



ON TOUR TO SCOTLAND FAQ's

Q. What ages can go on this expedition?

Children aged 14-16.

Q. How much does it cost?

£750 excluding return travel to and from Scotland.

Q. Who runs the expedition?

We will have 2 instructors with the children at all times on the water with a ratio of 1:6. We will also have a female 'Camp Matron' who will be looking after their pastoral needs through the day and night.

TOBA on Tour's Senior Instructor – Richard Moses

Richard's career in the military saw him working across all four continents, from the Jungles of South America to the vast expanses of Central Africa and frozen tundra of the South Atlantic Islands, during this time, his love for wilderness travel, living off the land and remote expedition was cemented. After 14 years' service, Richard moved into the corporate sector where he remained for over 20 years. During this 20-year period, Richard was heavily involved in building and selling a number of businesses, scaling each from start-up to £100m+ turnover and healthy seven figure EBIT performance.

Throughout this time, Richard was never far away from adventure and took time to qualify as a British Canoeing Level 3 Coach, Leader and Accredited Guide as well as formalising experience in bushcraft, mountaineering, and expedition medicine. Richard established Red River Guiding, with the objective to provide accessible adventure and training for children and adults in a safe and supportive environment. Richard is also an experienced Duke of Edinburgh Assessor guiding groups of children through Bronze, Silver and Gold expeditions across England, Wales and Scotland.

So far this year, Richard has led canoe expeditions cumulatively totalling over 2000km's in distance, often working remotely and without immediate assistance being available.

Q. What is the route and which campsites will you be staying at?

The 100km journey takes the children from Neptune Staircase at Fort William along the canal to Loch Lochie, across the bay towards Laggan Locks, on to Lock Oich and the canal towards Fort Augustus, before finally crossing Loch Ness and finishing at Dores Beach.

We will be 'wild camping' and where possible will be using Trailblazer sites where some even have drop toilets!

Night 1 – Loch Lochie

Night 2 – Lock Oich

Night 3 – The Canal

Night 4 – Loch Ness

Q. How do you manage safety at the Campsites?

Recognising the specific needs of the children within our care whilst on expedition, significant consideration is taken to identify campsites which are aligned to our risk assessments. Where possible, campsites are chosen with a separate area for our expedition group, away from other campers and the general public. When this is not possible, a demarcated camping area will be established with tents set out no more than two metres apart and will always have at least two members of TOBA staff present.

Q. What if our child wants to get in touch with home?

The Oxford Boat Adventure believes in screen free experiences, but while away from home, expedition mobile phones will be permitted. Our Adventure Leaders will look after phones while children are on the water. Morning and evenings calls to parents will be encouraged during certain hours, but then we will ask the children to hand their phones in for safe keeping and so they are not a distraction while we are spending time together as a group and enjoying our adventures. If your child does not own a phone or wishes to leave theirs at home they will be able to use our staff mobiles to call home. Parents and Emergency Contacts will also be given the staff mobile numbers so we can be reached 'out of hours' if you need to urgently contact the team.

Q. What Medical/First Aid will be in place?

Our instructors maintain current certifications in Quallsafe Outdoor or Wilderness First Aid with our Senior Instructor additionally holding FREC 3 pre-hospital care qualification. All members of staff on expedition hold a valid Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate and are continually updated on our policies regarding Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Q. How do we manage safety on the water?

Safety is our paramount concern and at the forefront of all expedition activity both on and off the water. TOBA operates a written Risk Assessment for each of its Paddlesport activities, extending to include the following additional considerations when delivering canoe expeditions:

Expedition Leaders will hold as a minimum, the following qualifications:

1. British Canoeing Awarding Body L3 Coach in Open and Whitewater **or**
2. be a British Canoeing Awarding Body Canoe Leader in Open and Whitewater or above.
3. British Canoeing Awarding Body Endorsed Guide / Guide Scheme Provider

All instructors are further assessed on an ongoing basis by TOBA's Technical Advisor to ensure currency and technical capability.

- Staffing ratios will not exceed 1 member of staff to 3 Canadian canoes. The Expedition Leaders will also be in a Canadian canoe.
- Expedition Leaders will be responsible for briefing the children in the appropriate method for kit care before the start of each session.

