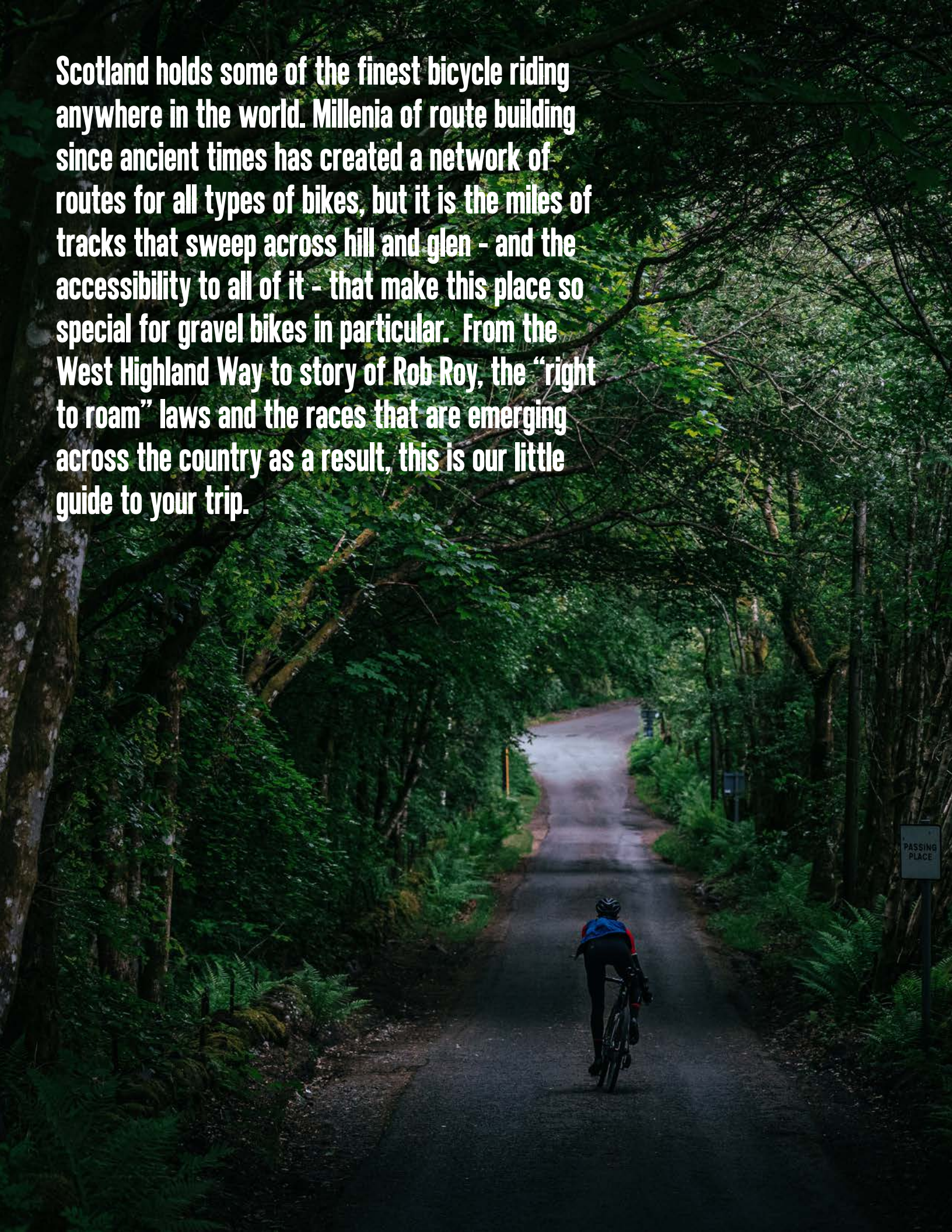


A scenic landscape featuring a gravel path that winds through a field of tall grass and shrubs. Two cyclists are riding away from the viewer on the path. In the background, a stone house with a grey roof is visible on a hill, surrounded by trees and a wooden fence.

