

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Linn of Dee-Glen Lui Townships (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

Although overlooked by high hills this is a gentle hike in a special place, suitable for most walkers. It is readily possible to modify the route to take in only the River Dee and Lui Water sections, or the walk distance can be extended by 3.5 km, to the Derry Hunting Lodge.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Nearest public transport in Braemar. NTS car-park. Parking fee, or free to members.

Length: 8.240 km / 5.15 mi

Height Gain: 115 meter. **Height Loss:** 115 meter.

Max Height: 426 meter. **Min Height:** 366 meter.

Surface: Moderate. On good paths and estate roads.

Difficulty: Easy.

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance.

Dog Friendly: Yes, on lead close to public roads.

Refreshments: Options in Braemar.



Description

Despite the remote location, 7 miles west of Braemar, the first section of this walk is justifiably popular with walkers of all abilities. The beauty of the natural environment is striking, and the walk kicks off with a visit to the Linn of Dee where the waters of the river churn and cascade through a rocky gorge, set off by the impressive Gothic stone bridge above, built in Victorian times to replace various wooden structures that were swept away. The route then progresses downstream before crossing through mature pine woods to the fast-flowing Lui Water, just above its confluence with the Dee. Here, there are some classic Highland views of tumbling waters, open conifer woodland, and high surrounding hills. The force of the river's flow makes a particular impact on the senses by the waterfall and salmon ladder at Waypoint 5. Our extended route then ventures further into Glen Lui before turning back to the start-point, taking a well-used estate road that leads to the Lairig Ghru pass through the Cairngorms and high peaks such as Ben Macdui and Derry Cairngorm, whose tops will be visible on a fine day. The early section is dominated by some wonderful views of 'granny pines' and the naturally re-generating Caledonian Pine Forest around them. As you enter a more open area with rough grassy meadows running down to the river, the landscape is dotted with overgrown low ruins, evidence of grain-drying kilns, barns and abandoned human habitation. After a chequered history, from late Medieval times onwards, of hardship and eviction, these farming "townships" were finally abandoned in the late 1700's. This route is on the Mar Lodge Estate, owned by the National Trust for Scotland. It is made up of more than 29,000 hectares of a quintessential Highland landscape: heather-covered moorland, Caledonian pine forest, and towering mountains.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at NTS Linn of Dee car-park

(56.98962; -3.54300) <https://w3w.co/blogs.hops.snatched>

The walk starts from the NTS Linn of Dee car-park (NTS charges apply, free to members) which is 6.6 miles west of Braemar, off the Linn of Dee Road. From the information boards close to the entrance to the car-park, cross the road and take the waymarked path going right for Linn of Dee. Soon, the path descends to the bank of the River Dee where the impressive rocky gorge of the Linn of Dee is immediately obvious. Keep going along the path towards the road and road-bridge*. Cross the road with care and go a little further and down to your left (take care!) to get a view of the bridge and Linn of Dee from the western perspective.

**Note: the impressive Gothic stone bridge was built in Victorian times to replace various wooden structures that were swept away.*



(2) Linn of Dee

(56.98828; -3.54669) <https://w3w.co/prospered.impulsive.golden>

In 300 m, or so from the start, after crossing the road to the west side of the road bridge to take in the view of the Linn of Dee from that side, when you are ready, re-trace your steps over the road by the bridge, then re-trace your steps along the riverbank. Ignore the path taking you back up to the car-park that you descended on and carry on walking along the well-maintained path through the trees, along the scenic riverbank, crossing areas where there are boardwalks. After about 400 m, follow the path up to the road. Cross the road and resume taking the path as it continues on the other side of the road, soon bending east through the trees, and proceeding parallel with the road. (304 m)



(3) Left through pedestrian gate

(56.99023; -3.53518) <https://w3w.co/spreads.secret.thinnest>

In 700 m, where the path ends at the entrance to a rough forestry road, go left through the pedestrian gate and follow the forestry road, with tantalising glimpses of the fast-flowing Lui Water on your right side. (1.1 km)



