

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Balmedie Country Park-Blairton Burn Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A short but enjoyable coastal walk through a special sand dunes system and on a wide sandy beach. There are good views of the recently constructed Menie golf course and the Aberdeen wind farm turbines, just offshore. The beach section can be extended in either direction.

Duration: 1.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: There are a number of Stagecoach bus services that stop in Balmedie. Check timetables. Walking to the walk start-finish point from the bus-stop will add 3 km, in total, to the walk. Yes, free car-parks at start/finish of walk.

Length: 4.810 km / 3.01 mi

Height Gain: 41 meter **Height Loss:** 41 meter

Max Height: 17 meter **Min Height:** 0 meter

Surface: Moderate. Mostly on grassy paths, sand and board-walk. The route is not suitable for an off-road mobility scooter due to narrow paths with deep sand, and steps.

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

Difficulty: Easy.

Dog Friendly: Yes, but must be on lead on short public road section and in car-parks.

Refreshments: Options in Balmedie and Aberdeen.



Description

An easy walk through the dune system, and on the fine sandy beach at Balmedie Country Park. The route initially heads north, leaving the Country Park boardwalk to cross an impressively large area of open sand dunes, where the natural marram grass environment is constantly shifting with the wind and seasons. The next section takes a path along the top of the dunes, high above the beach, to reach the outflow of the Blairton Burn at the southern end of the Menie links golf course, recently built on the Foveran SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), once described as one of the most exceptional sand dune systems in Britain. The

still controversial golf course development by the Trump International organisation was approved on the basis that the potential economic benefit would outweigh environmental harm. The mid-section of the walk returns, south, along the golden sands of Balmedie Beach where there is a good view of the Aberdeen wind farm turbines. A total of 11 turbines make up the European Offshore Wind Deployment Centre (EOWDC). The 11 turbines are the most powerful in the world with a total generating capacity of 93.2 MW. It is estimated the wind farm will produce the equivalent of more than 70% of Aberdeen's domestic electricity demand. The route along the beach then crosses the Eigie Burn outflow, before turning inland to cross the dunes again at the estuary of the Millden Burn. There are a number of interesting WW2 buildings in this area, remnants of a centre for destroying unexploded ordinance. This short walk can readily be extended both north and south along the beach.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at The Sand Bothy

(57.25393; -2.04179)

Start the walk from the Balmedie Country Park car-park with the toilet block at the west end and The Sand Bothy cafe/meeting space at the east end. Walk east on the main sandy path towards the sand dunes, passing The Sand Bothy on your right side.



(2) Left off the board-walk

(57.25366; -2.03873)

In just less than 200 m, where another board-walk heads south on your right side, turn the opposite direction and go left and north to follow a wide grassy track. Keep following this track, ensuring that you stay fairly close to the fence that appears on your left side. (188 m)



(3) Veer right to cross sand dunes

(57.25939; -2.03694)

In 700 m, as the wide grassy track offers to come to an end, veer right onto the obvious sandy path taking you to a large and fairly open area of sand dunes. Head east towards a fairly obvious path ahead of you that climbs onto the sand dunes behind the beach. Once you have reached the edge of the high dunes nearest to the beach, turn left and follow the narrow path north, with the beach on your right side below you. Keep going past a green and fairway on the (Trump) Menie Golf Links, until you arrive at a point where you are looking down on a bridge on the golf course near the estuary of the Blairton Burn. (879 m)



(4) Go right down to beach at Blairton Burn

(57.26511; -2.02662)

In 1 km, looking down on the golf course bridge over the Blairton Burn and the small estuary area where the burn meets the beach, go right and down from the sand dunes onto the beach, where you turn right and head south towards Aberdeen. Keep walking along the beach for about 2 km, passing the outflow of the Eigie Burn in about 1.5 km, and reaching the outflow of the Millden Burn in a further 500 m, or so, where you will turn inland and leave the beach (see Waypoint 5). (1.9 km)



(5) Right and up path before Millden Burn

(57.24848; -2.03868)

In 2 km, when you reach the outflow of the Millden Burn (note: where the burn outflows on the beach may vary over time), you should see a fairly wide and obvious sandy path leaving the beach on your right and rising to the top of the sand dunes behind the beach. Follow this path inland as it soon drops behind the dunes into a valley between dunes where you will spot a board-walk with steps rising up the next dune ahead of you. (3.9 km)



(6) Up steps on board-walk

(57.24896; -2.04010)

In 200 m, or so, take the stepped board-walk up the grassy dune ahead of you. This board-walk terminates at the top of the dune, as it crosses over, passing a couple of WW2 lookout posts. As you descend to the other side you will see another board-walk ahead of you on the flat. Join that board-walk and turn right to walk inland to walk towards a disused toilet block building and small car-park. (4.1 km)



(7) Right at end of board-walk onto beach road

(57.24998; -2.04364)

In 200 m, at the end of the board-walk, by an information board, opposite a disused toilet block and small car-park, turn right onto the narrow beach road, heading back towards The Sand Bothy building, which you can see ahead of you, where you started the walk. (4.3 km)



(8) Veer left by info board for car-park

(57.25244; -2.04138)

In 300 m, where the tarred beach road turns left, veer right slightly towards an information board and then take the narrow grassy path towards the car-parking areas near The Sand Bothy. (4.6 km)



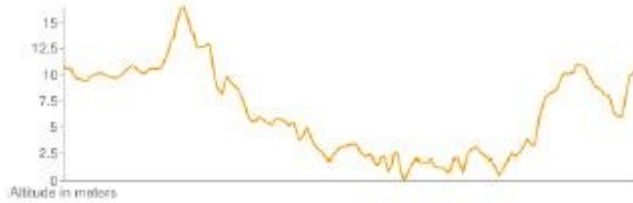
(9) Finish walk back at The Sand Bothy

(57.25393; -2.04192)

In another 200 m, you will have returned to the car-parking area by The Sand Bothy where you started the walk. (4.8 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 Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

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