

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Meikle Tap (Hill of Fare) Circular (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

Close to Westhill and Banchory, this is an accessible walk in open conifer forest and heather moorland, easily accomplished in a half-day excursion. The ascent to the top is gradual, whilst the views from the top are wonderful. A good hill-walk for walkers of all abilities.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport passing walk start/end point. Roadside lay-by at start/end point. Space for about 4 to 5 cars.

Length: 7.220 km / 4.51 mi

Height Gain: 257 meter. **Height Loss:** 257 meter.

Max Height: 353 meter. **Min Height:** 111 meter.

Surface: Moderate. The first half of the walk is mostly on good forest and land-rover roads. The second half is mostly on a rough path which may be muddy after rain. We believe that a modified (there and back) version of the route may be suitable for off-road mobility scooters. See the note at Waypoint 1 for details.

Difficulty: Medium.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, on lead at the start/end point on the busy B977 road.

Refreshments: Echt Tandoori in Echt. Jaffs in Dunecht. Options in Westhill, Banchory and Torphins.



Description

Starting and ending in mature conifer forest [*lower slopes now felled as at August 2022*] close to the village of Echt, this is a short but invigorating hill-walk that should be within the scope of most walkers. The woodland environment is very pleasant and reasonably open, followed by a sweeping steady ascent which affords some marvellous views along the way. Just below the summit is a tall and intriguing solitary standing stone, alongside other, fallen stones, indicating the possible remains of a more extensive stone circle. However, the origin of the stone, or stones, does not appear to be documented, and nor is the position marked on the OS map. The 360° panoramic views on reaching the trig point and mast at the summit are fabulous, providing lots of scope for identifying points of interest, and peaks, near and far.



An unusual stone cairn there provides 4 roughly-seated alcoves at the 4 points of the compass so that you can enjoy the view and a mid-walk snack in relative shelter! The return leg of the walk takes an, at times, steep descent on a rough path, which may be muddy, before regaining the forest. Meikle Tap is on the north-east corner of the extensive Hill of Fare massif, an area of forestry and rough moorland north of Banchory with a number of distinct peaks. Meikle Tap featured in the topography of the Battle of Corrichy in 1562. It was fought between the forces of George Gordon, 4th Earl of Huntly, against the forces of Mary, Queen of Scots, under James Stewart, 1st Earl of Moray. Mary had come in person to the north of Scotland intent on confronting the power of the Gordons, whose force originally took a vantage point on the lower northern slopes of the Meikle Tap. However, damaging arquebus musket shot drove them down to marshy ground. Apparently, the Gordon's tactic of charging with swords was defeated by Moray's long pikes, and they were speedily routed.

Waypoints

(1) Start walk through gap in old wall

<https://w3w.co/achieving.basics.uniforms> NJ7432203873

Start the walk from a lay-by on the left-hand side of the B977 road from Echt*. This lay-by is 1.95 km south from the Echt Tandoori at the crossroads in Echt. Cross the road with care and enter the woodland on a path through a broken-down stone wall. There is a fire hazard sign and an old steel gate to your right as you enter the trees.

**Note: In order to undertake the walk on an off-road mobility scooter follow this guidance: Start the walk at a lay-by approximately 250 m further on up the B977 road (in the direction away from Echt). Cross the road and take the forest road to a x-roads in about 100m, passing a moorland information board, turn right and follow the forest road. In about 180 m you will arrive at Waypoint 2 on the main route. Carry on from there, following the waypoint instructions until arriving at the summit area of Meikle Tap. The return on the main route, as described in our PDF guide, is not suitable for an off-road mobility scooter due to the path being narrow, steep and very stony in places. Instead, return to your start point by the same route as you ascended to the summit.*



(2) Go right at t-junction with forest road

(57.12438; -2.42786) <https://w3w.co/punctuate.dumplings.shiny>

In just over 150 m, where the path meets a forest road, go right to walk along the forest road in a NW direction. (155 m)



(3) Left and uphill

(57.12665; -2.43992) <https://w3w.co/pets.wrenching.look>

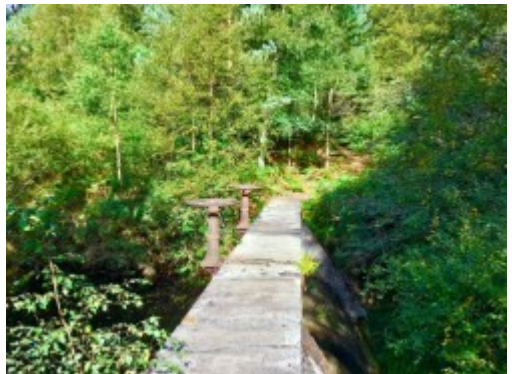
After 800 m, at a junction on the forest roads, go left and gently uphill. (953 m)



(4) Divert left to check out old dam

(57.12234; -2.44909) <https://w3w.co/quicksand.climate.prungs>

After ascending for 750 m, divert briefly to your left to check out an old dam on the Landerberry Burn. Then, continue following the forest road gently uphill. (1.7 km)



