

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



TORRIDON RAW BEAUTY OF THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

WORKSHOP LED BY NIALL
AND CHARLOTTE BENVIE

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Classic Scottish mountain landscapes
- Sea lochs and beaches
- Detail-rich old birch and pine woodland
- Waterfalls
- Red deer
- Autumn colours in the woods and on the moors
- Picturesque villages
- Light painting
- “Field studio” techniques
- Base overlooking Loch Torridon
- Charlotte’s superb hospitality

INTRODUCTION

Torridon and adjacent areas of Wester Ross are outstanding photographic locations that encapsulate the drama of the north west Highlands of Scotland. Vigorous weather systems from the west shower the area with rainbows and heavy rain makes waterfalls and burns gush water the colour of tea. Low winter sun colours the hills with gorgeous light, hills that by early November may even have their first covering of snow.

This is the time of year when red deer are rutting and we are likely to see quite a number close-to. The old forests of pine and birch are still colourful in early November, giving opportunities to produce panels of close up work.

We will push the limits of the day by “painting” individual trees with torch light at dusk.

A turbulent geological past and intensive glacial activity have shaped the mountains of Torridon into some of Scotland’s most impressive. In places, they fill the sky – a little daunting perhaps – but spectacularly photogenic. And don’t worry: most of the best views are to be had from the valleys. It is not only the mountains that impress: ancient Scots pines rise above birches that clothe the lower slopes of the pale quartz massif of Beinn Eighe. These dense woods are damp and extraordinarily rich in lichens, mosses, liverworts and ferns that can engross a macro photographer all day long.

The mountains conjure with incoming weather systems to produce squalls then drizzle hardly heavy enough to land then brilliant sunshine then hail all within an hour. Some days it is tranquil and the skies are blue. Mostly, it's a lot more interesting than that!

GENERAL SUMMARY

Our tours weave tuition into our time in the field – as much or as little as you need or want. Niall has worked in this area many times during his 21 year career, most recently (2013) on a major commission for Scottish Natural Heritage and knows the best places to head. He's known for his systematic approach to teaching photography which works as effectively in the field as in the studio. We care a great deal about your comfort on our tours, choosing shooting locations best suited to the abilities of the group. And because most of the locations are relatively close to our fabulous base overlooking Loch Torridon, we can afford to take our time. Charlotte belongs to the “nothing is too much trouble” school of hospitality and is an imaginative and talented cook too as well as a chocolatier by profession.

This is a great setting for Niall to teach his “method” – a programme that will enhance your understanding of the creative process and your ability to make the images you want. As well as regular photographic work, Niall will also encourage you to try some innovative approaches including landscape deconstruction and field studio artifact photography.

Most locations are easily accessible and require only a short walk. If the fitness of the group allows, we will do some trekking in places to gain altitude.

Here are the main areas we will visit, as and when the weather dictates:

Loch Maree with views over to Slioch

A great evening location, the loch provides a mirror for the dramatic massif of Slioch while the rock-strewn shore provides a variety of arresting foregrounds.

Beinn Eighe NNR

The woodlands and mountains of Britain's first National Nature Reserve offer a glimpse into a wilder past. High rainfall encourages a lushness rarely seen in the eastern pine forests and ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens abound. And above the old pines, the Beinn Eighe ridge, composed of white quartzite, rises dramatically. We'll take our time and go part of the way up the “down” section of the Mountain Trail to get some great views into a large wooded gorge and over Loch Maree.

Loch Clair

Get your wellies on for the very best positions along Loch Clair, reflecting Liatach and part of Beinn Eighe. This is an iconic view that is worth returning to until the light is just right and the conditions calm.

Lower Diabaig

We drive up out of Glen Torridon, taking in familiar panoramas over Loch Torridon, visit a fascinating set of falls then head over the moors before descending into Lower Diabaig. Used a location in a number of movies, the village's setting in a secluded corner of the sea loch looks more Norwegian than Scottish.

Shieldaig

As well as the attractive village and pine-covered island, there are beautiful birch and pine forests on the slopes near by. If there haven't been any autumn storms, we can look forward to some great colours on the trees. And if there have been, there will be some great colours on the forest floor.

