

SUMMIT WALKS | CIRCULAR WALKS | NATURE WALKS

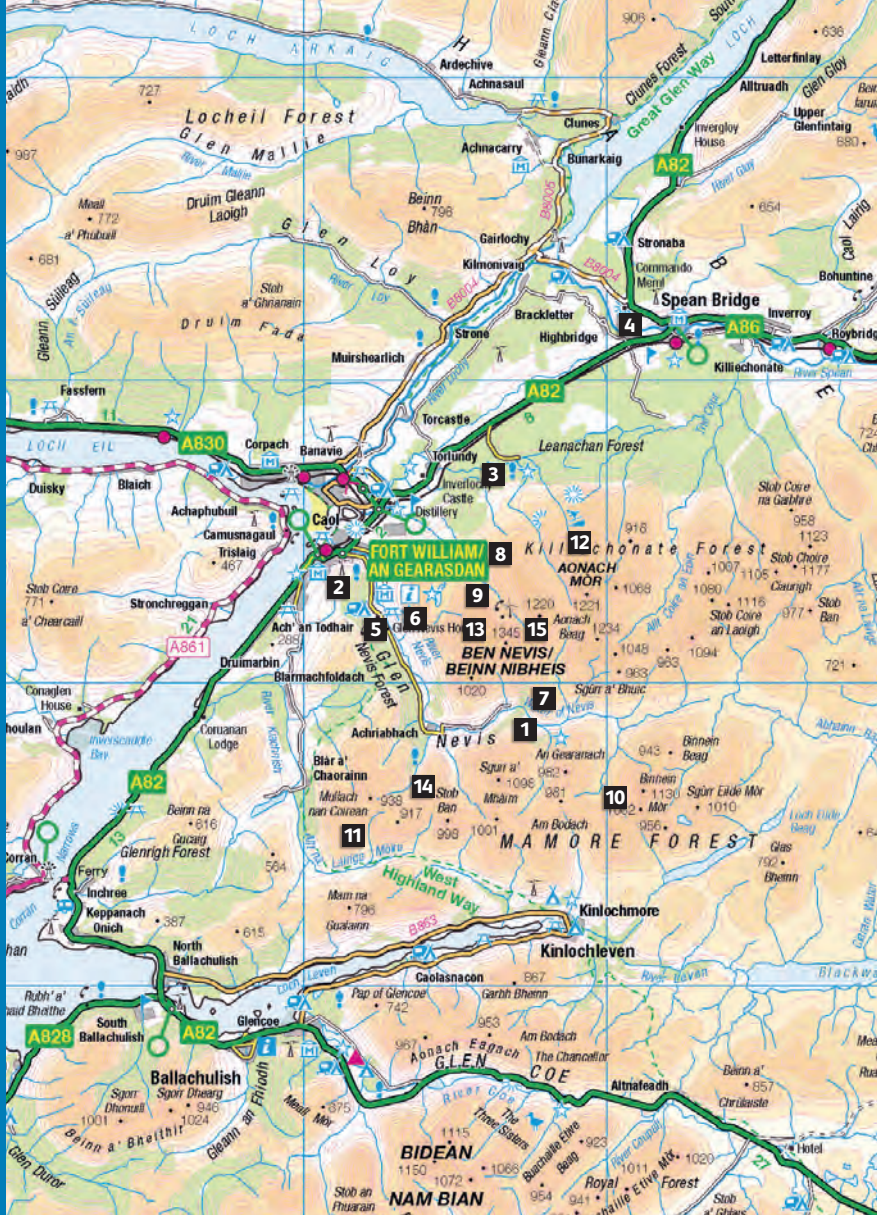
MOUNTAIN WALKS

BEN NEVIS

15 ROUTES TO ENJOY ON AND AROUND BEN NEVIS



KERI WALLACE



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THE ROUTES

01 Steall Falls ●○○○○ 3.9km/2.4 miles	1
02 Cow Hill ●●○○○ 9.7km/6 miles	5
03 River Lundy trail, Leanachan Forest ●○○○○ 3.5km/2.2 miles	9
04 Commando Memorial trail, Spean Bridge ●○○○○ 4.7km/2.9 miles	13
05 Dùn Deardail ●●○○○ 9.8km/6.1 miles	17
06 Meall an t-Suidhe ●●○○○ 9.3km/5.8 miles	23
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09 Half Ben & the CIC Hut ●●○○○ 14.2km/8.8 miles	39
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11 Lairig Mòr ●●○○○ 21.1km/13.1 miles	55
12 Aonach Mòr by gondola ●●○○○ 6.7km/4.2 miles	61
13 Ben Nevis via the Mountain Track ●●●○○ 16.5km/10.3 miles	67
14 Mullach nan Coirean & Stob Bàn ●●●○○ 13.4km/8.3 miles	73
15 Ben Nevis via the Càrn Mòr Dearg Arête ●●●●● 17.3km/10.7 miles	79

Appendix

86



Download the
Mountain Walks Ben Nevis
GPX files from
www.adventurebooks.com/MWBN-GPX

ROUTE GRADES

Easy	●○○○○
Medium	●●○○○
Hard	●●●○○
Full-on	●●●●●



INTRODUCTION

At 1,345 metres, Ben Nevis (Beinn Nibheis) is the highest mountain in Britain and, as such, it is naturally an objective for visiting tourists and hillwalkers worldwide. Each year, over 150,000 people hike to the summit; a vast rocky plateau that is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest on account of its numerous rare species.

The first recorded ascent of the mountain was made in 1771, but the main path wasn't built for another 112 years, when it allowed for the construction of an observatory on the summit. Quite remarkably, this meteorological station was manned in all seasons and weathers for 21 consecutive years – you can still see the remains of the building today.