***WELCOME TO ÁSPERO COUNTRY***

***cervélo***

**Scotland holds some of the finest bicycle riding anywhere in the world. Millennia of route building since ancient times has created a network of routes for all types of bikes, but it is the miles of tracks that sweep across hill and glen - and the accessibility to all of it - that make this place so special for gravel bikes in particular. From the West Highland Way to story of Rob Roy, the “right to roam” laws and the races that are emerging across the country as a result, this is our little guide to your trip.**



# THE ROUTE - DAY ONE

Distance: 83.9 km

Ascent: 1,120 m

Descent: 1,300 m



## Leg 1 - Glen Fruin and the Arrochar 'Alps'

To ride bicycles in Scotland is to be immersed in history as much as it is to lightly pass through it's mountains, hills and glens.

Rewind to the 7th February 1603 and we'd be dodging claymores and ducking for cover. The bloody battle of Glen Fruin was fought here between Clans MacGregor and Colquhoun- hundreds perished in the battle to avenge two murdered MacGregors who sought shelter at the wrong abode.

Fast forward and a very different kind of history is palpable. Leaving the 'Raid na Gael' - the Highlandman's pass- behind us; ahead lies the

'Yankee Road'; an asphalt ribbon constructed during World War II to ferry men and munitions deep into the glen's remote corners.

Within these hills and lochs lie many dark secrets associated with war: torpedo testing, bouncing bombs, submarine underwater ejection systems- speculation is rife that the special forces remain active here, operating mock detention and interrogation training and other discreet operations. We'll move along, shall we?

Tarmac quickly gives way to gravel and soon we're greeted with our first splendid views of the Loch Long and the Arrochar Alps beyond.

## Leg 2 - Arrochar to Inveruglas Ferry (to Inversnaid)

Caffeine downed, cake ingested we leave Loch Long and Arrochar behind and winch our way up and into the heart of the Arrochar 'Alps' - a range of mountains popular with Glasgow hillwalkers and mountaineers seeking a quick 'Corbett' fix. In recent years this part of Scotland has also become quite popular with our two-wheeled brethren - you'll see why in a minute or twenty.



Prominent among these towering beauties is Beinn Artair (The Cobbler) which at 884 metres (2,900 ft) just misses out on 'Munro' status by a measly 100 feet but is recognised as one of the most impressive summits in the Southern Highlands due to its distinctive, rocky features - can you see the summit outline of the cobbler bending over his last? Incidentally, what shoes did you pack? We'll delicately tip-toe across the Allt Coiregrogain river before swooping down the access tracks of the Sloy/Awe Hydro-Electric Scheme - an impressive dam situated between Loch Sloy and Inveruglas on the west bank of Loch Lomond.

Don't hang about for too many selfies - there's a ferry to catch and a short crossing of the beautiful Loch Lomond if we want our lunch.

### Hydroelectric Gravel

Hydroelectric power generation in Scotland started early in the 20th century and is a key part of the nation's renewable energy strategy. Scotland has the UK's highest mountains

and largest inland lochs (lakes, but Scottish ones). Combined with a high rainfall this makes production of hydroelectricity extremely viable; Scotland now generates 85% of the UK's hydroelectric energy resource, much of it developed in the 1950s by the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board who played a large part in bringing 'power from the glens' into Scottish homes making electricity affordable and sustainable, especially for remote areas of the country. Around 12% of Scotland's total electricity now comes from hydroelectric generation.

A (largely) happy byproduct of this infrastructure is the abundant access hydro roads and the gravel riding opportunities these tracks have created; twinned with bicycles

like the Aspero - fast cycling in remote locations is a beautiful reality.

Albeit there is contention in some quarters that the lure of renewable energy government subsidies has led to environmental imbalance where insensitive dams and overtly visible tracks have blighted the landscape in some locations. Let's leave that story there; probably best discussed over a dram!

### Leg 3 - Inversnaid to Balmaha

Has that baguette settled yet? Not to worry - the toughest leg is behind us and lunch will settle as we really get into the gravel groove now on some mellower gradients.

Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park awaits and we're now entering Duke's Weekender gravel festival country; home also to the brand new Duke's Gold gravel tour. This adventure owes much to Scotland's forward thinking Government and their liberal outlook on outdoor access and the 'healthy nation' remit of public agency Forestry and Land Scotland.

There's so much more to talk about - let's crack on to Balmaha - dinner and the bar awaits!

