

# The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

## Hill of Dunnideer Circular (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

An easy walk-in to the Hill of Dunnideer, avoiding a steep ascent. Views of the hill dominate the route from areas of natural woodland and farmland. The stone circle on the hill-side, and ruined castle at the summit are impressive. From the top there are marvellous open views.

Duration: 2.5 hours



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 2.5 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** Best option is train. Check Scotrail timetable. Parking at walk start/end point in cemetery car-park.

**Length:** 5.490 km / 3.43 mi

**Height Gain:** 138 meter **Height Loss:** 138 meter

**Max Height:** 254 meter **Min Height:** 135 meter

**Surface:** Moderate. Mostly grassy paths.

**Child Friendly:** Yes, but only if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

**Difficulty:** Moderate to easy.

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but must be on lead on public roads and around any cattle or sheep encountered.

**Refreshments:** Options in Insch.



### Description

This walk takes a gentle and unconventional route to the top of Dunnideer, avoiding a short but steep initial climb by circling around the hill from a northern aspect, through community woodland and with inspiring views of the hill and summit ruin over open fields. From the top of the hill the vista is outstanding in all directions but with particularly impressive views of nearby Hill of Christ's Kirk, Buck of Cabrach, Tap o' Noth, Hill of Foudland, and Hill of Tillymorgan. Although not high, the Hill of Dunnideer, with its distinctive ruined castle on top, dominates the landscape around the large Aberdeenshire village of Insch. Dunnideer Castle, possibly the earliest tower-house in Scotland, was built c.1260 AD partially from the remains of an existing vitrified hill-fort in the same location dating from late Iron Age period, c. 250 BC, and probably Pictish. On the slopes of the hill, the walk route takes a short detour to the impressive remains of Dunnideer Stone Circle, partly hidden in trees. Dating back to the Bronze Age, recumbent stone circles are amongst the oldest surviving structures in Britain and are unique to the north-east of Scotland. They get their name because one large stone in the circle is laid on its side. It is thought that ancient peoples might have used these circles to record and celebrate the passing of the seasons by observing the movements of the sun and the moon and other "heavenly bodies". However, they may have developed different purposes over time, such as hosting cremation ceremonies.



## Waypoints

### (1) Start walk down lane opposite golf club sign

(57.34319; -2.62740) <https://w3w.co/slouched.roughness.rear>

From the car-park at the west side of the cemetery, walk to the pavement on Western Road and turn right. Then, with the golf course across the road on your left, immediately go right again to go down the wide lane used by golfers to connect the two parts of the golf course that are separated by Western Road. At the end, where the lane veers slightly right onto the golf course, carry on through the gate into the field. Walk along the path at the edge of the field, with the golf course on your right. At the corner of the field turn left to continue following the path towards trees and a gate at the end of the field, ahead of you.



### (2) Through gate and veer right

(57.34657; -2.62614) <https://w3w.co/initiated.gladiator.flagpole>

In about 500 m from the car-park, go through the walkers' gate into a woodland area. Veer slightly left away from the gate, then almost immediately veer right to follow the main path along the edge of the woodlands, with open fields soon appearing on your right. (500 m)



### (3) Through gate and straight on

(57.34714; -2.62686) <https://w3w.co/bleaching.compress.limitless>

In about 80 m you will arrive at another walkers' gate. Go through the gate and continue following the path. Soon, by a small group of trees and a small burn, you will arrive at another walkers' gate taking you into the field for a short distance. Almost immediately ahead of you there is another walkers' gate taking you out of the field back onto the path. Carry on taking this path for about 2.0 km, with open fields always on your left. Eventually you will arrive at a walkers' gate on your left. (580 m)



### (4) Left through gate and into field

(57.35103; -2.65448) <https://w3w.co/became.gobbles.savings>

In 2.1 km, go left through the walkers' gate into the field. Walk up through the field, keeping to the side, by the dyke. (2.7 km)



### (5) Cross road - up path and through gate

(57.34796; -2.65347) <https://w3w.co/clef.ticket.curiosity>

In about 300 m, at the field gate, by the tarred road, go through or climb the gate. Cross the road with care, go a little left to find the path up to the walkers' gate. Go through the gate and start ascending the woodland path with fields on your right. Ignore any paths to the left at this stage. (3.0 km)



### (6) Left for stone circle

(57.34445; -2.65318) <https://w3w.co/picnic.notifying.paths>

After ascending for about 500 m great views start emerging towards the nearby Hill of Christ's Kirk, and further away to the west, the Buck of Cabrach, and The Tap o' Noth. Just after a turn to your left, go sharply left away from the main path to follow the path into the trees that will take you to the Dunnideer Stone Circle. (3.5 km)



### (7) Right off track for stone circle

(57.34500; -2.65203) <https://w3w.co/shrimps.rollover.placed>

Soon this path will turn right and, about 100 m from Waypoint 6, mid-way along the next short section of path, you will see the remains of the recumbent stone circle amongst some trees. After checking out the stone circle, return to the path. (3.6 km)



### (8) Right along deer fence

(57.34485; -2.65162) <https://w3w.co/openly.disbelief.conducted>

Carry on towards the deer fence, with the ruined tower on the summit of the Hill of Dunnideer clearly visible ahead and above you. Turn right to follow the path, with the deer fence (and the Hill of Dunnideer) on your left. (3.6 km)



### (9) Left through gate

(57.34398; -2.65248) <https://w3w.co/viewer.claims.bribing>  
In another 100 m, or so, you arrive at a walkers' gate, in trees. Go left here, through the gate. Now follow the path between fields before ascending towards the summit of the Hill of Dunnideer. As you ascend, note the ancient earth ramparts that originally encircled the hill. (3.7 km)



### (10) Hill of Dunnideer

(57.34232; -2.64659) <https://w3w.co/blackbird.forgets.surveyed>  
At the summit of the hill, the most obvious feature, of course, are the ruins of the 13th Century tower house, or castle. On the eastern side you will make out some remains of the much earlier vitrified fort that occupied the site. There are great views to enjoy. When you are ready, head downhill, following the path towards the village of Inch, below. At the bottom of the hill, at the small parking area off the road there is an information board about the history of the Hill of Dunnideer. (4.2 km)



### (11) Right down road

(57.34292; -2.63789) <https://w3w.co/intend.listening.redeeming>  
In 700 m, walk through the small car-park and veer right for Western Road. Walk along the verge back towards your start-point at the cemetery car-park. (4.9 km)



### (12) Finish walk back at car-park

(57.34311; -2.62731) <https://w3w.co/slouched.roughness.rear>  
In 600 m, you will have arrived back at your start-point in the cemetery car-park. (5.5 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](#)