(5) Left and uphill at y-junction

(57.12255; -2.45303) <https://w3w.co/apprehend.fills.duration>

In 300 m, at a y-junction go left and uphill as views towards the peak of Meikle Tap now begin to open up on your left side. (2.0 km)



(6) Left again and uphill at y-junction

(57.12232; -2.46657) <https://w3w.co/smuggled.inserted.phantom>

In 900 m, at another y-junction, again go left and uphill. (2.9 km)



(7) Summit of Meikle Tap

(57.11339; -2.45950)

<https://w3w.co/coaching.promoted.suspended>

After ascending in open moorland for 2.4 km, and soon after passing a solitary standing stone (its origin does not appear to be documented and nor is its position marked on the OS map), you will arrive at the summit of Meikle Tap where there is a mast and a trig point. There is also a stone cairn with handy seated alcoves facing N, S, E and W, each giving some shelter from the wind, depending on direction. There are marvellous views in all directions. When you are ready to move on, take the footpath descending from the trig point in a NE direction. You will see the extensive McIntosh Plant Hire buildings below you, slightly to your right. In the middle distance, some miles away, you will see the Loch of Skene straight ahead. Carry on down this rough footpath and into the trees below for almost 2.5 km. (4.5 km)



(8) Left along forest road

(57.12281; -2.42788) <https://w3w.co/agree.working.feasting>

After descending from the summit for 2.4 km and arriving at a x-roads* on the forest tracks, take the forest road going left. (6.9 km)

**Note: just beyond the x-roads is an information board about managed moorlands.*



(9) Right onto path to return to start

(57.12433; -2.42791) <https://w3w.co/boarding.afford.craftsmen>
After about 200 m, look out for the path on your right side where you emerged at Waypoint 2, at the start of the walk. Go right to take this path back to the B977 road and your start-point at the lay-by. (7.1 km)

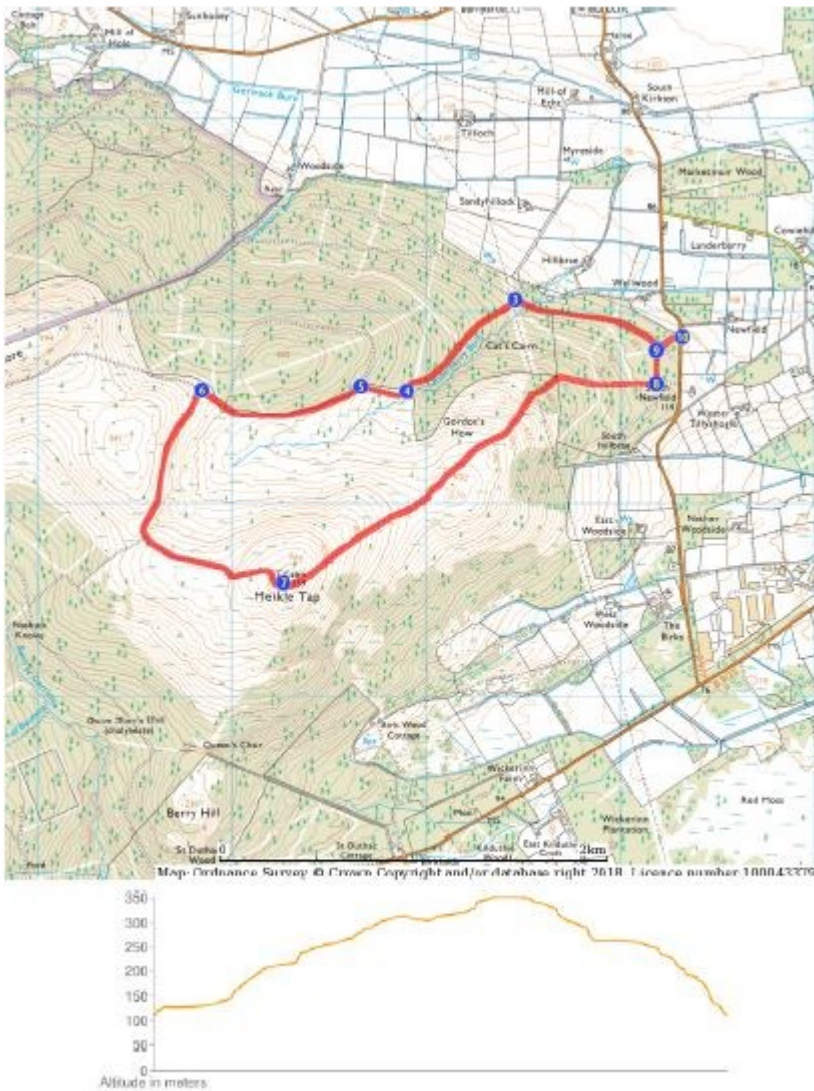


(10) Cross B977 road to end walk at car-parking area

(57.12495; -2.42568) <https://w3w.co/attention.offerings.hook>
After approximately 100 m, you will have left the path through the trees to carefully cross the busy B977 road in order to return to your start-point at the lay-by on the other side of the road. (7.2 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](#)