

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Coiliochbhar Hill (from Kildrummy side)

Route Summary

A short but quite demanding hill walk involving an initial ascent through pleasant woodland and farmland, becoming grass and heather hillside as you climb higher. The views at all stages of the walk are very good, with the panorama at the summit being especially satisfying.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport to this location. The parking area at the walk start/end point will take more than one vehicle.

Length: 6.090 km / 3.81 mi

Height Gain: 353 meter. **Height Loss:** 353 meter.

Max Height: 530 meter. **Min Height:** 197 meter.

Surface: Moderate. See Waypoint 1 for directions to walk starting point. Mostly on fairly good forestry and moorland land-rover tracks. The footpath diversion at Waypoints 6 and 7 is quite rough and overgrown in places.

Difficulty: Medium.

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent. This walk involves a considerable ascent over a fairly short distance.

Dog Friendly: Keep dogs on lead near to farm animals. The low fence to be crossed at Waypoint 7 has a gap that allows dogs to pass through.

Refreshments: Options in Alford (if open, during continuing Covid-19 pandemic).



Description

This is a fairly straightforward “there and back” hill walk over a relatively short distance of 6km. The ascent to the summit at 533 m above sea level is on good tracks but is quite steep at times and is certainly unrelenting, so you should be prepared for the necessary level of physical exertion! Coiliochbhar Hill (also known as Callievar Hill and Coillebharr Hill) marks the western end of the Howe of Alford. The long ridge, heavily forested on the northern slopes, dominates the left-hand view on A944 road west of Alford towards Mossat. The walk starts and ends in the Milltown of Kildrummy area, although on the opposite side of the River Don from the hamlet. As you start to gain height in the early stages of the walk there are wonderful views over farmland and the Don valley, with the “whale’s back” mass of Morven dominating the skyline. In the final section, making a direct ascent on a fairly steep heathery hillside, the views looking back to the southern and western perspective are increasingly wide-ranging, with the Cairngorm peaks prominent in the distance, as the Donside farmland falls away below you. Arriving at the obvious summit cairn there are tremendous views in all directions. Going clockwise from the northern aspect, notable hills to spot are: Tap o’Noth; Lord Arthur’s Hill; Manabattock; Knock Saul; the Bennachie range; the Menaway range; Hill of Fare; Clachnaben; Mount Battock and Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; the Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes. It’s an impressive panorama, so we recommend that you try to pick a clear day for undertaking the walk. Coiliochbhar, at 533 m high (1749 feet), is a “Marilyn” hill. Marilyn’s are defined as peaks with a prominence above 150 metres (490 feet). The name Marilyn was coined as a humorous contrast to the Munro classification of Scottish mountains above 3,000 feet (910 m), and makes a punning reference to the film actress Marilyn Monroe!



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at parking area beyond Newton Farm

(57.23285; -2.85592) <https://w3w.co/mend.stow.trailers>
Directions to reach the parking area as follows. Driving on the A97 road, Mossat to Kildrummy, at approximately 2 km from Mossat, take the minor road on the left to Milltown of Kildrummy. In about 3 km, after passing through the hamlet of Milltown of Kildrummy, cross the bridge over the River Don and turn immediately left down a tarred single track dead-end road. Pass Dukeston Farm and then, in about 1 km from the bridge pass Newton Farm on your right side. The parking area where the walk starts is a further 280 m, or so, on the left side, before a small ruined building. From the parking area, turn left to walk NW along the tarred road, away from Newton Farm, looking for a rough road on your right in about 150 m.



(2) Veer right off tarred road and uphill past gate

(57.23387; -2.85736) <https://w3w.co/dugouts.growth.noon>
In just less than 150 m, veer right off the tarred road and uphill on a rough forestry road towards a gate. Walk around the gate and continue gently uphill. (143 m)



(3) Follow rough road as it turns sharp right and uphill

(57.23515; -2.85991) <https://w3w.co/married.triangle.unimpeded>
In 200 m, don't go straight ahead. Instead, follow the rough forestry road as it turns sharp right and uphill, with trees on your left side and open views down to the valley of the River Don on your right side. (354 m)



(4) Go right at y-junction - below ruined cottage

(57.23419; -2.85095) <https://w3w.co/arise.rested.artichoke>
After ascending for 550 m, at a y-junction, go right to continue on the rough road, passing below the ruined cottage at Cameron's Hillock. In the middle distance on your right you can see Corbanchory Farm. (906 m)



(5) Carry straight on ignoring road going uphill to right

(57.23393; -2.84868)

<https://w3w.co/clarifies.compress.changing>

In 200 m, where a road climbs uphill to your right, continue straight on, now on a gentle decline. Below you on your left you will see the ruined buildings at Ferneybrae. (1.1 km)



(6) Right at locked gate to follow diversion along deer fence uphill

(57.23485; -2.84547) <https://w3w.co/bronzer.resources.dealings>

In 200 m, you will arrive at a locked deer fence gate. A small sign indicates that walkers should take the footpath to the right, alongside the deer fence. Note that the path is indistinct and overgrown (in summertime). Keep the fence close on your left side and watch out for the stumps of gorse bushes which are a trip hazard. (1.3 km)



(7) Left to continue following footpath diversion alongside deer fence

(57.23320; -2.84478) <https://w3w.co/stall.guessing.about>

In another 200 m, as directed by another footpath sign, go left over a low fence and continue along the upper boundary of the deer fence. Soon, just above another deer fence gate, you will arrive back onto the rough road that you left to take the footpath diversion at Waypoint 6. Now, continue uphill on the rough road, ignoring any options to go left or right. In a short time you will pass through an open, disused gate as you continue the relentless, and at times, steep ascent. (1.5 km)



(8) Veer left at y junction to follow track straight uphill

(57.23229; -2.83360) <https://w3w.co/gentlemen.rivals.upward>

After ascending for 800 m, where there a great views down to Corbanchory Farm, the rough road splits into a fork. Keep left here and take the grass and heather track heading straight uphill ahead of you towards a larch tree wood near the top of Coiliochbhar Hill. When you reach the top, the track swings left away from the trees and towards the nearby summit cairn. (2.3 km)



(9) Cairn at summit of Coiriochbhar Hill

(57.23504; -2.82408) <https://w3w.co/increased.affair.short>

After a fairly steep ascent of 800 m, the track swings left onto the Coiriochbhar ridge, arriving at the obvious summit cairn. From here there are wonderful views in all directions. Going clockwise from the northern aspect, notable hills to spot are: Tap o'Noth; Lord Arthur's Hill; Manabattock; Knock Saul; the Bennachie range; the Menaway range; Hill of Fare; Clachnaben; Mount Battock and Mount Keen; Lochnagar; Morven; the Buck of Cabrach; Ben Rinnes. Quite a panorama! When you are ready, re-trace your steps to make your descent back to the walk start-point. (3.1 km)



(10) Finish walk back at parking area near Newton Farm

(57.23283; -2.85600) <https://w3w.co/mend.stow.trailers>

After a descent of 3km, or so, you will have arrived back at the parking area where you started the walk. (6.1 km)



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on AllTrails](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)