



25 DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY THE MERRICK

▶ Distance: 9 miles/14.4km ▶ Time: 5 hours ▶ Grade: Challenging



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FEATURE
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The Merrick from
Benyellary.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY...

PHILIP THOMAS

Crowning the Range of the Awful Hand

in Galloway Forest Park, the Merrick is the highest mountain in Scotland's Southern Uplands. Theoretically, the longest sightline in the British Isles extends from its bare, bosomy summit to Snowdon in North Wales - 144 miles south across the Irish Sea. Even without a notionally haze-free day and a powerful telescope, you can make out Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and much more besides in every direction. From the roadhead in Glen Trool, a marked trail climbs above the waterfalls of Buchan Burn and through

conifer plantations up to the subsidiary peak of Benyellary. The path slings across 'Neive of the Spit' and up to the trig point on the Merrick's summit. From here, you can make the walk a simple 8-mile out-and-back or go off path and descend to Loch Enoch to navigate a tougher, wilder circular route.

1 Start

At end of paved road/parking spaces, turn L up signposted Merrick Trail ('The Merrick 4'). Go through gate to follow path above Buchan Burn. Ahead take the higher path as signposted over the rise of Stroquhan and down through wall to Culsharg Bothy.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Bruce's Stone car park above Loch Trool, grid ref NX415803

Is it for me? Clear and seldom very steep paths are followed to Merrick summit. Later stages navigate rough, rocky and pathless terrain, requiring careful route-finding, best done with good visibility.

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Newton Stewart

Refreshments Nearest at Glen Trool visitor centre (scotland.forestry.gov.uk)

Public toilets None

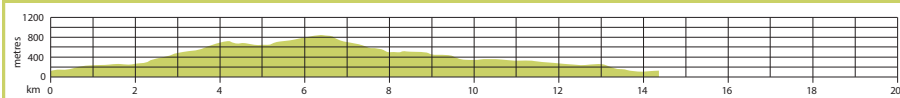
Public transport None
Maps OS Explorer 318; Landranger 77

2 1½ miles/1.8km

Take path L of building up through trees to a forestry track. Turn R over bridge and shortly L to deer gate/path



GRADIENT PROFILE



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► OS Explorer map 318 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

through forest, signed 'Merrick Climb'. Emerge from trees by the 'crossing the line' concrete boot prints and continue rising on stony path to a deer gate. Follow it north up to a wall, where the path turns northeast along the wall and climbs to the top of Benyellary (summit cairn at 719m just R of path, grid ref NX414838).

3 2½ miles/4km
Follow the path beside the wall north-northeast down and across the saddle of Neive of the Spit. The path veers northeast away from the wall, rising to summit of the Merrick (marked by a shelter cairn and trig point at 843m, grid ref NX 414 838). If you aren't confident navigating rough, pathless terrain, turn around now and walk back the way you came.

4 4 miles/6.4km
From summit, follow a bearing ESE for about 1.6km down Redstone Rigg, aiming for SW corner of Loch Enoch. You'll need to route find between outcrops and navigate steeper ground towards the shore. Use the shore and wall/fence line as catching features.

5 5 miles/8km
From the beach at grid ref NX440847, follow a faint path along the south shore for 200m to grid ref NX442846 and turn R/south away from shore up a shallow gully below Craig Neldricken. Maintain



bearing on rough path dropping beside burn and through wall, then around west shore of Loch Neldricken (passing 'Murder Hole' marked on map – a name with literary origins).

6 6 miles/9.6km
The path rises away from the shore above Mid Burn, drops to Loch Valley and follows the west bank of Gairland Burn SW. It turns S to pick up a clearer path and eventually meet a wall,

following it W. Go L through gate and follow path WSW down to track. Turn R and follow track over Buchan Bridge, swinging R up to car park (or detour L to see Bruce's Stone). **CW**

**VIEW THE WALK ON
OS MAPS ONLINE:**
lfto.com/cwroutes

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