

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Gardenstown-Crovie-5 Farms Circular (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

A varied walk in a beautiful and unique coastal landscape, taking in two pretty fishing villages, dramatic cliffs, and rolling farmland. There is a considerable overall ascent at 336 m, rewarded by some wonderful viewpoints.

Duration: 3 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Stagecoach #273 from Banff. Check timetable. There is a small public car-park at New Ground, Gardenstown, near the start/end point of the walk.

Length: 8.880 km / 5.55 mi

Height Gain: 336 meter

Height Loss: 336 meter

Max Height: 116 meter

Min Height: 8 meter

Surface: Moderate. Mostly on hard-surfaced farm access roads or minor public roads.

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

Difficulty: Medium.

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead near to livestock, and on public roads.

Refreshments: Teapot 1 Cafe (summer season only) and Garden Arms Hotel, both Gardenstown. Otherwise, Banff or Fraserburgh.



Description

This walk offers the opportunity to enjoy one of the grandest and most picturesque coastlines in the NE of Scotland, if not the whole country. Deep valleys break up the landscape, separated by mighty cliff-tops, such as Troup Head, and punctuated by villages clinging to tiny strips of land, constantly threatened by the sea. Inland, the fertile farmland looks prosperous, assisted by a relatively benign micro-climate, protected by the Grampian Mountains and the Moray Firth. At the start of the walk, we take a dramatic coastal path, in places cut into the rocky headland that separates Gardenstown and Crovie.



After exploring pretty little Crovie, the route climbs high to the level of the rolling farmland characteristic of the area, passing five farms before looping back to a viewpoint above Crovie where there is an information board and inscribed stone. A new cliff-top path back to Gardenstown provides some stunning perspectives on the coastline. On a clear day you can see the northern tip of Scotland across the Moray Firth. Originally, and still familiarly, known as Gamrie, Gardenstown was founded in 1720 by the local landowner as a planned fishing village, to provide rental income. On a remote and almost inaccessible hillside to the west of the village, are the eye-catching ruins of the Church of St John, built in 1513, on a spot occupied by monks to give thanks for a famous victory over an invading Danish army in 1004. Crovie (pronounced Crivie) was established by crofters who had been displaced from the N of Scotland by the Highland Clearances. They made a hard and precarious living from fishing, paying the local laird rent for the boats and the cottages. By the end of the 19th C, more than 50 fishing boats were based here. The village was almost destroyed in the Great Storm of January 1953. Since then most of the buildings, which all have "listed" status, have become holiday or weekend homes.

Waypoints

(1) Start walk at car-park to east of harbour

(57.67396; -2.33451)

Start the walk at the little car-park in the area known as New Ground, just a little east of Gardenstown harbour. Walk past the boardwalk and benches area, heading east in the direction of Crovie village, just visible in the middle distance. Cross the little beach* to join the raised stone and concrete coastal path running under the cliffs. Note, the walkway is safe. There are metal posts and chains to protect the walker from a fall to the sea! Follow the path around the headland, eventually arriving at the western end of Crovie.

**Note: if you arrive at high-water on a spring tide, the beach at Gardenstown may be impassable. You have the option to wait, or reverse the route to/from Crovie by taking the cliff-top path that you would, otherwise, take from Crovie to Gardenstown in the final section of the walk. See: <https://tides.willyweather.co.uk/gr/aberdeenshire/gardenstown.html>*



(2) Walk along the sea-front at Crovie

(57.67770; -2.32487)

In about 800 m from the start, arriving at the western end of Crovie, where the access road runs downhill, veer left to walk along the sea-front, passing the sea-facing gable ends of many cottages, all now listed buildings. Carry on walking, enjoying, the charming irregularity of the village architecture until you have reached the last cottage, at the furthest east point. Now reverse your steps to the mid-point in the village where the small burn runs into the sea. (790 m)



(3) Walk up burn-side and across bridge

(57.67922; -2.32386)