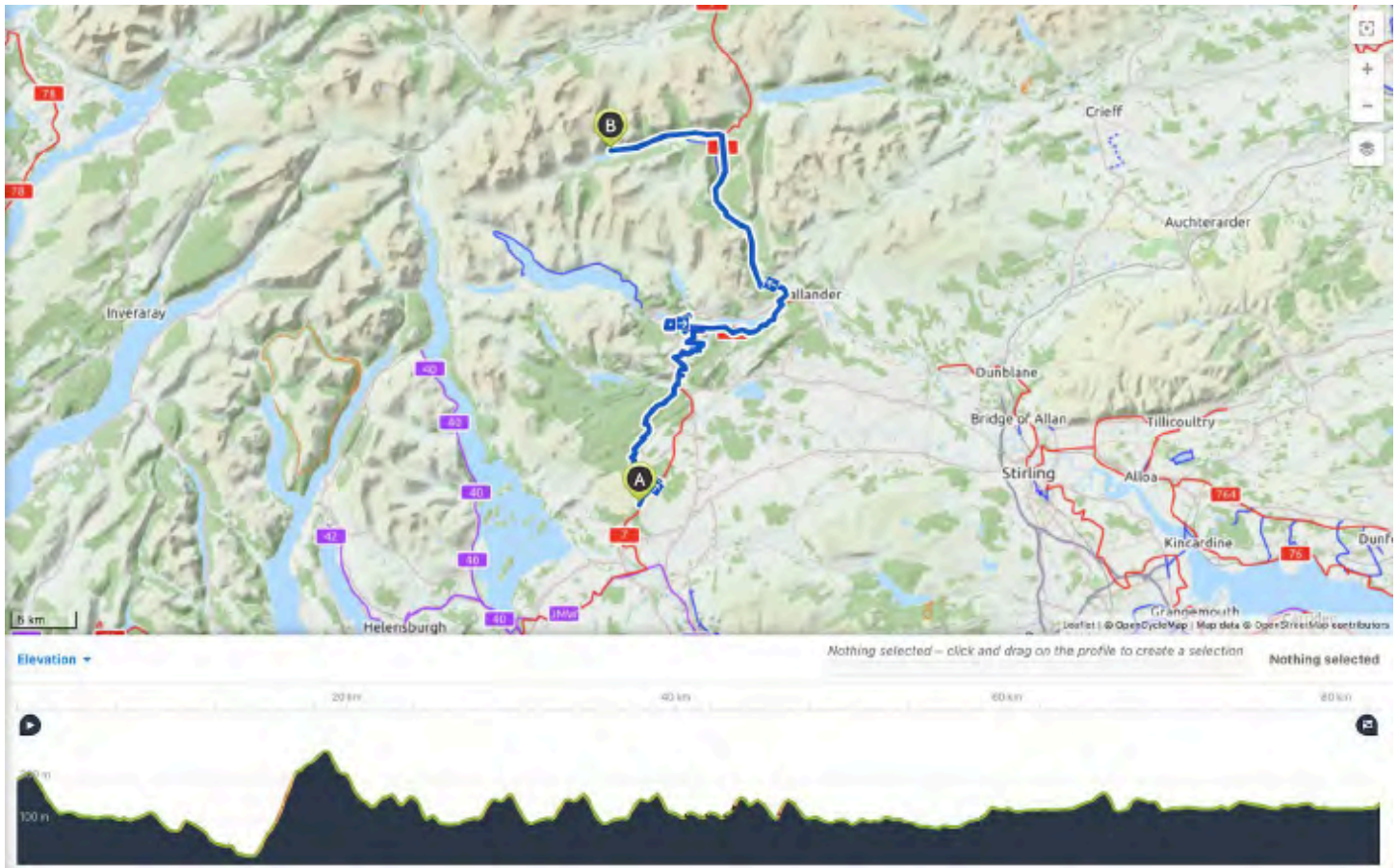


# THE ROUTE - DAY TWO

Distance: 68 km

Ascent: 950 m

Descent: 1,010 m



## Leg 1 - Balmaha to Brig o' Turk

Good morning! Yesterday was a solid shift. You might be relieved to hear today starts with a wee shuttle and a nice 'down' that dips us back into the lush forests of the Trossachs. A quick caffeine fix in Aberfoyle and a java boost over the Duke's Pass where lunch awaits us at the rustic Byre Inn, by the beautiful Loch Venachar.

Just beyond the Byre lies the small, scattered settlement of Brig o' Turk- a hamlet around a ford over the Finglas Water. A wooden bridge was built in the 1700s, replaced by the stone bridge visible today in the early 1800s. The unusual name of the village comes partly, and obviously, from the location of a bridge here.

