

Spey Descent

Is it for me?

This is one of the Classic Scottish Open Canoe journeys, which follows the River Spey from Loch Insh through to Spey Bay on the North East Coast of Scotland. Over the 5 days the journey is about 60 miles long and broken into manageable sections. To get the most of the week some canoe experience is useful and the fitness for a 5-day expedition is essential. Wild or remote camping is a highlight of this trip and we usually have many happy hours spent round the campsite chatting about past, current and future adventures. The River Spey is graded from flat water to grade 2 with most of the flat water or grade 1 sections being closer to the start of the journey and the grade 2 sections from day 3 onwards. There is often the opportunity to watch bird and wildlife as you are travelling down the river, with perhaps even a sighting of a rare osprey.

Aim

The Spey Descent is suitable for people with limited open boating skills, although you will gain more out of the trip if you have already got some basic canoe skills. During the journey we will look at many paddling skills as well as the skills to camp overnight and have an enjoyable journey.

Course Content

You will usually be in a group of around six, with one instructor. Meeting your instructor on the first morning provides an opportunity to discuss people's experience and aspirations, which along with the weather forecast and water levels will enable us to plan the weeks' journey with you. The journey is normally completed in Tandem boats (2 people to a boat), but there may be the opportunity to paddle solo if requested.

This is a general outline of the journey and changes may be made due to weather, local conditions and paddlers ability.

The course will begin with some coaching in the basic skills on Loch Insh, and then you will paddle the first part of the journey to Aviemore, returning to Glenmore Lodge for the night. You will then prepare camping equipment and food supplied by us for the next 4 days and 3 nights as your journey will be undertaken without vehicle support until we are picked up

On the Tuesday we finish packing barrels full of food and personal equipment and then drive to Aviemore where we will have a chance to pack our boats and practice paddling with a full load before setting off for the day. This day is normally spent consolidating skills learned on the Monday and developing further efficiencies in your paddling. We spend the evening at a very basic campsite which has toilet facilities and a campfire.

Wednesday is spent again developing more river running and reading skills as the river starts to pick up it's pace. Another enjoyable day with no fixed campsite at the end of the day, but several possibilities, including an island location.

Thursday generally takes us through the most regularly paddled sections of the river, so the chances of meeting other paddlers is much higher. We will quite possibly end

the day in Craigellachie village where there is the chance to visit a famous local whisky bar.

Friday continues with grade 2 river all the way to the sea at Spey Bay, where we will get picked up and brought back to Glenmore Lodge for celebratory tea and cakes after our kit clean up.

Whilst on this journey we will be able to spend time coaching and developing your personal paddling. In addition to this we will be looking at developing the additional canoe specific skills to help you leave the course feeling confident to safely paddle in similar environments with friends. As part of this safety and rescue is essential, there will be an opportunity to look at a variety of aspects of this during the week as well, as is needed.

In addition to this you will benefit from your instructors wealth of knowledge of additional canoe paddling venues around the UK, and more than likely the rest of the world!! Stories will be told and hopefully you will leave inspired and with knowledge to confidently take your paddling to other parts of the UK and rest of the world!

Equipment List

Glenmore Lodge has a large, and very comprehensive store of up to date clothing and equipment. You are welcome to use your own equipment and pick and choose odd items from the store. Your instructor will want to check that personal equipment is appropriate for the activity.

If you are thinking about buying equipment but are not too sure what to get we would advise you to come and try our equipment and then make your purchases after the course. We have a range of most equipment items you can try during the course and there is advice on hand from other students as well as the staff.

We have a range of some of the latest river kayaks from Pyranha and other top manufacturers. All our Sea kayaks are this years models from P&H, Valley and North Shore. Our Open boats are all new from Mad River, Wenonah and Venture. The surf kayaks are from Valley and Mega including high performance and international class.

Our paddling clothing is from Peak and we have a wide range tailored to your discipline.

We use a range of paddles depending on the activity, Lendal and Werner for sea kayaking and Werner for river/surf kayaking and canoe. There are specialist additional open boating items such as paddles, poles and sails.