Despite Ben Nevis's popularity, the area surrounding the mountain is quiet and comparatively unappreciated. It sits within the Ben Nevis and Glen Coe National Scenic Area, which is home to red deer, water voles, golden and white-tailed eagles and ptarmigan, along with snow bunting, pine marten and rare butterflies including the chequered skipper. The glens are steeped in Scottish cultural significance, from the Picts of Dùn Deardail and tales of Jacobite betrayals to the lost inhabitants of upper Glen Nevis with their charcoal-burning platforms.

This collection of local walks will allow enthusiasts of all abilities to immerse themselves in the dramatic landscapes, breathtaking grandeur and great variety of the Ben Nevis area. There are some big and classic routes but there are also some lower-level, easier options for bad weather days, those who are short on time or families with children in tow. Once you start to explore Ben Nevis, you will find there is something for everyone.

Keri Wallace

Cloud inversion from the summit of Ben Nevis.



9.8km/6.1 miles

05 / DÙN DEARDAIL

Follow the West Highland Way up through the Nevis Forest to find the remarkable remains of a vitrified fort and spectacular views of Ben Nevis and Sgùrr a' Mhàim.

ESSENTIAL INFO

GRADE ●●○○

DISTANCE **9.8KM/6.1 MILES**

ASCENT **310M**

TIME **3 HRS (WALKER)/1.5 HRS (RUNNER)**

START/FINISH **BRAVEHEART CAR PARK,**

GLEN NEVIS

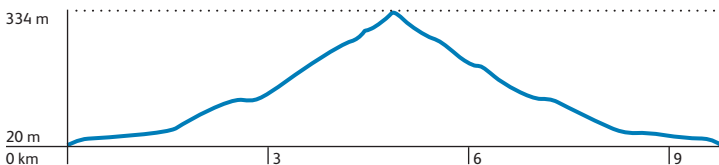
START GRID REF **NN 121 736**

START GPS **56.8158, -5.0800**

OS MAP **392, BEN NEVIS & FORT WILLIAM**
(1:25,000)

OVERVIEW

The fort of Dùn Deardail occupies a majestic hilltop position overlooking Glen Nevis. It was built around 2,000 years ago and is thought to have had multiple occupations (and possibly rebuildings) throughout history, with uses ranging from a Celtic fort to a Pictish citadel. Excavations revealed that it had eventually been destroyed by a raging fire, the evidence of which – vitrification – can still be seen today. This out-and-back walk follows the West Highland Way from Glen Nevis up through forestry to visit this historical viewpoint, 300 metres above the glen. Save this one for a clear day and be sure to stop for a picnic on the top.



