



# Bla Bheinn (Blaven)

Bla Bheinn (the Blue Mountain) is one of the most magnificent mountains in Britain; a great isolated citadel of rock with fabulous views and all the character of the main Cuillin Ridge. Its ascent is straightforward by Cuillin standards but very rocky.



## Terrain

Good path at first, but later the going becomes very rough, with loose stones, a scree gully, and some very mild scrambling.

## Public transport

Bus 50B and Post Bus from Portree and Broadford. Get off at car park near the bridge over the Allt na Dunaiche.

## Start time

Meet 9am for start at 9.30am. Car park off B8083 road near Loch Slapin.

## Contact

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## Hill walking

All route descriptions and difficulties given here are for summer conditions.

## Walk Statistics

- Distance: 8km / 5 miles
- Time (summer conditions): 5 - 6 hours
- Ascent: 990m
- Start Grid Ref: NG560215

## Summits Climbed

- Munro
- Bla Bheinn

# Walk Description

## Stage 1

The photograph shows Bla Bheinn from the road on the far side of Loch Slapin. When driving from Broadford, the car park is up a track (signed) to the right just after the road crosses the bridge over the Allt na Dunaiche. Return to the road and cross the bridge to reach the start of the walk, which heads up the other side of the stream. Or take the path from the far end of the car park which heads back down the stream and then turn left to cross the stream on the road and head left up the path.

The first part of the walk is on an excellent path which heads gently up the moor; it leads through two gates above a steep wooded gorge. The area is owned by the John Muir Trust, a charity that protects wild places, and also maintains the path.



## Stage 2

Further on there are views down into a second gorge carved by the Allt na Dunaiche. After a kilometre and a half the path crosses the stream, and three hundred metres further on crosses a second stream before beginning the climb up Coire Uaigneich on the newly repaired path.

The route turns sharp right as it reaches the grassy bowl of Fionna-choire - ignore other paths heading straight on (if you reach a huge boulder, you've missed the turning). The route is slightly indistinct for a while, zigzagging up the steep slopes to the right once the edge of the cliffs is passed. Higher up is a wide scree slope where traces of a zig-zag path ease the ascent.

## Stage 3

At one point it looks like many people have headed further right; instead climb slightly left, clambering over some fallen boulders to enter a narrower scree gully. Continue up the stony gully which thankfully is the steepest and loosest part of the climb.

Near the top, the path heads out left and then gives much improved going, becoming clearer once again and leading up to the rim of Bla Bheinn's eastern cliffs - bear slightly right on the way up to get the best views. From here the way is clear, continuing up the slope to the left; there are spectacular views in places between the great buttresses, with a dramatic gash backed by a vertical rock wall - part of the Great Prow and famed amongst rock-climbers.



## Stage 4

Further on is a cairn and views across to the rock peak of Clach Glas. The easiest route up Clach Glas is a rock climb graded Moderate. The going becomes very rocky as height

is gained. Soon the route is funnelled up into a narrowing gully, requiring a short easy scramble to ascend the rocks at the top; alternatively the rocks on the left can be climbed from lower down the gully. Beyond this, the summit is soon reached. Bla Bheinn is 928 metres high, making it the only Munro on Skye that is not part of the Cuillin Ridge.

## Stage 5

The view is magnificent, with huge sweeps of sea, mountains and islands in all directions; most of the island can be seen as well as the whole of Raasay and miles of the western seaboard. The Cuillin look fabulous to the north, but perhaps the finest feature is the aerial view of Glen Sligachan, enclosed by the contrasting peaks of Sgurr nan Gillean on the left and Marsco on the right.

## Stage 6

The easiest and quickest return to the start is by the route of ascent. It is possible to scramble (slightly awkwardly) to the south summit and then descend the southeast flank to a col between Abhainn nan Leac and Fionna-choire, but a steep scree run has to be descended beyond - so the outward route is probably pleasanter. A superior descent is the south ridge, but this also requires the scramble to the south summit and ends many miles from the car park.