The "Turk" element comes from the Gaelic *tuirc*, which means wild boar, and suggests they were once hunted here.

When Sir Walter Scott published *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810 visitor numbers to the Trossachs increased fivefold overnight and Brig o' Turk found itself on one of the main routes into the area, connecting Callander with Loch Katrine.

In 1886 the "The Duke's Road" was built to connect Aberfoyle with Loch Achray, placing Brig o' Turk on a loop that was considered an essential part of any Victorian's trip to Scotland- and herein lies the roots of the naming of Duke's Weekender and Duke's Gold gravel events.

Over the years the visitors who have broken their journey here have included Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Among those who have spent longer periods in the village have been the poets Millais, Ruskin and William Wordsworth, whose sister Dorothy recorded their visit.

Perhaps of more interest to us, the 'Bicycle Tree' is a veteran dating from the late 19th century, the tree grew in or near to the scrap heap of the village blacksmith and has encapsulated several metal objects over the years. Most notably this includes an early 20th-century bicycle (from which it received its name) and, reputedly, a ship's anchor and chain.

The Bicycle Tree is recognized as a landmark of the local area and has become a tourist attraction. It was granted the protection of a

Tree Preservation Order by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority in March 2016.

## **Leg 2 - Brig o' Turk to Monachyle Mhor**

Soup, sandwiches and (perhaps) a dram later you'll be replete and ready to fend off a marauding clan of...road cyclists before the next gravel hit.

The last leg's a spin along National Cycle Network Route 7 at whose junction we pass the memorably named 'Kilmahog'. No prizes for guessing their favourite takeout.

There's not a huge amount going on here at this end of the 'Great Trossachs Path' but what there is, is just enough. A local pub, near the site of the old chapel, called The Lade Inn, and the Scottish Real Ale shop (which aims to stock ALL bottled Scottish ales), the "lade" is a man-made diversion from the river that was used to power the watermills. Stuff the history tour- how many beers can be squeezed into that cycle jersey pocket?

Nearby, Samson's Putting Stone sits precariously on Bochastle hill. Local legend has it that the stone came to be there as a result of a putting competition between a family of giants. The winner of the competition was Samson who lived on Ben Ledi. Cue: next episode of Outlander.

A rapid spin to Monachyle Mhor and before you know it- high fives and cask ales at the bar- you've made it to the end of the Aspero Challenge. Well done. Get fresh because you're in for some extra special Scottish hospitality at one of Scotland's fine hotels. Cheers!





## The Right to Roam

More than a 'principle' Scotland's Outdoor Access Code (commonly referred to as the 'right to roam') is enshrined in law, approved by Ministers and the Scottish Parliament in 2003 as Part 1 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act. It gives everyone statutory access rights to most land and inland water. Responsibility is the cornerstone.

People only have these rights if they exercise them responsibly by respecting people's privacy, safety and livelihoods, and Scotland's environment. Equally, land managers have to manage their land and water responsibly in relation to access rights. In other words, use your head and don't be a dick. Pretty cool, huh?

With regard to cycling, our responsibilities are simple: don't endanger walkers and horse riders: give other users advance warning of our presence and give way when on a narrow path. Take care not to alarm farm animals, horses and wildlife.

When cycling off-path, particularly in winter, avoid: going onto wet, boggy or soft ground, and churning up the surface.

And, when cycling through Glen Fruin - avoid getting caught up in a military training exercise.

## Forestry and Land Scotland

Formerly, Forestry Commission Scotland, this public organisation is the bedrock of much

of Scotland's outdoor activities. They're custodians of the forested landscape and another contributor to Scotland's growing gravel scene and many of the 'great' paths featured in the tour.

Many people think their work is simply timber production. That's true – but it's only part of the story. They also develop renewable energy schemes, create and maintain trails and visitor facilities and conserve habitats, wildlife and archaeological treasures.

## Scottish Natural Heritage

Outdoor recreation is a big deal in Scotland, both to the public and at government level. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) is driving the construction of hundreds of routes through improving public access, part of the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme.

SNH has been working with the Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division to deliver the scheme, with a total of £8.5 million committed.

By the end of this year, an equivalent distance to the length of the West Highland Way from Milngavie to Fort William, 96 miles, will have been funded by the scheme. The new and improved paths will connect towns and villages and provide a great variety of ways to explore the outdoors in coastal areas, along riverbanks, to viewpoints and around farmland. Gravel nirvana in the making.