Climbing to the vitrified fort gives great mountain views up Glen Nevis to the Mamores.



Looking back to Fort William and the lower slopes of Ben Nevis.

DIRECTIONS

- 1** Exit the top of the Braveheart car park to join a large track and **turn left** (signposted *Dùn Deardail*). Continue **straight ahead** until you reach a junction where there is a wooden signpost indicating the *Wishing Stone* (down and to the left) and the *Peat Track* (upwards and to the right); go **straight ahead** at this junction, signposted *Dùn Deardail*.
- 2** Keep following the West Highland Way to reach another junction; take the **right fork** uphill, still signposted *Dùn Deardail* (there is also a West Highland Way thistle icon and green marker post here). Up until this point the trail has been fairly flat, but now it starts to climb in earnest. The track gets a little rougher as it progresses. There are several burns coming down on the right-hand side passing underneath the track, some with little waterfalls flowing over rock. As the trail gains height, felling of trees on the downslope affords a view up the Red Burn to Ben Nevis and the Mountain Track is clearly visible as it cuts across the flank of Meall an t-Suidhe.



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Walk the perimeter of the remarkable ruins with Ben Nevis as a backdrop.

- 3** The West Highland Way zigzags as it steepens towards higher ground. Pause before a stand of Scots pine to look back at open views over Fort William and Corpach, with the aluminium works prominent to the north. After a hairpin turn at around 220m, the track flattens off and an information board can be seen on the left, telling the history of Dùn Deardail (there is also a three-way wooden marker post opposite). **Turn sharp left** here to take a narrow gravel trail up the left-hand side of a plantation of trees. Do not take the trail heading into the trees on your right but continue up the line of the forest.
- 4** The trail climbs and then undulates towards the top with fantastic views over to Ben Nevis on the left. Just before the fort itself there is a rising line of stone steps leading up a prominent knoll. Dùn Deardail appears on the top as a circular ruin (outer wall) covered in grass. Walk the perimeter for unbeatable views of Ben Nevis and up the glen towards the Mamores. This is a great place for a picnic and a fine position for any keen photographer.
- 5** Retrace the outward route back to the car park.

GOOD TO KNOW

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

The seasonal Glen Nevis Bus service from Fort William runs to Glen Nevis.

The Braveheart car park (parking charge) is located on the Glen Nevis road between Fort William and the Ben Nevis Visitor Centre. Do not park on the nearby verges if the car park is full (vehicles may be towed), but there are a few small lay-bys.

WHEN TO WALK IT

This walk is suitable for all weather conditions, but it is a route that is all about the views, so it is worth saving for a clear day (ideally when Ben Nevis is cloud-free) – what a vista!

TERRAIN AND NAVIGATION

The initial section of the route follows the signposted West Highland Way and is a wide vehicle track (fairly flat initially but steepening towards the fort). Navigation is easy throughout thanks to clear waymarking. The top section is narrow singletrack and rock steps.

FACILITIES AND REFRESHMENTS

The nearby Ben Nevis Visitor Centre is open from April until October and has toilets (available only during



Leave the West Highland Way and follow signs to find the fort.

opening hours), a small gift shop and can provide local information. The nearest pub is the Ben Nevis Inn – across the river and a short walk uphill along the Mountain Track. The Glen Nevis Restaurant and Bar is close by too.

DOGS AND KIDS

This walk is popular with dog walkers but there are some grazing livestock, so dogs should be kept under control at all times. The section on the West Highland Way is suitable for mountain bikes or outdoor buggies, though it is fairly steep higher up. A good approach for little legs is to bring bikes for the flat section (as far as the fork in the trail at NN 120 721) to help speed things along!

POINTS OF INTEREST

Once at the fort, look out for fused rocks where the old ramparts poke through the grass. The massive fire that destroyed this settlement burned with enough heat to melt rock (this is the process of vitrification).

On this walk you will see a signpost down to the Wishing Stone (aka Samuel's Stone or the Stone of Council). This roadside rock is said to mark the spot where a victory was won by the Camerons of Glen Nevis over a rival clan. It has several legends but today most people hop round it three times and make a wish – if the stone turns round then your wish will come true!