

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Blairgowrie-Cargill's Leap-Knockie Hill Circuit (Perthshire)

Route Summary

At first following an historic passage used by Highland cattle raiders, along the River Ericht, the route then climbs gradually through hill farmland to the summit of the Knockie Hill where there are great views, near and far, in all directions.

Duration: 2.5 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: Regular Stagecoach bus services from Perth and Dundee. Check timetables. There are parking areas around the Wellmeadow in the centre of Blairgowrie but they can be busy.

Length: 6.110 km / 3.82 mi

Height Gain: 166 meter

Height Loss: 166 meter

Max Height: 199 meter

Min Height: 61 meter

Surface: Moderate. A mix of surfaced paths, rough access roads and farm roads, with sections on minor tarred roads and pavements.

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

Difficulty: Medium.

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

Refreshments: Options in Blairgowrie. We can recommend the Cateran Cafe on the corner of the High Street and Allan Street.



Description

This is a walk of three parts, with the initial section following the Cateran Trail along the banks of the River Ericht, passing many old mill buildings along the way. The course of the river here is, by turns, a mix of wide rippling shallows and surging rocky gorges. The route visits Cargill's Leap, at the Keith Falls, where the Reverend Donald Cargill jumped the river to escape King Charles II's dragoons in 1665 during the turbulent Covenanting period in Scottish history. He was later executed for his religious beliefs and activism for the Covenanting cause in 1681 at Edinburgh. Leaving the Ericht, the route then rises above the very scenic upland valley of the Lornty Burn, with fine views of distant hills. Turning back towards Blairgowrie, the path then crosses over the Knockie Hill, the last foot hill of the Grampian range. Here, there are splendid views of Strathmore and the Sidlaw Hills. The conjoined burghs of Blairgowrie and Rattray, dating back to the 12th C, sit in a pretty vale at the north end of Strathmore, nestling at the foot of the Grampian Mountains. They developed over the centuries at the crossroads of historic routes to Perth, Coupar Angus, Alyth and Braemar. The Glenshee Ski Centre is 18 miles to the north at the Cairnwell Pass, on the A93 road to Braemar, the highest public road in the UK. The town experienced huge expansion in the 19th C as a result of the many textile mills which were built along the River Ericht, all now closed. By 1870 there were 12 mills along the river employing nearly 2000, and the population had increased tenfold from 400 in the 1700s. Soft fruit growing, mainly raspberries and strawberries, developed in the 20th century and are still vital to the town's economy. The 64 mile Cateran (Highland cattle raiders and warriors) Trail starts and finishes at Blairgowrie. This signed long-distance walk follows a circular route from Glenericht to the Spittal of Glenshee, then down to Glenisla and Alyth.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at Riverside steps - Mill Street

(56.59239; -3.33636)

Start the walk at the Riverside steps just off Mill Street. Walk down the steps and turn left to walk up-river on the surfaced path on the banks of the River Ericht.



(2) Veer right to Cargill's Leap viewpoint

(56.59827; -3.34066)

In 780 m from the start, veer right to follow a narrower path to the famous Cargill's Leap* viewpoint. After taking in the scene and the information board, follow the narrow path on the left side of the viewpoint that takes you back to the main track where you carry on in a northerly direction as before, away from Blairgowrie. (780 m)

**Note: Cargill's Leap, at the Keith Falls, where the Reverend Donald Cargill jumped the river to escape King Charles II's dragoons in 1665 during the turbulent Covenanting period in Scottish history. He was later executed for his religious beliefs, and activism for the Covenanting cause, in Edinburgh on 27 July 1681.*



(3) Keithbank Mill bridge

(56.60059; -3.34158)

In 220 m, divert to the Keithbank Mill Bridge on your right to take in the views of the river and to read the information board. When you are ready, return to the route and carry on as before in a northerly direction, away from Blairgowrie. (1.1 km)



(4) Left and uphill

(56.60282; -3.35095)

In 700 m, after passing the former Brooklinn Mill, now converted to holiday accommodation, and observing the impressive high weir on the Lornty Burn, follow the access road as it swings uphill and left to a signposted junction. Go left and uphill here on the tarred road. (1.8 km)



(5) Right and uphill

(56.59892; -3.34492)

In another 700 m, at a signposted junction, go right and uphill. Keep following this minor road for approximately 1.3 km as great views of the valley of the Lornly Burn, and distant hills, start to open up on your right side. (2.5 km)



(6) Left for Knockie Hill path

(56.59823; -3.36523)

After 1.3 km, go sharp left to take the signposted path for Knockie. (3.8 km)



(7) The Knockie Hill viewpoint

(56.59708; -3.36222)

In 200 m you will have arrived at the The Knockie viewpoint where there is an information board and great views to the south over Blairgowrie & Rattray. When you are ready, carry taking the farm track downhill towards Blairgowrie. (4.0 km)



(8) Go left - then right down Newton Street

(56.59262; -3.35151)

In about 900 m, with Newton Castle obscured by trees ahead of you, go left towards Burnhead Road for a short distance and, with houses now on your left, turn right down Newton Street. Follow the street down to a t-junction with Perth Street where you turn left for the High Street, then Allan Street, then Wellmeadow at the centre of Blairgowrie. (4.9 km)



(9) Finish walk back at Riverside steps

(56.59229; -3.33636)

After 1.2 km, when you reach the centre of Blairgowrie at Wellmeadow, turn left onto Mill Street to end the walk where you started at the Riverside steps. (6.1 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](#)