(4) Right off rough road onto Lui Water path

(56.99178; -3.53827) <https://w3w.co/scouts.startles.emphasis>

In 300 m, leave the forestry road to veer right onto a path onto the high riverbank of the Lui Water. There are some great views of the tumbling watercourse, especially after rain. (1.3 km)



(5) Divert right to salmon ladder

(56.99483; -3.53914)

<https://w3w.co/bachelor.carriage.minimums>

In 400 m, at a y-junction where the main path goes straight ahead, veer onto the right fork which soon descends close to the riverbank where there are fast flowing waterfalls, and where a concrete salmon ladder has been constructed to assist the fish to make progress through this spectacular but difficult river gorge. When you are ready, re-trace your steps back to the Waypoint, turning sharp right to carry on taking the main path. (1.7 km)



(6) Right onto Glen Lui road

(56.99792; -3.54310) <https://w3w.co/brisk.indicate.circulate>

In 600 m, the Lui Water path meets the Mar Estate road again. Here, you turn right* to follow the road into Glen Lui where there are mountainous vistas, near and far. Low cloud permitting, you should readily identify Ben Macdui between a gap in lower hills, to the west, one of the highest mountains in the UK. Keep going on this road for about 2.3 km (crossing a bridge over the Lui Water in about 800 m). The early section is soon dominated by some wonderful views of 'granny pines' and the naturally re-generating Caledonian Pine Forest around them. As you enter a more open area with rough grassy meadows running down to the river on your left, look out for overgrown low ruins, evidence of grain-drying kilns and abandoned human habitation (farming townships and shielings - see the next Waypoint for more info). (2.3 km)



**Note: you have the option of turning left here to shorten the walk by more than half, returning to the car-park directly instead of exploring part of Glen Lui. In which case, your next waypoint is Waypoint 9, in about 450 m.*

(7) Left onto grassy track to river - in townships area

(57.01354; -3.55842) <https://w3w.co/touches.continued.insolvent>

In 2.3 km, on the southern point of a noticeable little bend in the road that makes its way around a low heathery bank, look out for an indistinct vehicle track on your left, heading down through the grassy meadow* towards the river. You are about to walk in a loop, down to the river, along to your left along the riverbank, then back up to the estate road for the return section of the route**. Follow the grassy track down to the Lui Water where you turn left to walk along the riverbank in an easterly direction, with the water on your right side. This section is fairly rough, with a barely discernable path, crossing a small burn in the final few steps. (4.6 km)



**Note: the area is dotted with overgrown low ruins, evidence of grain-drying kilns, barns and abandoned human habitation. After a chequered history, from late Medieval times onwards, of hardship and eviction, these farming "townships" were finally abandoned in the late 1700's. For an insight into the history, see the MAR LODGE ESTATE GRAMPIAN An Archaeological Survey : <http://rapweb.rcahms.gov.uk/wp/00/WP003909.pdf>*

***Note: you have the option of continuing along the estate road to Derry Lodge, an abandoned hunting lodge set in pine trees. There and back will add 3.5 km to the walk.*

(8) Left away from river and up grassy track to Glen Lui road

(57.01081; -3.55531) <https://w3w.co/rooms.encourage.chief>

In 500 m, after crossing the small burn (you should be able to stride across it), go left a little, away from the riverbank to pick up a grassy vehicle track heading north, back up to the estate road that you left at Waypoint 7. Look out for the ruins of farm townships on either side. At the estate road, turn right to re-trace you steps back towards the walk start-point, ignoring the Lui Water path on your right that you emerged from earlier at Waypoint 6. (5.1 km)



(9) Right off road towards NTS car-park

(56.99424; -3.54103) <https://w3w.co/replied.poet.indulges>

In 2.5 km, go right, off the estate road, to take the waymarked path back to the NTS car-park where you started the walk. (7.6 km)



