

# WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



## SCOTLAND COIGACH & ASSYNT

WITH DOUGIE CUNNINGHAM

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Achmelvich Beach
- Clachtoll beach
- Wailing Widow Falls
- Reiff
- Stac Pollaidh from Loch Bad a' Ghail & the Aird of Coigach
- Achnahaird
- Ardvreck Castle, Loch Assynt
- Loch Druim Suardalain
- Inverpolly from Creag Dharaich
- Clashnessie Falls?
- Stac Pollaidh summit ridge
- Old Man of Stoer
- Elphin Bothy

### INTRODUCTION

Coigach and Assynt lie in the far northwest of Scotland, and together they combine to make up one of the most wild and beautiful areas in the Scotland. Here we will encounter a landscape full of open spaces where huge skies lend a magical quality to the light that is a joy to photograph.

We will be exploring a unique range of island mountains set amongst a landscape of knocks and lochans that surpass the the more oft visited mountains and glens of Scotland. Stac Pollaidh and Suilven in particular are amongst the most photogenic of all Scottish mountains and will feature in the backdrop of several venues we visit. The local rocks attract geology students from far and wide, and for us provide not only unique vistas but

also some incredibly fine photographic detail. Looking towards the coast, we will enjoy some of the most beautiful beaches on the Scottish mainland including Achmelvich and Clachtoll plus some of the most dramatic and characterful sea cliffs at Reiff.

There is more to Coigach and Assynt that can easily be described – it is the sort of place you need to experience. There will be plenty of time to explore, soak in the atmosphere and truly connect with each of the incredible places we visit. Out in the field there will be the option of photographic guidance and advice from guide/tutor Dougie Cunningham. Along with our time in the field, we will have evening sessions to review the days images, consider different creative decisions, photographic techniques and ways to post process our images.



### PHOTOGRAPHIC TUTOR

Dougie Cunningham is a professional Scottish landscape photographer whose many clients include The National Trust for Scotland, Field Magazine, The Great Outdoors and Wanderlust. Dougie recently wrote a best-selling guidebook *Photographing Scotland*, he is currently writing a walking guidebook for the Coigach and Assynt Living Landscape Partnership. Dougie is a Scottish adventurer born and bred, there is no better photographer suited to ensure that participants get a true insight into the stunning and often hidden landscapes of Coigach and Assynt.

### BRIEF ITINERARY

For full details please "download the trip description PDF":

We will have just one base in Lochinver for the whole duration of this workshop. In our experience this will allow participants to relax into a daily routine safe in the knowledge that we return to the same base each evening.

Lochinver itself is a beautiful location and is perfectly placed for our photographic excursions.

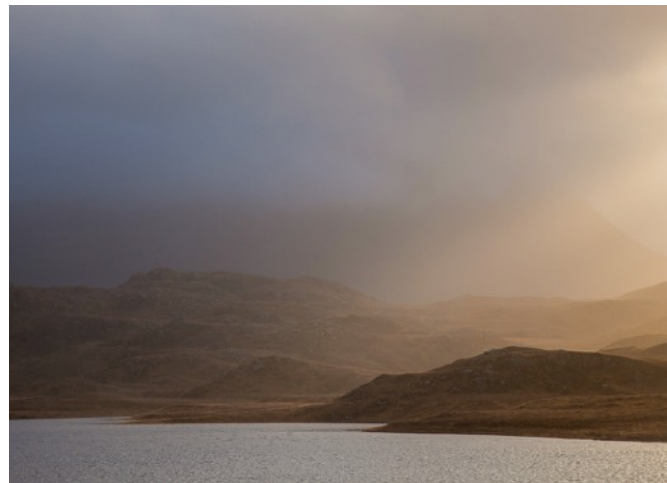
### Day 1: Arrive in Loch Inver

There will be a pre-booked and timed transfers from Inverness mid morning to our hotel in Loch Inver. We will meet together as a group at 15:00 for introductions and a trip briefing. If the conditions are suitable we will go out to a sunset location followed by dinner at our Hotel. Hotel Lochinver (D)

### Days 2–7: Various Locations

As is often the case our exact itinerary will always be dependent on the prevailing weather conditions, each evening Dougie will discuss with participants plans for the following days outings. There are a couple of longer trips that will depend very much on the weather conditions and the fitness of participants, these will be optional. Following is a list of locations that will be included in our six full days of photography.