- Expedition Leaders must make sure the children are kitted out correctly including wearing a properly fitted buoyancy aid and suitable footwear.
- Expedition Leaders will make sure that the children are supervised at all times. No children are allowed to paddle alone.
- Expedition Leaders will be responsible for making themselves aware of any medical issues concerning the children in their group.
- Whilst the children are on the water the Expedition Leaders will carry with them appropriate safety kit for the conditions and medications that may be needed on session by a child in a dry bag.
- Expedition Leaders will be responsible for making a dynamic risk assessment for the conditions for canoeing before the group gets on the water and throughout the session.
- The Director of TOBA has overriding authority to decide if an expedition takes place. She will assess the weather against the ability of the participants and listen to the Expedition Lead responsible for the group and his/her opinions. If the Director of TOBA decides that the activity is unsafe it will not take place.
- Expedition Leaders will supervise the expedition from a canoe and be on hand in the event of a capsize or any other incident.
- All Expedition Leaders must wear and keep on them their assigned radio to stay in communication with other Expedition Leaders whilst on the water.

EQUIPMENT

- Equipment will be purchased from a reputable supplier.
- All equipment is maintained regularly by TOBA and is confirmed as being fit for purpose.

Q. What body of water will the expedition take place on?

- We will be paddling the canals and lochs of the Great Glen including Loch Lochy, Loch Oich and Loch Ness.
- We will not be taking them down the Grade 3 white water section at Loch Oich due to unpredictable water flow but instead will continue along the canal.
- All features of significance will be managed by the Expedition Leaders using industry adopted best practice bank and/or river-based pre-emptive safety cover.

Q. How will you manage poor weather?

Our adventure leaders follow industry recognised safety guidelines as follows;

- No boat should go or stay afloat in an electric storm.
- No boat should go or stay afloat with a gale force of 3 or more.
- We refer to our pre-arranged 'Contingency Plans and Accident and Emergency Procedures' for our severe weather plan and gathering points.

Q. Can our child go with a friend, or can they come on their own?

Your children are welcome to come either with a friend or on their own. Our friendly team will ensure everyone has a chance to make friends and build new relationships from the outset. This expedition provides a great opportunity to make new friends and enjoy new experiences together.

Q. Who will children share a tent with?

If your child comes with a friend, they will share with them. If they are coming on their own we will pair them up with a suitable tent buddy.

Q. What equipment do they need to bring with them?

A full kit list will be provided nearer the time but essentially, they will need to bring;

- Suitable clothing
- Suitable footwear
- Toiletries
- Temperature appropriate sleeping bag and a pillow
- All specialist kit will be provided.

Q. What food is provided, and can all diets and allergies be catered for?

All food will be provided including 3 meals a day and snacks in between. If there are any dietary requirements, please specify these on the booking form so we can plan for these well in advance to ensure everyone is catered for correctly.

Please reassure your children we will have proper wholesome food for them to enjoy during the trip. Examples of meals include porridge and fruit for breakfast, wraps, cheese and salads for lunch and tuna pasta or spag bol for supper along with plenty of snacks to keep energy levels up too!

Q. What skills will they learn?

The TOBA Expedition programme is designed to further equip the children with new skills and to stretch them. Activities will reflect the age and experience of the group (we will gather more information before the expedition on their experience) but will include many of the following:

- Leave no trace philosophy
- Emergency procedures and first aid
- Understanding the expedition's environment
- Expedition nutrition and hydration
- Packing, loading and paddling a loaded canoe
- Field Butchery
- Fire starting through the ages (bow drill, flint & steel, compression etc)
- Improvised sailing - sourcing and using natural wood bows as rafting kit
- Preparing a meal from foraged foods
- Natural navigation
- Improvised water purification
- Making natural cordage
- Tarpology

Q. What will the children do in the evenings?

Once we have set up camp, the children will have the opportunity clean up, then help prepare and cook a hot supper. The instructors will ensure they have plenty of free time to sit relaxing around the fire, unwind in their tents, phone home and enjoy some quiet time before a good night's sleep.