

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Smirisary Village and White Beaches (Highland)

Route Summary

This is a short coastal walk in an extraordinarily beautiful but remote area, with great views out to the islands of Eigg and Muck. The part-abandoned village of Smirisary, in a stunning pastoral setting, is your gateway to a little clutch of evocative white sand beaches.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport. There is a small car-parking area at the walk start/end point.

Length: 4.650 km / 2.91 mi

Height Gain: 200 meter. **Height Loss:** 200 meter.

Max Height: 65 meter. **Min Height:** 1 meter.

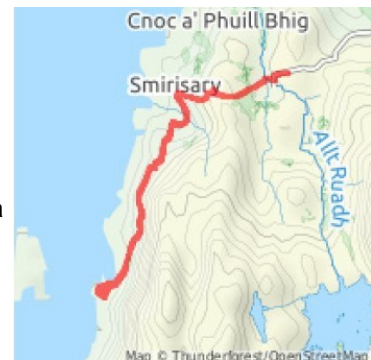
Surface: Moderate. There is a clearly defined path throughout, apart from a small section across the meadow in Smirisary. Some path segments are rough, boggy, or muddy.

Difficulty: Medium.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, but on lead due to unenclosed grazing sheep.

Refreshments: The Glenuig Inn serves snacks and light lunches during the day.



Description

This is a memorable little there and back coastal walk in a wildly beautiful landscape in the remote and rugged Moidart area of West Scotland. At the turning point on the route, the walk takes in some stunning white shell-sand beaches of the type made famous by the film *Local Hero*. At an isolated low promontory, with small islands close by offshore, there are three beautiful little white sand beaches, two facing north and one facing south. Particularly if the weather is fine you will want to spend some "quality time" in this special place! On the way, if your walk is in the Summer months, you will be surrounded by wild flowers as you pass through an area of species-rich coastal grassland, where there are fine views of the islands of Muck and Eigg, with the high hills of Rum also visible behind Eigg. Early on, and again during the return, the route passes through the once deserted settlement of Smirisary occupying a seemingly idyllic sheltered setting under grassy cliffs. Information about the history of the village is elusive. What is certain is that, in times past, the tiny subsistence crofting community at Smirisary would have been one of the most remote places in Scotland. Even today there are no roads in the village. All over the West of Scotland these remote little communities stopped being viable as modern life and expectations changed. We suspect that the last of the original occupants moved on or died off in the 1950's. However, in recent times a number of the houses have been restored as "away from it all" weekend and holiday retreats with very limited access to modern utilities. Moidart is a wild and beautiful West Highland region on the Atlantic shoreline, peppered with white sand beaches and surrounded by fjords and freshwater lochs, forming part of the Rough Bounds, an area renowned for its remote and rugged landscapes. Lying a few miles offshore, the enticing Small Isles, of Rum, Eigg, Muck and Canna, are accessible by ferry from Mallaig.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk from Smirisary car-park

(56.82830; -5.84665) <https://w3w.co/reds.shine.professed>

Start the walk at the small car-park for Smirisary*. With your back to the car-park, go left down the tarred road, veering left at the small turning circle and continuing on an a short section of access to a house situated ahead of you, and below you.

**Note: the car-park is at the end of a single track road, just over 2 km from the hamlet of Glenuig, which is itself just off the A861 road, 13 km from Lochailort, on the route from Lochailort to Acharacle, in Moidart.*



(2) Right for footpath to Smirisary village

(56.82795; -5.84806) <https://w3w.co/printer.kind.abundance>

In just over 100 m, turn right into an access road, signposted for the Smirisary footpath. Go through the pedestrian gate to avoid the cattle grid and follow the path as it initially goes downhill and passes a house on your right side. Carry on walking on the path, now going uphill. (117 m)



(3) Carry straight on - ignoring path through trees to left

(56.82716; -5.85323) <https://w3w.co/clerk.smart.quality>

In 350 m, ignore the path going sharp left into trees and carry straight on with a fence on your right side. At the end of the fence veer slightly right to take a very short detour to a grassy bank with good views down to your first sight of Smirisary village houses*, the sea, and the islands of Eigg, Rum (behind Eigg), and Muck. Once you have taken in the view, return to the main path and follow it downhill, bending left and right at various points. (468 m)



**Note: information about the history of Smirisary village is elusive. What is certain is that, in times past, the tiny subsistence crofting community at Smirisary would have been one of the most remote places in Scotland. Even today there are no roads that vehicles can use in the village. All over the west of Scotland these remote little communities stopped being viable as modern life and expectations changed. Probably the last of the original occupants moved on or died off soon after the 2nd World War. However, in recent times a number of the houses have been restored as "back to basics", "away from it all" weekend and holiday retreats.*

(4) Go left on hillside path - above walled garden

(56.82732; -5.85726) <https://w3w.co/snipe.mammoth.signified>
After descending the coastal hillside for 350 m, you will arrive at a t-junction above a walled garden to the right of a white-painted house. An indistinct path goes right but your route is left and downhill, passing the white house on your right side. Keep following the path towards a green meadow (where there are probably sheep grazing), passing a tree with a simple rope swing (at June 2021) on your right side. Upon reaching the meadow keep to the low, sea-side, looking out for a path on your right. (799 m)



(5) Right off meadow - towards the sea

(56.82556; -5.85712) <https://w3w.co/slurred.besotted.spoiler>
In 200 m, take the path going right, off the meadow, in the direction of the sea and towards another white-painted house ahead of you and a little to your left. (1 km)



(6) Left after boardwalk to follow signed path

(56.82575; -5.85779) <https://w3w.co/roadshow.leotard.senior>
In less than 100 m, after crossing a short area of boardwalk, go sharp left at a wooden signpost with the words 'Footpath to White Sands'. The path ascends a shallow ridge heading south and passing the white-painted house a little below you now on your right side. Keep going on this (sometimes rough and boggy) path, with various twists and turns, as it proceeds along the coastline for over a kilometre, with the sea always on your right side. (1.1 km)



(7) Arriving at the first Smirisary beach

(56.81731; -5.86332) <https://w3w.co/crash.sheets.forklift>
In 1.1 km you will have arrived at a small promontory with small islands close by offshore. Here, there are 3 beautiful little white sand beaches, two facing north and one facing south. Especially if the weather is fine you will want to spend some time in this special place! When you are ready to move on, re-trace your steps back to your start-point at the Smirisary car-park. (2.2 km)



(8) Finish walk back at the car-park

(56.82825; -5.84670) <https://w3w.co/reds.shine.professed>

After re-tracing your steps along the coastal path and through the Smirisary village area you will have arrived back at your start-point in the car-park. (4.7 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](#)