GLENMORE LODGE CAN SUPPLY:

- ✓ Buoyancy aids
- ✓ Helmets
- ✓ Spray decks
- ✓ Cags
- ✓ Wet suits
- ✓ Wet suit bootees
- ✓ Small drybags
- ✓ Dry suits (only for out of season kayak courses)

- ✓ Paddling Trousers
- ✓ Pogies
- ✓ Paddling Neoprene Gloves/mitts
- ✓ Towlines
- ✓ Split Paddles

Expeditions

- ✓ Large dry bags
- ✓ Barrels for open boat journeys
- ✓ Sleeping bag & liner
- ✓ Tents (2 & 3 person)
- ✓ Karrimat
- ✓ Cookers, (Trangias, MSR & primus) we have paraffin and meths only. If you prefer to use your own stove you must bring the fuel for it.
- ✓ Pots and pans
- ✓ Cutlery / plastic mug

EQUIPMENT YOU NEED TO BRING WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE IN THE STORES.

Listed here are the essentials, this is not an exhaustive list.

- ✓ Informal clothing for leisure wear
- ✓ Insulating layers – at least two mid weights
- ✓ Fleece/insulated jacket
- ✓ Waterproof jacket
- ✓ Hat & gloves***
- ✓ Vacuum Flask & Water Bottle ***
- ✓ Box or bag for packed lunch.
- ✓ Blister kit/ small first aid kit
- ✓ Personal toiletries & medications (towels are provided)
- ✓ Sun cream – you just never know! ***
- ✓ Sunhat and sun glasses & cord
- ✓ Insect Repellent – it may be midgey!***
- ✓ Spare towel
- ✓ An alarm clock
- ✓ Glenmore Lodge also has a pool, sauna, gym & climbing wall - so don't forget your swimming/gym/climbing kit!

Open Canoe

- ✓ For open canoe courses Spey descent etc. a pair of wellies are very useful.
- ✓ For 5 Star courses please bring headtorch and light sticks for night paddling.***

Items marked * are available in our shop subject to availability.**

Some Useful Books

Scottish White Water: The SCA Guidebook by Bridget Thomas

Welcome to the wonderful world of Scottish white water, which has inspired many people to get out there, get off the beaten track and paddle something new. In an age where park and play is becoming ever more popular, it's been great to see paddlers

once again seeking out the wilderness experience an important part of what makes paddling special.

Path of the Paddle by Bill Mason

Song of the Paddle by Bill Mason

Thrill of the Paddle by Paul Mason, Mark Scriver and Bill Mason

These books are a must read for any open boater! It takes you from basics right through to reading and tackling white water.

Paddle Your Own Canoe by Gary and Joanie McGuffin

Beautifully put together book with great photos to compliment the text.

Scottish Canoe Classics: 25 Great Canoe & Kayak Trips by Eddie Palmer

Eddy has chosen his favourite twenty-five inland touring routes and described them in loving detail. The routes are beautifully illustrated with numerous colour photos and specially commissioned maps. The selected routes are suitable for open canoes, sit-on-tops and touring kayaks.

Scottish Canoe Touring: An SCA Canoe and Kayak Guide by Scottish Canoe Association

This guide is aimed at those looking for calmer waters ...rivers, canals, inland lochs and sheltered sea lochs. Routes described cater for all tastes, from those seeking an idyllic afternoon's paddle to those looking for a multi-day canoe-camping expedition.

Canoe & Kayak Games by Dave Ruse

This book is a completely new and updated fourth edition of Dave Ruse's original 'Canoe Games'. It includes the best of the original Canoe Games, but has been completely revised and radically updated, with a huge number of new games contributed by BCU coaches. These games are grouped and linked to the BCU Coaching Scheme.

British Canoe Union Coaching Handbook by BCU

This book is a mine of useful information and practical tips. If you aspire to be a better canoe or kayak coach, this is the book for you.

White Water Safety & Rescue by Franco Ferrero

This work includes white water safety and rescue for canoeists, kayakers and rafters. This is a completely revised new 2006 2nd edition now in full colour throughout.

Some Useful Websites

www.animatedknots.com/index.php	Animated Knot Tying
www.bcu.org.uk	British Canoe Union - Paddle sports coaching etc.
www.canoescotland.com/	Scottish Canoe Association
www.johnmuiraward.org	A scheme to get young people involved in the outdoors
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk	Loads of info on maps, access etc.
www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/	Scottish Access Code
www.theaward.org/scotland	Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme
www.ukriversguidebook.co.uk/	UK Rivers Guide