Some of Scotland's longer distance routes upon which this itinerary is based have also experienced improvements, including sections of the Rob Roy Way- in total 138 projects have been funded, with 52 due to be completed in 2019.

These new and improved pathways will encourage even more people to get outside, ride bikes and participate in recreational activities, with all the associated benefits for physical and mental health.

### **Scotland's 'Great Trails' Three Lochs Way**

The foundation of our tour- with Loch Lomond, The Gareloch and Loch Long as recurrent scenic backdrops- the Three Lochs Way takes you on a fascinating journey through place and time as it links a necklace of communities strung along the Clyde Sea Lochs fringe of Scotland's first national park. It's a 34.5 mile long distance route and although developed and promoted primarily with walkers in mind, much of the route follows broad tracks and paths which are equally accessible on a gravel or mountain bike.

Gentle landscapes are gradually replaced by the scenic drama of mountain, crag and loch

as the Three Lochs Way crosses the Highland Boundary Fault and heads towards the mountains of the Southern Highlands. Rarely rising above 250 metres, the route's 55 kilometres (34 miles) can easily be ridden in a day with the West Highland railway line never far away- it opens up a multitude of extended day and multi-day rides by using the country's public transport system (trains and ferries) to link up Scotland's broader network of paths and trails.

### **Great Trossachs Path**

The Great Trossachs Path is part of the national collection of long distance trails called Scotland's Great Trails. The Great Trails network offers so many opportunities for people to explore the best that Scotland has to offer from source to sea routes, coastal trails, historical routes and trails which pass by mountains and lochs.

### **The West Highland Way**

The West Highland Way (Scottish Gaelic: Slighe na Gàidhealtachd an Iar) is a linear long distance footpath in Scotland, 154 km (96 miles) in length, running from Milngavie north of Glasgow to Fort William in the Scottish Highlands. Opened in 1980, it was Scotland's first officially designated Long Distance Route and is now designated by Scottish Natural Heritage as one of Scotland's Great Trails. It was primarily intended as a long distance walking route, and whilst many sections are suitable for mountain biking and horse riding, it opens up a wealth of gravel itineraries and link-ups.

About 120,000 people use the path every year, of whom about 36,000 walk the entire route. The path is estimated to generate £5.5 million each year for the local economy. The gravel economy is young and will add enormously in years to come.

## Rob Roy's Way

Originally conceived as a seven day walk across the Southern Highland of Scotland taking in some of the most beautiful countryside in the UK. Starting from Drymen on the West Highland Way it goes north east to finish in Pitlochry, the Way is 77 or 94 miles- 124 or 151Km dependent on route choice.

It follows the tracks and paths used by Rob Roy MacGregor in the 17th & 18th centuries as he worked, fought and lived the life of Scotland's most notorious outlaw. The paths were also well used by other historical characters throughout the Jacobite uprisings, and the feuds between local clans. Nowadays, such paths provide ample opportunities for gravel escapes and Strava battles.

As you ride past the village of Balquhider from the east, a spur of road to your right leads to the village kirkyard. Here you find Balquhider's Parish Church, the ruins of the Old Church it replaced, and the grave of Rob Roy MacGregor. Alongside him lie his wife and two of their sons.

## Hosts

This trip is brought to you in partnership with Go-Where Scotland. They specialise in bicycle adventures off the beaten track. They're the experts when it comes to creating distinctly Scottish rides for adventurous spirits- their motto is 'Ride Mòr' and they hope this trip ignites the same fire in you that burns bright in them. Sláinte!

Website: <https://go-where.co.uk>

Contacts: Andy & Aneela McKenna

Email: [info@go-where.co.uk](mailto:info@go-where.co.uk)

## Definitions:

### Loch

Loch is the Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Scots word for a lake or a sea inlet. It is cognate with the Manx lough, Cornish loagh, and one of the Welsh words for lake, llwch.

Just to confuse these watery matters, some lochs could also be called firths, fjords, estuaries, straits or bays.

Sea-inlet lochs are often called sea lochs or sea loughs.