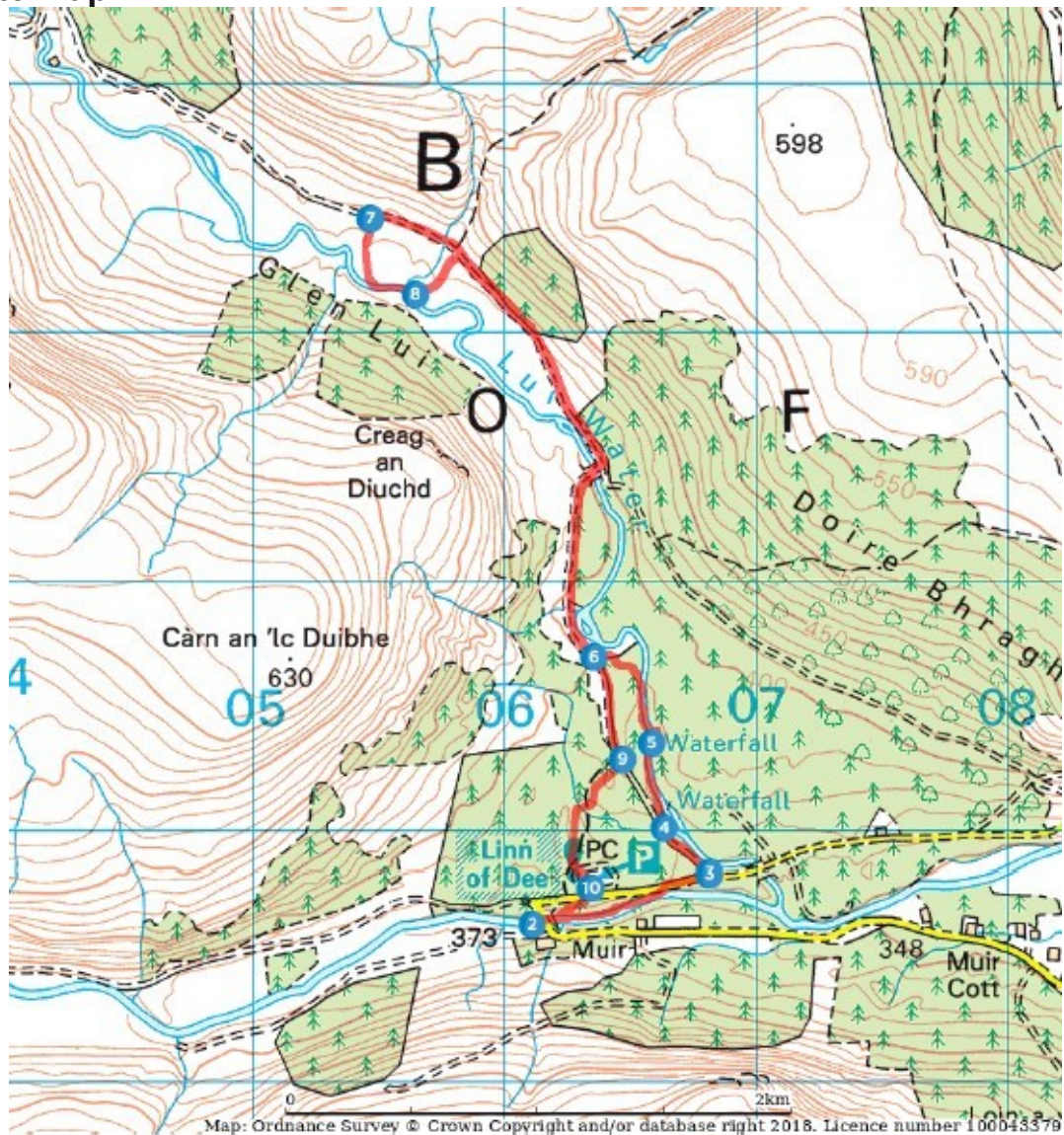
(10) Finish walk back at NTS Linn of Dee car-park

(56.98962; -3.54291) <https://w3w.co/blogs.hops.snatched>

In 900 m, you will have returned to the NTS Linn of Dee car-park where you started the walk. (8.3 km)



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from Walk](#)

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

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

[Access Walk on Viewranger](#)

[Access the Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)