Bealach na Ba

Noted as perhaps the most “exciting” drive in the UK, the steep, winding ascent of the Bealach takes us to a great viewpoint from where we can walk on the summit. Eyes forward as we drive though!

The Russell Burn, near Kishorn

Classic falls with mountain backdrop that we must take in before we ascend the Bealach.

Beaches on the Applecross peninsula

Monty Halls made his “Great Escape” BBC TV series from one of these, Sand Bay, but we'll explore others too.

Glen Grudie pine wood

Given the right light, this wood right beside the road is a great location to shoot over towards Slioch.

DAILY ITINERARY

Our itinerary will depend on the weather conditions but we plan to visit all the destinations described at least once. Evenings will be spent on editing, post-production (using Adobe Lightroom) and analysis – as well as enjoying a splendid meal. We will aim to catch dawn and dusk each day unless the forecast is poor and will spend the



days outside in all but the worst of conditions. If we are stuck indoors, we will do a bit more editing, post-production work and have more tutorials.

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The tour departs from Inverness Airport although we can make collections from the railway station and you are welcome to go directly to the accommodation in your own car if you want to drive up. During the tour I will drive you around in a 9-seater minibus.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Full board accommodation
- Guiding and tuition
- Driving to and from Inverness airport

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Alcoholic drinks
- Unscheduled entry to visitor attractions

ACCOMMODATION

Balgy Lodge, Loch Torridon

FOOD

Niall's wife, Charlotte, will be catering for the group. A chocolatier by profession, she is an experienced hostess and even had a dish of her's appear on Masterchef (narrowly missing out on a TV appearance herself)!

Please mention in the booking form any special dietary requirements and allergies you might suffer from.

SPENDING MONEY

There are relatively limited spending opportunities in this part of the world but Kinlochewe has a well provisioned store.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation and loss of baggage. We will need a copy of your travel insurance at the time of booking.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

There will be Visa requirements for guests travelling from some countries outside the UK.

[Check here if you need a UK visa.](#)

LANGUAGE

Both Niall and Charlotte speak very good English (!) As do the locals.

CLIMATE

The weather around these mountains is changeable but we can be pretty sure that we'll see at least some rain.

CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

As usual, we suggest layering: merino wool or similar undergarments; fleece layer; down jacket if it is very cold; and a waterproof shell for your body and legs; fine gloves inside fold-back mitts; a waterproof cap with liner. Walking boots will be fine for some locations but experience tells that it is wet underfoot just about everywhere in the north west and wellies will be useful too. If you're worried about getting cold feet we'd recommend neoprene models such as those from Muck Boots.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT/INFORMATION

- Camera – and a back-up if you have one.
- Memory cards, reader, cables, spare batteries and chargers
- Tripod and head
- Laptop computer with Lightroom / Adobe Camera RAW
- Portable backup drive
- Wide angle zoom ideally 16–35mm for full frame camera, 12–24mm for smaller sensor.
- Macro lens or close focusing zoom. 105mm is ideal.
- A tele-zoom such as a 70–200mm
- As long a telephoto as you own and a beanbag to support it on. You will need this for deer photography.
- Electric release

- Polarising filter, if you have one.
- Large plastic bag to keep your camera and lens.

I will bring a portable studio flash set to demonstrate how I mix daylight and flash as well as a spot light for light painting. But feel free to bring your own as well.

OTHER ITEMS

- Trekking towel for drying your gear in the field
- Head torch
- Any medication you need
- An open mind and vivid imagination

MAPS AND BOOKS

[OS Explorer 433: Map of Torridon](#)

Book: [Beinn Eighe: the mountain above the wood](#)

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Contact us through our website, where you can also fill in the online booking form, or phone +44 (0)1630 647828.

PARTNERS

Non-photographer partners will be very welcome although this primarily a photography holiday we also visit some very beautiful and relaxing places. If any participants do not wish to join the photographic sessions they will be able to relax in and around the accommodation. The cost will be the same for photographers and non-photographers.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL

This is an outdoor travel holiday and the itinerary is dependent on the weather, local conditions and other variables. Wild Photography Holidays may use their discretion to change the itinerary should conditions dictate this; your health, safety and enjoyment will always be our primary concern when making such changes.

MORE INFORMATION

We hope that this information has answered some of your questions about the holiday; it doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website.

Read about our [approach to teaching photography](#)