GRAVEL

Áspero Disc Force eTap AXS  
Mid Olive/Dune



Burgundy/Dark Orange

GRAVEL

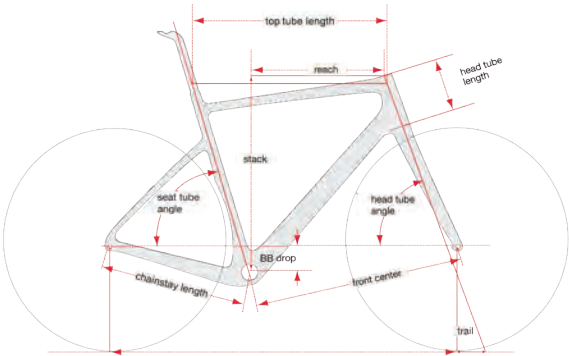
Áspero Disc Force eTap AXS

Specs

Fork	Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered Áspero Fork
Headset	FSA IS2 1-1/8 x 1-1/2
Wheels	DT Swiss GRC 1650 Disc
Tires	Donnelly X'Plor MS0 700x40 Tubeless
Crankset	SRAM Force DUB 36t
Crankset length	48 165mm 51 170mm 54-56 172.5mm 58-61 175mm
Bottom Bracket	SRAM DUB BBright
Chain	SRAM Force 12 spd
Rear Derailleur	SRAM Force eTap AXS 12 spd
Cassette	SRAM Force XG-1270, 10-33
Shifters	SRAM Force eTap AXS HRD 12 spd
Handlebar	Easton EC70 AX
Stem	Easton EA90
Brake Calipers	Sram Force HRD
Saddle	Prologo Dimension NDR T4.0
Seatpost	Easton EC70
Brake Rotor	SRAM CenterLine XR 160mm
Accessories	Easton Computer Mount

Geometry

Size	48	51	54	56	58	61
Stack	505	530	555	580	605	630
Reach	370	379	388	397	406	415
Effective Seat Tube Angle	74.5	74°	73.5°	73°	73°	73°
Top Tube	512	532	553	575	591	608
Wheel Size	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c
Head Tube Angle	71°	71.5°	72°	72°	72°	72°
Fork Offset(Rwd/Fwd)	52/57	49/54	46/51	46/51	46/51	46/51
Head Tube Length	83	107	133	159	188	214
BB Drop	78.5	78.5	76	76	73.5	73.5
Front Centre Fwd Pos.	583	592	602	619	637	654
Chainstay Length	420	420	420	420	420	420
Stand Over Height	690	732	764	788	814	838
Trail	59.9	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7
Wheelbase	990	1000	1010	1027	1046	1063



# GRAVEL

Áspero Disc GRX  
Mid Olive/Dune



Burgundy/Dark Orange

## GRAVEL

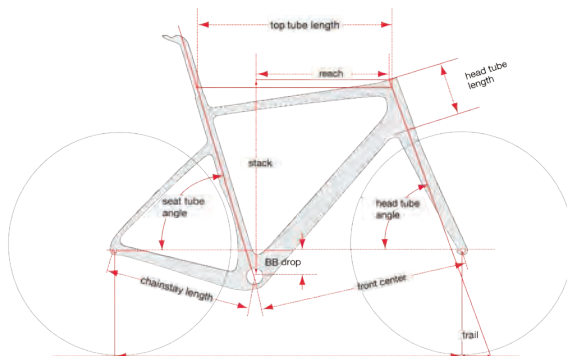
# Áspero Disc GRX

### Specs

<b>Fork</b>	Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered Áspero Fork
<b>Headset</b>	FSA IS2 1-1/8 x 1-1/2
<b>Wheels</b>	Easton EA70 AX
<b>Tires</b>	Donnelly X'Plor MS0 700x40 Tubeless
<b>Crankset</b>	Easton EA90 47/32
<b>Crankset length</b>	48 170mm 51 170mm 54-56 172.5mm 58-61 175mm
<b>Bottom Bracket</b>	Cervélo BBright Connect 30x79
<b>Chain</b>	Shimano CN-HG701, 11 spd
<b>Front Derailleur</b>	Shimano GRX RX-810, 11 spd
<b>Rear Derailleur</b>	Shimano GRX RX-810
<b>Cassette</b>	Shimano HG800, 11-34
<b>Shifters</b>	Shimano GRX RX810, 11s
<b>Handlebar</b>	Easton EA50 AX
<b>Stem</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Calipers</b>	Shimano GRX Hydraulic Disc
<b>Saddle</b>	Prologo Dimension NDR STN
<b>Seatpost</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Rotor</b>	Shimano SM-RT800, 160mm
<b>Accessories</b>	Easton Computer Mount

