

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

## Braes of Morven-Roar Hill Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

### Route Summary

There are great views, particularly of the Howe of Cromar, on this vigorous little hill-walk on the eastern slopes of Morven Hill, steadily gaining more than 300 meters ascent over a relatively short distance to achieve some fine outlooks in all directions.

Duration: 3 hours.



### Route Overview

**Duration:** 3 hours.

**Transport/Parking:** No public transport nearby. See Waypoint 1 for directions to the walk start point by car. Rough parking for about 8 vehicles at the walk start/end point.

**Length:** 6.270 km / 3.92 mi

**Height Gain:** 327 meter. **Height Loss:** 327 meter.

**Max Height:** 535 meter. **Min Height:** 213 meter.

**Surface:** Moderate. There are some boggy sections near the start, otherwise on a rough but well-defined moorland path. The return is on land-rover tracks, with a short section on a very quiet minor tarred road.

**Difficulty:** Medium.

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

**Dog Friendly:** Yes, but must be on lead at all times as sheep may be encountered throughout the route.

**Refreshments:** Options in Logie Coldstone, Tarland, Alford, Aboyne, and Ballater.



### Description

This is a straightforward but very enjoyable short hill walk on the heathery slopes of Morven, an imposing Corbett hill that sits between Deeside and Donside, on the eastern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park. On both the ascent and descent, there are marvellous views of the broad bowl of the Howe of Cromar, with its appealing patchwork of fields and woodland, protected by surrounding hills, with Loch Davan at Muir of Dinnet visible for most of the time. After crossing a moorland "saddle" where the Coinach Burn bursts out of the hillside and down a grassy ravine, the mid-section of the route crosses over the broad top of Roar Hill where there are fine views back towards the summit of Morven to the north-west, and a far-ranging, wild and mountainous landscape to the west and south. The imposing



"whale's back" mass of Morven Hill ("A' Mhòr Bheinn", in Gaelic) is a recognisable feature throughout much of western Aberdeenshire, immortalised by Lord Byron in verse as follows: "...when I rov'd a young Highlander o'er the dark heath, And climb'd thy steep summit, oh Morven of snow ...". Hill sheep, from a large flock managed by the Auchnerran Demonstration Farm, may be encountered throughout the walk. The farm is operated by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and aims "... to demonstrate how agricultural practices, livestock management, wildlife conservation and game management can co-exist to form an economically viable system ...". Auchnerran occupies 1,030 acres of hill-farming land, with over 1,000 sheep. The heather moorland above the farm is owned by the Dinnet Estate and is grazed in summer by the hefted sheep flock. See: <https://www.gwct.org.uk/auchnerran/about/>

## Waypoints

### (1) Start the walk at the small car-parking area

(57.12681; -2.97633) <https://w3w.co/shorthand.shocked.hobble>

Start the walk at the small car-parking area\* at the end of the tarred road, just before the rough access road to Groddie. There is an information board for the Auchnerran Demonstration Farm\*\* which operates in this area. Looking at the info board, go left to take a farm track, almost immediately taking a fork going left through a gate where there is another Auchnerran information board. Carry on taking the grassy track, soon passing the ruins of Balhennie croft and heading uphill towards two adjacent farm gates.



*\*Note: the car-parking area is 2.7 km from the A97 Dinnet to Logie Coldstone road down a narrow dead-end road signposted for Groddie. The turn-off for Groddie is 2.5 km from the Milton of Leys x-roads on the A97, heading for Logie Coldstone, or 860 m from the centre of Logie Coldstone, heading for Dinnet. There is space for about 8 cars, and the space can soon fill up on a weekend morning so our advice is to arrive early.*

*\*\*Note: the Auchnerran Demonstration Farm is operated by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and aims "... to demonstrate how agricultural practices, livestock management, wildlife conservation and game management can co-exist to form an economically viable system ...". Auchnerran occupies 1,030 acres of hill-farming land, with over 1,000 sheep. The heather moorland above the farm (covering most of our walking route) is owned by Dinnet Estate and is summer grazed by the hefted sheep flock. See: <https://www.gwct.org.uk/auchnerran/about/>*

### (2) Climb over low gate after passing Balhennie Cottage

(57.12511; -2.98301) <https://w3w.co/capacity.meaty.ordering>

In 515 m from the start, cross over the low farm gate on the right (it is securely tied so it is easier to climb over it). Carry on walking uphill through a field with a fence on your left side. In 80 m go through a pedestrian gate and take the indistinct path going more or less straight uphill\*. After passing over a couple of boggy sections where the path is indistinct, the path soon becomes much more distinct as it steadily climbs up through the heather moorland in a broadly SW direction, getting closer to the steep grassy ravine of the Coinlach burn on your left side as you gain height. (515 m)



*\*Note: the main path to the summit of Morven goes right here. You may, if you wish, take this path uphill for about 80 m, then go left on a path that soon joins up with our route.*

### (3) Go left upon meeting land-rover track

(57.11607; -3.00132) <https://w3w.co/payer.hothouse.silly>

In 1.6 km, the narrow path meets a land-rover track\* close to the rushing waters of the Coinlach Burn. Turn left here and take the land-rover track as it ascends over Roar Hill where there are fine open views to the south and west. (2.1 km)



*\*Note: turning right here is a route that takes you to a path to the summit of Morven.*

