



Map: ©Crown copyright 2025 Ordnance Survey. Media 016/25. Main photo: Caledonian Concepts Ltd

## Etape Loch Ness



**KATHERINE MOORE**  
Cycling journalist and the author of *Gravel Rides South West England*

**Route name:** Etape Loch Ness  
**Start/finish:** near Inverness Cathedral  
**Maps:** OS Landrangers 26 Inverness & Loch Ness and 34 Fort Augustus  
**Ride length:** 105km/65 miles  
**Climbing:** 1,390

metres (4,560 feet) **Bike type:** road bike, touring bike or hybrid  
**Ride level:** regular and experienced  
**GPX file:** [cyclinguk.org/weekender-loch-ness](https://cyclinguk.org/weekender-loch-ness)

01

### Urquhart Castle

Would it be a ride in the Highlands without a loch-side castle? From the road you can look down over the loch's shores for an almost bird's-eye view over the ruins of Urquhart Castle, which is worth a diversion. This large castle ruin has seen some tumultuous times, including the Wars of Scottish Independence in the 14th century.

02

### Invermoriston Falls

Easily seen from the road, this cascade may not be huge in size but it is certainly pretty enough to warrant a pause after you pass through Invermoriston. The bridge dates back to 1930, and it's said that you can see salmon leaping here if you're lucky, usually around the end of October.

03

### Fort Augustus

The town of Fort Augustus lends itself well to a café stop halfway around the route, at the end of Loch Ness and the start of the Caledonian Canal. Fish and chips while you look out for Nessie? Or perhaps something lighter from DelightfulNess by the canal?

04

### Loch Tarff and General Wade's Military Road climb

There's no getting away from the fact that this climb is a biggie, but there's some light relief with a flatter middle section past Loch Tarff after the steep ramps at the start. Take your time and pace yourself; the views are worth it. The Etape Loch Ness event offers the full experience, with bagpipes to greet you at the summit!

05

### Harry Gow Bakery, Inverness

Celebrate the end of the ride in style with a 'dream ring' from Harry Gow Bakery – a huge, cream-filled, icing-topped ring doughnut. It's not easy to eat, but it's a local delicacy to be savoured when visiting these parts.

06

### The Castle Tavern, Inverness

For a proper post-ride refuel, the cyclist-friendly Castle Tavern comes highly recommended. With iconic views over the castle, this charming pub has plenty of character, and the food is excellent. Enjoy your meal from one of the cosy bar tables or from the beer garden out front.