Hotel Lochinver (B,L,D)



### Achmelvich

This location has a little bit of everything. Crystal clear turquoise waters, and a chain of sandy beaches, with the finest white shell sands on the west coast. Add to this a long stretch of the machair and some great rocky headlands to explore, a perfect photography location. The Hermit's Castle brings an unusual twist to things for those that find it!

### Clachtoll

Not far along the coast from Achmelvich, Clachtoll has a completely unique character, and many stunning features to discover. The famous Split Rock is a powerful subject, particularly when there is a good swell coming in, and the salmon bothy gives us an insight into the history of the area.

### Wailing Widow Falls

The Allt Chrànaidh can't flow more than 50m from Loch na Gainmhich before it tumbles suddenly into a deep slot gorge. Viewed from the top, it makes for a pretty



unique sight, with the small loch emptying immediately into a stunning waterfall. We can also scramble up the gorge from below, entering into a secluded and magical world where the intricate detail is as fascinating as the scene in its entirety.

### **Reiff**

At the western end of the Coigach peninsula is the tiny hamlet of Reiff. There is as much detail to be found inland as there is drama in the cliffs and rocks along the coastline. It's a place that feels wild, and is different every time you visit.

### **Stac Pollaidh from Loch Bad a' Ghail & Aird of Coigach**

Stac Pollaidh is one of the very finest mountains in Scotland, making up in character what it lacks in height. The banks of Loch Bad a' Ghail offer some great views back to the towering summit ridge. Perhaps the real prize here is found when we explore the Aird of Coigach, where the stone and heather provide the foreground to set against the backdrop of Inverpolly. From here we have views not just of Stac Pollaidh, but across to Suilven too.

### **Achnahaird**

This lovely location has an expansive feel, with superb views across to the Island Mountains of Inverpolly, there are not many beaches to rival it for photography.

### **Ardvreck Castle and Loch Assynt**

Loch Assynt is the largest inland body of water in the area, and is set amongst some spectacular scenery. Ardvreck Castle is well-placed on a small peninsula and can be photographed against Quinag in the distance. Further along the loch as several small islands with stands of pine trees – perfect photography fodder!

### **Loch Druim Suardalain**

Not far from our base in Lochinver is Loch Druim Suardalain. Its intricate northern shore creates an intimate atmosphere, while it boasts one of the very finest views of Suilven in the area.

### **Inverpolly from Creag Dharaich**

This viewpoint is another that is only a short drive from our accommodation. With elevated views across the whole of Inverpolly, this is the perfect place for sunrise, but can also be incredible at the tail end of the day if the conditions look better then. From here, all the island mountains of Assynt line up perfectly along the horizon, making for a truly world-class location.

### **Clashnessie Falls**

A short walk from the road near Drumbeg is Clashnessie Falls. There are many waterfalls in the area although Clashnessie has easy access and a host of beautiful features combining to make a perfect venue for photographers. This is a great place to work the lines and textures in the landscape, using the falls as a backdrop.

### **Stac Pollaidh Summit Ridge**

A more demanding location which will depend on conditions as well as the fitness and willingness of the group. On arrival at the car park, a brief detour to the shore of Lurgainn gives us an excellent view back towards our objective for the day, the summit ridge of Stac Pollaidh. The climb itself is short but steep. On rounding the shoulder of the hill around half way through the ascent, you will enjoy views out over Suilven and Cul Mor. The ridge itself is intricate and has many beautifully weathered sandstone features, along with an incredible vista stretching in every direction. We can't guarantee that this will feature on the tour, but this will be a place never forgotten!



### **Old Man of Stoer**

Another classic location requiring a bit of an effort but so well worth it! The Old Man of Stoer one of the finest sea-stacks in Scotland. The round trip is approximately 7km over mixed terrain. Our first view of the stack will be a little over half-way through the outbound leg, from a fine cliff-top perch. Continuing to the point at the north end of the peninsula opens up many more views of the pinnacle.