#### (4) Left at t-junction

(57.11016; -2.99428) <https://w3w.co/insert.openings.foreheads>  
In 900 m, at a t-junction, take the land-rover track going left and downhill. There are very good views of the Howe of Cromar and surrounding hills, with Loch Davan at Muir of Dinnet also visible to your right. (3 km)



#### (5) Through gate and carry on

(57.11986; -2.97923) <https://w3w.co/bars.showcases.implore>  
After descending for 2 km, and soon after crossing the fairly narrow Coinlach Burn on stepping stones, go through a pedestrian gate beside woodland and follow the grassy track. (5 km)



#### (6) Take right fork

(57.12039; -2.97660) <https://w3w.co/mirror.vest.tango>  
In about 200 m there is a fork in the grassy track. We suggest that you take the clearer right fork track with woodland on your right side (although the left fork track through the pasture joins up a little further down the hillside). (5.2 km)



#### (7) Left onto tarred road - passing Auchnerran Farm building

(57.12293; -2.97122) <https://w3w.co/meaty.goodnight.putter>  
In 500 m, after passing through a gate and walking past the rear of some Auchnerran Farm office and storage buildings, turn left onto the minor tarred road for the final section of the route, back to the car-parking area where you started the walk. (5.7 km)

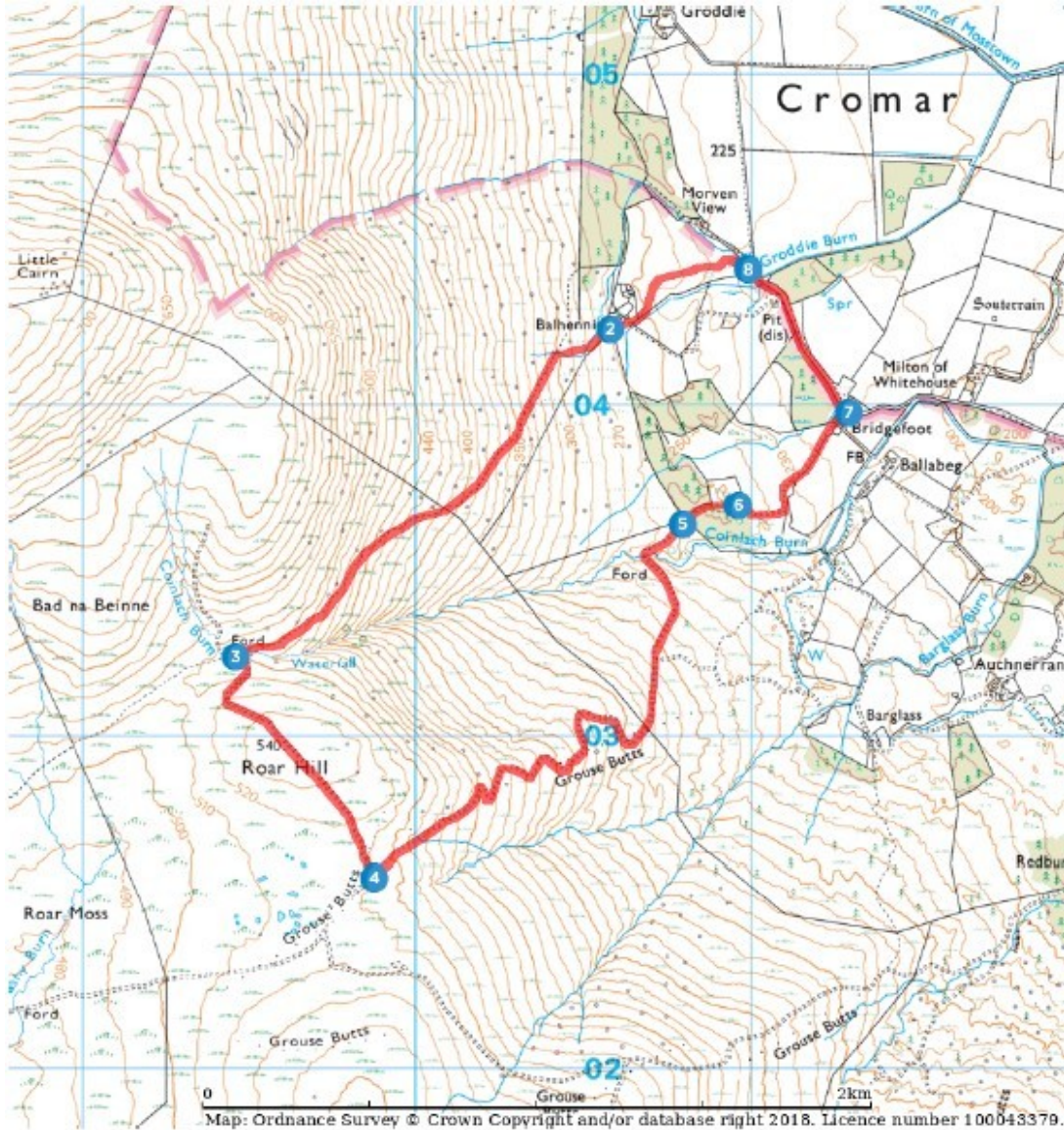


## (8) Finish walk back at parking area

(57.12679; -2.97627) <https://w3w.co/shorthand.shocked.hobble>  
In 600 m, you will have returned to the car-parking area where you started the walk. (6.3 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 Walk on Outdooractive](#)

[Access Walk on Wikiloc](#)