

An utterly  
unforgettable  
route

# NORTH HIGHLANDS

TRAIL  
ROUTE **5**

35km/21¾ miles

2-DAYER

STRENUOUSNESS	■■■■■
NAVIGATION	■■■■■
TECHNICALITY	■■■■■
MUNRO COUNT	1



## Ladhar Bheinn

Knoydart is still a wilderness, and reaching Ladhar Bheinn by foot from the road end is an epic undertaking. **Peter Macfarlane** packs for a wild overnighiter.

**K**noydart is a wild peninsula in the north-west of Scotland, but it's as hard to get to as a Hebridean island (or even harder). There are no casual day walks and no easy peak-bagging to be had. However you approach it, you'll have to allow extra time for your trip. This is a good thing, of course, as you'll end up spending time in wild scenery fringed by sea and sand and surrounded by some of the finest peaks the north-west has to offer. If you get clear weather you'll have the darkest of skies above you to spot constellations, and you're many hours

The Loch Hourn walk is long but it's every bit as good as the mountain at its end.



away from the nearest road: bliss. But it doesn't mean you have to rough it. Our route in from the north does take us past some good accommodation (which can

We've got to walk all the way along there?! Descending Druim a' Choire Odhair.

PETER MACFARLANE

be busy, so book ahead), meaning you can rest up and relax after putting the miles in from Kinloch Hourn or even sit out a storm. You can carry a tent too and camp at the Barrisdale site (which I've based the route on) or – even better – head into the hills with your tent still in your rucksack. It's a big landscape and one that's easy to hide yourself in, find your own space and soak in the very real Highland atmosphere. At the heart of the route is Ladhar Bheinn, and it's hard to imagine a mountain more fitting in its location: wild, rugged and beautiful. This is a trip you really won't forget.



### FACTS



**Distance** day one 9.3km (5¾ miles); day two 25.7km (16 miles)  
**Total ascent** day one 450m; day two 1840m  
**Time** day one 4 hours; day two 11 hours

**Start/finish**

**NG950065**

**Nearest town** Fort Augustus by road; Mallaig by ferry

**Terrain** good paths on walk-in; a well-trodden hill route including some very steep and pathless sections in a remote area

**Maps** Harvey Superwalker (1:25,000) Kintail and Glen Shiel; OS Landranger (1:50,000) 33, 40; OS Explorer (1:25,000) 398, 413, 414

**Accommodation** Barisdale has bunkhouse and bothy with an adjacent campsite, all chargeable: [www.barisdale.com](http://www.barisdale.com); Skiary Guesthouse (01809) 511214, [www.skiary.com](http://www.skiary.com); Kinlochourn Farm B&B (01809) 511253

**Public transport** Invergarry is the nearest bus stop City Link Buses 08705505050, [www.travelinescotland.com](http://www.travelinescotland.com) Spean Bridge Station, [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)

**Guidebook** *The Munros*, pb SMC; *The North-West Highlands*, pb SMC

**Tourist info** [www.knoydart-foundation.com](http://www.knoydart-foundation.com)



**1 NG950065** The start point is 20 miles along a dead-end singletrack road at Kinloch Hourne, where you leave your vehicle in a car park run by the farm for a small fee. From here follow the path onwards by the loch. The track gets rougher but good progress can be made and the scenery is glorious beside the long and fjord-esque Loch Hourne. Rugged mountainous slopes rise all around with patches of lush greenery and ancient Scots pines to help divert you from the miles ahead. There are some ascents, including up to 100m and back down at Runival but generally the way is easy going and soon you'll see Ladhar Bheinn as you round the lower slopes of Carn Mairi.

**3 NG856018** The regular ascent route usually tackles Stob a' Chearcaill's ledges head-on as a tricky scramble with a good bit of exposure, but I prefer taking this side door onto the hill as I'm usually carrying camping kit and it's easier going. Cross easy grassy slopes and take your own line up the steep grass ahead; you'll have to use a steadying hand here and there, but the new views south down Gleann an Dubh Lochain and out to sea should delight when you stop for a rest.

**2 NG872048** Walk into Barisdale, and if you do choose to spend the night here get a good sleep, because tomorrow is going to be a very big day! Leave the pleasant oasis of Barisdale on a good track heading south and climbing between Luinne Bheinn and Stob a' Chearcaill. This winds its way to a height of 450m at the Mam Barrisdale pass.

**4 NG843028** Arrive on the short ridge between Stob a' Chearcaill and Aonach Sgoilte, and from here take the ridge that cuts right and forms a rocky headwall facing into Coire Dhorrcail. Initially descend on easy ground and past a rugged ridge that cuts into the corrie on your right. There's a steep drop into a break in the lowest point on the ridge. The climb back up the other side is rough and will require some handwork but there's no real difficulty or exposure. The initial ascent ahead is gradual but the terrain is rough and the ridge twisting before a final climb to the level and narrow summit ridge of Ladhar Bheinn itself.

**5 NG821041** Walk the ridge and visit the summit cairn and the trig pillar, taking in views you won't forget with sea,

mountain and sky: the perfect combination. Linger as long as you dare, there's still a long way to go, retrace your steps to Stob a' Choire Odhair's adjoining ridge.

**6 NG825040** Carefully follow the narrow and rather airy rocky ridge down and then up and over Stob a' Choire Odhair, descending the broader ridge beyond.

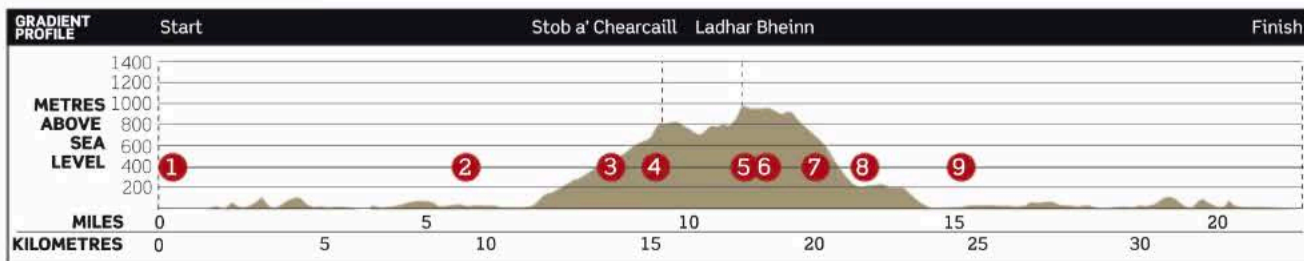
**7 NG834044** Take your own line down into Coire Dhorrcail, a glorious and wild place to visit, walled with sheer rock.

**8 NG850043** Cross the river by some shielings (huts) and pick up a good track, which contours out of the corrie and back down to Barisdale.

**9 NG871041** Rejoin your outward route and start the long walk back with a head full of memories.



Looking through Coire Dhorrcail to Loch Hourne.



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