In 800 m, having returned to the mid-point in the village by the burn, go left and inland, crossing the burn at a little wooden bridge to pass by the front of two cottages on your left. Carry on up the access road as it starts to climb up the side of the little valley. (1.6 km)



(4) Left at t-junction

(57.67829; -2.32163)

In 200 m, or so, the rough road meets a t-junction. Go left here to pass by what remains of Stonehouse Farm on your right. (1.8 km)



(5) Left and down onto fields access road

(57.67942; -2.32039)

In another 200 m, at a y-junction, don't take the right fork which is an access road to Mink Howe but, instead, go downhill on the left fork, marked as a field access road. Follow the rough road as it climbs quite steeply uphill. Eventually, you pass Crovie Farm on your left. Keep going after the farm, with fields on both sides at all times. (2.0 km)



(6) Right at t-junction by Crovie Farm sign

(57.68171; -2.30110)

After 1.9 km, you arrive at a t-junction, where there is a sign for Crovie Farm, that you passed earlier. The road on your left passes Northfield Farm and goes to the RSPB Reserve at Troup Head*. Your route on this walk is to the right, inland and away from Northfield Farm. Keep going on this road, passing a small pottery and holiday let place at one point, until you reach Protston Farm in about 1 km. (3.9 km)

**Note: to divert to the RSPB Reserve, and back, would add about 4 km to the walk. RSPB link:*

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/troup-head/>



(7) Right down access road at Protston Farm

(57.67350; -2.30729)

In 1 km, turn right down the farm access road at the bend in the road at Protston Farm. (4.9 km)



(8) Veer left onto grassy track at Stonewells Farm

(57.67676; -2.31142)

In 500 m, at Stonewells Farm, veer slightly left to take the track rising gently uphill, with farm buildings on your right. Follow this grassy track as it rises over the hill and starts to descend to the valley area known as Mink Howe. There is a section where the path gets narrower, passing through gorse bushes. Keep going, passing through a couple of steel gates before passing the house, also known as Mink Howe, on your left, then passing Waypoint 5 as you continue to descend towards Crovie. (5.4 km)



(9) Keep straight on - down then up

(57.67836; -2.32164)

After 1.1 km, at the t-junction encountered at Waypoint 4, above Crovie, carry straight on, at first going downhill, then uphill. When you reach an open parking area at the tarred public road for Crovie, turn left and uphill. Soon you arrive at the Crovie viewpoint where there is a car-park, a picnic area, and an information board to check out. After checking out the view and info board, return to the tarred public road and continue uphill for a few metres, looking out for a walk signpost and path on your right. (6.5 km)



(10) Right onto surfaced path to Gardenstown

(57.67587; -2.32478)

Just a few metres above the Crovie Viewpoint area there is a (new, at the time of writing in Nov 2018) walks signpost and good surfaced path along the cliff-tops to the high end of Gardenstown. Go right along this path. (7.1 km)



(11) Through gate to Gardenstown

(57.67269; -2.33214)

In 700 m, the cliff-top path emerges at the end of a row of houses on Morven View Road at the high side of Gardenstown. Turn right to go along Morven View Road and then continue downhill on the pavement towards the harbour area at the centre of the village. In about 800 m, look out for a path on your right marked for 'Viewpoint', just below the Free Church. (7.8 km)



(12) Down steps on right to harbour viewpoint

(57.67238; -2.33591)

In about 800 m, look out for a path and steps on your right marked for 'Viewpoint', just below the Free Church, on Church Road. Go down the steps and deviate to the right, briefly to take in the fine harbour view. Then, re-trace your steps and carry on walking down the path until it joins Harbour Lane. (8.6 km)



(13) Finish walk back at car-park

(57.67393; -2.33462)

From Harbour Lane, at a junction, carry straight on past houses on your right, heading back towards your walk start-point at the New Ground car-park and benches. (8.9 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 Wikiloc](#)