### Geometry

<b>Size</b>	48	51	54	56	58	61
<b>Stack</b>	505	530	555	580	605	630
<b>Reach</b>	370	379	388	397	406	415
<b>Effective Seat Tube Angle</b>	74.5	74°	73.5°	73°	73°	73°
<b>Top Tube</b>	512	532	553	575	591	608
<b>Wheel Size</b>	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c
<b>Head Tube Angle</b>	71°	71.5°	72°	72°	72°	72°
<b>Fork Offset(Fwd)</b>	57	54	51	51	51	51
<b>Head Tube Length</b>	83	107	133	159	188	214
<b>BB Drop</b>	78.5	78.5	76	76	73.5	73.5
<b>Front Centre Fwd Pos.</b>	583	592	602	619	637	654
<b>Chainstay Length</b>	420	420	420	420	420	420
<b>Stand Over Height</b>	690	732	764	788	814	838
<b>Trail (Fwd Pos)</b>	59.9	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7
<b>Wheelbase</b>	990	1000	1010	1027	1046	1063



# GRAVEL

Áspero Disc Ultegra RX  
Mid Olive/Dune



Burgundy/Dark Orange

## GRAVEL

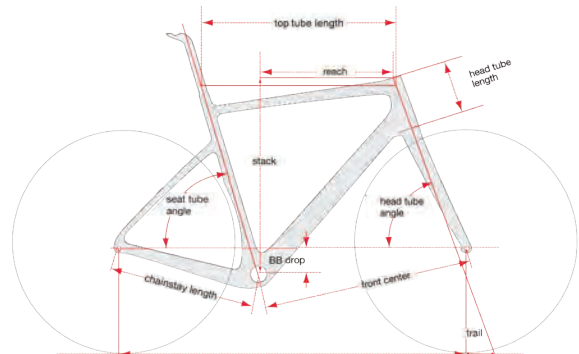
# Áspero Disc Ultegra RX

## Specs

<b>Fork</b>	Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered Áspero Fork
<b>Headset</b>	FSA IS2 1-1/8 x 1-1/2
<b>Wheels</b>	Easton EA70 AX
<b>Tires</b>	Donnelly X'Plor MS0 700x40 Tubeless
<b>Crankset</b>	Easton EA90 47/32
<b>Crankset length</b>	48 170mm 51 170mm 54-56 172.5mm 58-61 175mm
<b>Bottom Bracket</b>	Cervélo BBright Connect 30x79
<b>Chain</b>	Shimano CN-HG701, 11 spd
<b>Front Derailleur</b>	Shimano Ultegra 8000, 11 spd
<b>Rear Derailleur</b>	Shimano Ultegra RX, 11 spd
<b>Cassette</b>	Shimano HG800, 11-34
<b>Shifters</b>	Shimano Ultegra 8020, 11 spd
<b>Handlebar</b>	Easton EA50 AX
<b>Stem</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Calipers</b>	Shimano Ultegra 8070 Hydraulic Disc
<b>Saddle</b>	Prologo Dimension NDR STN
<b>Seatpost</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Rotor</b>	Shimano SM-RT800, 160mm
<b>Accessories</b>	Easton Computer Mount

## Geometry

<b>Size</b>	48	51	54	56	58	61
<b>Stack</b>	505	530	555	580	605	630
<b>Reach</b>	370	379	388	397	406	415
<b>Effective Seat Tube Angle</b>	74.5	74°	73.5°	73°	73°	73°
<b>Top Tube</b>	512	532	553	575	591	608
<b>Wheel Size</b>	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c
<b>Head Tube Angle</b>	71°	71.5°	72°	72°	72°	72°
<b>Fork Offset (Rwd/Fwd)</b>	52/57	49/54	46/51	46/51	46/51	46/51
<b>Head Tube Length</b>	83	107	133	159	188	214
<b>BB Drop</b>	78.5	78.5	76	76	73.5	73.5
<b>Front Centre Fwd Pos.</b>	583	592	602	619	637	654
<b>Chainstay Length</b>	420	420	420	420	420	420
<b>Stand Over Height</b>	690	732	764	788	814	838
<b>Trail</b>	59.9	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7
<b>Wheelbase</b>	990	1000	1010	1027	1046	1063



