

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Tomintoul-River Avon Circuit (Moray)

Route Summary

This gentle excursion into scenic Glen Avon belies the undeserved reputation of Tomintoul for bleak and austere landscapes. There is no doubt that this upland river valley experiences some harsh times in wintry weather, but at other times it is a sparkling and sublime landscape.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Stagecoach bus services. Check timetables. Free public car-park off Main Street, SE of The Square.

Length: 7.690 km / 4.81 mi (*note: the walk can be started at Waypoint 3, reducing the length by 2.9 km*)

Height Gain: 190 meter.

Height Loss: 190 meter.

Max Height: 363 meter.

Min Height: 316 meter.

Surface: Moderate. Pavement, tarred minor road and unsurfaced farm/forest roads.

Difficulty: Easy.

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

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: Glen Avon Hotel, Richmond Arms Hotel, Old Station Cafe, Clocktower Restaurant.



Description

This walk is a very pleasant and undemanding excursion into the scenic Glen Avon countryside on the southern outskirts of Tomintoul, which, at 345 m (1,132 ft), is said to be the highest village in the Scottish Highlands. The village, like many in the NE of Scotland, was a planned settlement, built to support the agricultural and social changes that swept over the country in the 18thC. With an attractive central square, sitting either side of the military road from Corgarff, in Strathdon, to Fort George, on the Moray Firth, it was laid out on a grid pattern in 1775 by the 4th Duke of Gordon. Nowadays much of the surrounding countryside is owned by the Glenlivet Estate, part of Crown Estate Scotland, who promote outdoor activities in the area, including walking. The village sits on the banks of the River Avon (pronounced locally as “an”), a significant tributary of the River Spey, which drains the NE area of the Cairngorm Mountains. Glen Avon was once described as follows – *“Regarded from the point of view of river and mountain scenery, [it] is perhaps the most perfect glen in Scotland. For in the whole 38 miles, from its source above Loch Avon, to the Spey ... every phase of highland landscape is presented ... not the least attractive are those in the middle reaches, where the hills are friendly rather than fearsome, where groves of silver birches break and soften the valley side, where the alder dips its branches in the singing water, and where the oyster-catcher sweeps and cries above the shingle.”* [attrib. Sir Henry Alexander, Lord Provost of Aberdeen, 1932-35]. It's not surprising, therefore, that in 1860, when Queen Victoria passed through Tomintoul, she was entranced by the fine view over the River Avon, and up the Glen towards Ben Avon in the Cairngorms. That viewpoint is now called “The Queen’s View” and, happily, is a focal point on this consistently scenic walking route.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk in Tomintoul Square

(57.25173; -3.37956) <https://w3w.co/turned.repaid.tinny>

Start the walk at the information board near the centre of The Square in Tomintoul. From there head up Main Street in a SE direction, passing the Clocktower Restaurant on your right and the Richmond Arms Hotel, across the road, on your left.



(2) Right up Delnabo Road

(57.24851; -3.37514) <https://w3w.co/statement.frog.clutches>

In 450 m, turn right off Main Street onto Delnabo Road. Follow this road as it leaves the village into open countryside. Take care to walk on the right side of the road/verge, facing oncoming traffic. (449 m)



(3) Left off road for Country Walk

(57.24230; -3.38524) <https://w3w.co/detective.squeezed.huddled>

In just under 1 km, go left off the tarred Delnabo Road onto a rough road into trees, signposted for the Tomintoul Country Walk and the Queen's Viewpoint. Keep going on this rough road, passing the car-park. (1.4 km)



(4) Divert left and uphill for Queen's Viewpoint

(57.23897; -3.38642) <https://w3w.co/instincts.deadline.kindness>

In 400 m, divert left and uphill for the Queen's Viewpoint. (1.8 km)



(5) Queen's View - viewpoint

(57.23872; -3.38558) <https://w3w.co/fillers.shameless.zinc>

In about 50 m, you will have arrived at the Queen's Viewpoint*, where there is a bench. When you are ready, re-trace your steps down the viewpoint access path and turn left to carry on taking the rough road through the trees, with the River Avon below you on your right. (1.85 km)

**Note: In 1860, when Queen Victoria visited Tomintoul on horseback, returning to Glen Feshie from a visit to Grantown, the royal party stopped to take lunch at a place that is now known as "The Queen's View". The fine view from here over the River Avon, and up the Glen towards Ben Avon in the Cairngorms made a favourable impression on her, and she recorded her approval in her journal.*



(6) Continue onwards - don't take right fork downhill

(57.23272; -3.38138) <https://w3w.co/incurring.ranch.manicured>

In 900 m, the road branches at a y-junction. The right hand option drops down to a keeper's cottage. Carry onwards, taking the left branch, more or less straight ahead of you, as it starts to gently ascend the hillside. (2.7 km)



