfway round this route you'll find Loch Migdale, which is ideal for a spot of wild swimming; don't forget to pack your swimwear in your saddlebag.

A Scottish coast to coast

A flat, traffic-free route from Glasgow to Edinburgh. cyclinguk.org/across-scotland