# GRAVEL

Áspero Disc Apex 1  
Mid Olive/Dune



Burgundy/Dark Orange

## GRAVEL

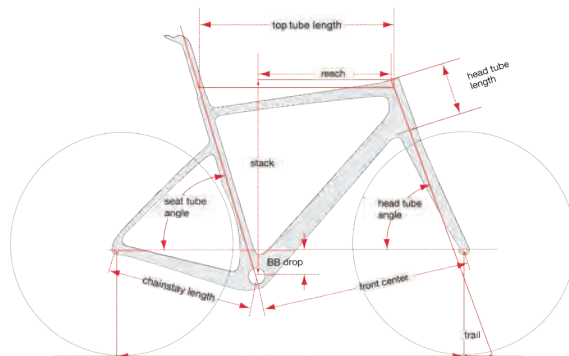
# Áspero Disc Apex 1

## Specs

<b>Fork</b>	Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered Áspero Fork
<b>Headset</b>	FSA IS2 1-1/8 x 1-1/2
<b>Wheels</b>	Alexrims Boondocks 7-D
<b>Tires</b>	Donnelly X'Plor MS0 700x40 Folding
<b>Crankset</b>	SRAM Apex 1 40t
<b>Crankset length</b>	48 165mm 51 170mm 54-56 172.5mm 58-61 175mm
<b>Bottom Bracket</b>	Cervélo BBright Connect GXP
<b>Chain</b>	SRAM PC-1110
<b>Rear Derailleur</b>	SRAM Apex 1
<b>Cassette</b>	SRAM PG-1130, 11-42
<b>Shifters</b>	SRAM Apex 1 HRD
<b>Handlebar</b>	Easton EA50 AX
<b>Stem</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Calipers</b>	SRAM Apex HRD
<b>Saddle</b>	Cervélo Road Saddle
<b>Seatpost</b>	Easton EA50
<b>Brake Rotor</b>	SRAM Centerline 160mm
<b>Accessories</b>	Easton Computer Mount

## Geometry

<b>Size</b>	48	51	54	56	58	61
<b>Stack</b>	505	530	555	580	605	630
<b>Reach</b>	370	379	388	397	406	415
<b>Effective Seat Tube Angle</b>	74.5	74°	73.5°	73°	73°	73°
<b>Top Tube</b>	512	532	553	575	591	608
<b>Wheel Size</b>	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c
<b>Head Tube Angle</b>	71°	71.5°	72°	72°	72°	72°
<b>Fork Offset (Rwd/Fwd)</b>	52/57	49/54	46/51	46/51	46/51	46/51
<b>Head Tube Length</b>	83	107	133	159	188	214
<b>BB Drop</b>	78.5	78.5	76	76	73.5	73.5
<b>Front Centre Fwd Pos.</b>	583	592	602	619	637	654
<b>Chainstay Length</b>	420	420	420	420	420	420
<b>Stand Over Height</b>	690	732	764	788	814	838
<b>Trail</b>	59.9	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7
<b>Wheelbase</b>	990	1000	1010	1027	1046	1063



# GRAVEL

Áspero Disc Frameset  
Mid Olive/Dune



Burgundy/Dark Orange



Dark Teal/Light Teal

## GRAVEL

# Áspero Disc Frameset

### Specs

Fork	Cervélo All-Carbon, Tapered Áspero Fork
Headset	FSA IS2 1-1/8 x 1-1/2
Seatpost	Cervélo Carbon, SP19
Thru Axles	Cervélo Lever Thru Axles

### Geometry

Size	48	51	54	56	58	61
Stack	505	530	555	580	605	630
Reach	370	379	388	397	406	415
Effective Seat Tube Angle	74.5	74°	73.5°	73°	73°	73°
Top Tube	512	532	553	575	591	608
Wheel Size	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c	700c
Head Tube Angle	71°	71.5°	72°	72°	72°	72°
Fork Offset (Rwd/Fwd)	52/57	49/54	46/51	46/51	46/51	46/51
Head Tube Length	83	107	133	159	188	214
BB Drop	78.5	78.5	76	76	73.5	73.5
Front Centre Fwd Pos.	583	592	602	619	637	654
Chainstay Length	420	420	420	420	420	420
Stand Over Height	690	732	764	788	814	838
Trail	59.9	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7	59.7
Wheelbase	990	1000	1010	1027	1046	1063