(7) Sharp right to cross bridge

(57.22485; -3.37753) <https://w3w.co/patting.unopposed.deep>

After a further 1 km, you will arrive at a junction where the road you are on drops and offers to swing sharply to your right to join a narrow tarred road. Ignore the option to carry straight on and go downhill and right onto the tarred road towards the bridge over the River Avon, just ahead of you. Cross the bridge and carry on, following the road as it passes through the Delavorar farm buildings. Carry on taking this road for over 2 km as it heads back down Glen Avon, returning in the direction of Tomintoul, with the River Avon now across fields on your right side. Part way along, after crossing a bridge over the Water of Ailnack, you will pass the attractive Delnabo Lodge* and garden. (3.7 km)



**Note: "...Early records show that there was a house here in 1540, owned by the Gordons and Grants. The present turreted Lodge dates from the 18th century ...". See: <http://www.delnaboestate.co.uk/delnabo.php>*

(8) Follow road right to cross bridge

(57.23950; -3.38922) <https://w3w.co/mourner.bucks.rockets>

In 2.2 km, follow the road as it bends sharp right to cross a bridge over the River Avon. Now follow the road back to The Square in Tomintoul, soon re-tracing your steps on the outward route as you pass Waypoint 3. This is a quiet access road, but make sure you walk on the right side of the road/verge, facing oncoming traffic. (5.9 km)



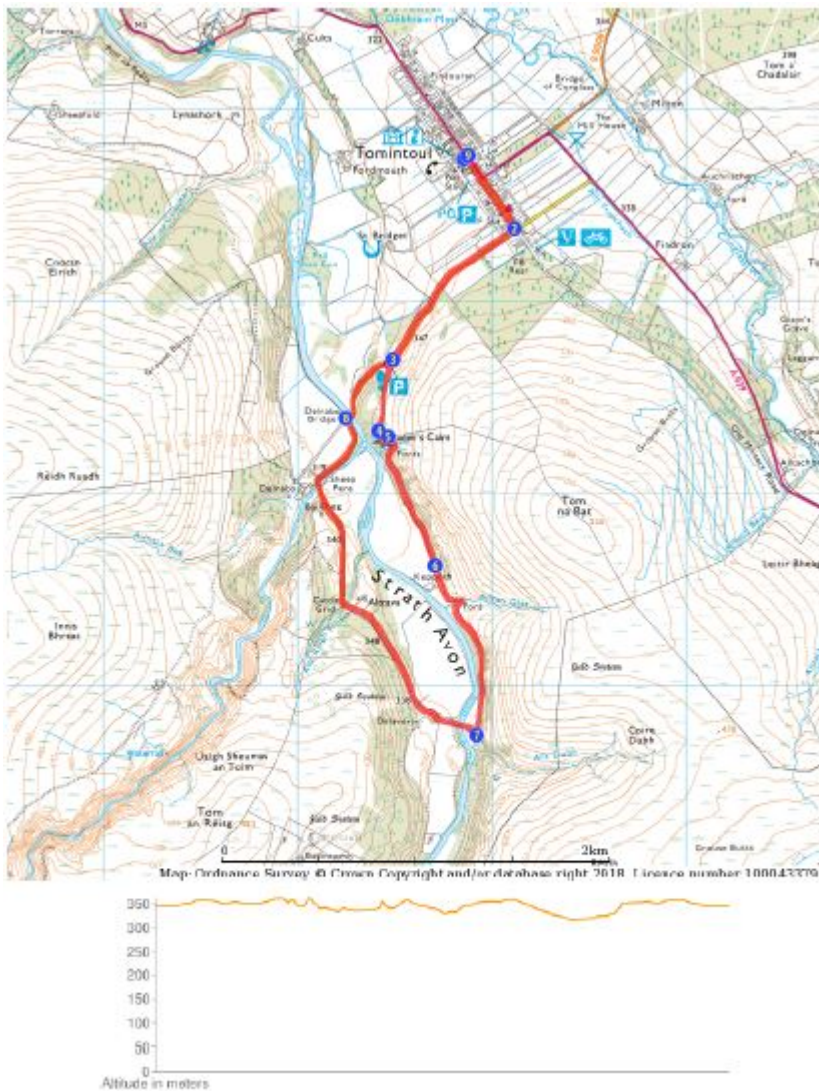
(9) Finish walk back at Tomintoul Square

(57.25188; -3.37925) <https://w3w.co/turned.repaid.tinny>

In 1.8 km you will have returned to your start point in The Square at Tomintoul. (7.69 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](#)