### **Day 8: Homeward Travel**

If the weather conditions are suitable we will enjoy a last sunrise in a location not too far from our hotel. Following our final breakfast together there will be a pre-booked and timed transfer to Inverness from our hotel in Lochinver.(B)

### **JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS**

The trip officially starts on Day 1 at our Hotel in Lochinver. There will be a transfer from Inverness to Lochinver on Day 1 & Lochinver to Inverness on Day 8. Regarding timing and pick-up location please get in touch with the office closer to the departure time.

Inverness is considered to be the gateway to the Highlands and is well served by domestic/international flights, train and the UK national bus service. For participants who wish to drive themselves to Lochinver there is parking at the hotel.

### **WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- Accommodation 7 hotel nights
- Single rooms with private bathrooms
- All meals



- Photographic tuition
- Transfers to and from Inverness

#### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Flights
- Alcoholic beverages
- Snacks and beverages other than with meals
- Travel insurance

#### ACCOMMODATION

Hotel in Lochinver. The price is based on single rooms. Double or twin rooms are available for friends and couples who wish to share.

#### FOOD

We will eat dinner in the hotel restaurant. Lunch will generally be packed and breakfasts will always be at our hotel. Please let us know when you book if you have any special dietary requirements.

#### ALCOHOL

The hotel has a bar and serves alcohol

#### TRAVEL INSURANCE

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

#### PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

If you're coming from abroad you will need a valid passport or national identity card to enter the UK. You might also need a visa, see the [UK Government website](#)

#### TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS DUE TO COVID 19

Due to possible Covid 19 restrictions we advise you to check the [official Covid pages](#) and if travelling from abroad to consult [Entering the UK](#) on the UK Government website.



#### LANGUAGE

English and Gaelic

#### CLIMATE

Scotland's climate is tempered by the Gulf Stream. Summers are mild and winters rather cold, the weather is very changeable at all times of the year, there may be rain, sunshine, drizzle and very rarely snow all in the same day. Expect temperatures to be 0°–7°C in February and around 15°–6°C in October. It can be very windy during both months. Most importantly for us, the lack of pollution means that the clarity of the light is often exceptional with phenomenal 'big skies' and really atmospheric cloud patterns.

#### CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

As we will often be standing around in one location it's important to have some warm clothes. The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof jacket. A warm down



jacket is great for standing around. For the lower body choose a pair of warm trousers. There are numerous makes and types of warm trousers to choose from, just ensure that the cut is generous to allow freedom of movement. We will sometimes be walking in snow and on ice so good quality warm walking boots are recommended. A pair of wellington boots can be useful on the beach but these are not essential if space/weight is an issue. If you have any questions feel free to contact us at anytime before the trip.

#### CLOTHING LIST

- backpack to contain camera gear and few spare items
- pair warm trousers, fleece lined are great

- thermal tops e.g. 'smartwool' (base layer)
- thermal leggings e.g 'smartwool' (base layer)
- light fleece/wool jumper
- duvet jacket, down or synthetic
- waterproof jacket
- waterproof trousers
- quality warm walking socks
- leather/waterproof walking boots
- warm hat
- fleece neck-warmer
- light warm gloves
- warm windproof over-mittens
- casual clothes for hotel wear
- sun cream, sunglasses

- head torch
- small, basic first aid to include plasters and any medications of a personal nature.

#### PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...  
For full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele



zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom.

- Spare camera
- Sturdy travel tripod for low light photography
- Remote release to avoid shake on long exposures
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these. A neutral density filter in the range of 4–6 stops would be a good addition to your kit.

- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.
- A laptop or tablet with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting

images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor.

- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are UK three-pin. If you're coming from outside the UK you might need a travel plug adapter on sale at airports.

### **PARTNERS**

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs. The price will be the same.

### **MORE QUESTIONS?**

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

### **BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY**

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)7432 808777.

### **LINKS**

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website. Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)