Before you go

No public body gives a distance or a time for this way. By our map it is about 11 km (7 miles) there and back with about 960 metres of climb, and it takes about 5 to 6 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow: leave plenty of daylight for the way down. That is Beinn Dorain alone: with Beinn an Dothaidh as well it is a longer round, about 14 km and 6 to 8 hours. Forestry and Land Scotland says the walk should be attempted by experienced hill walkers only. Under snow it is a winter mountain, for ice axe, crampons and the skills to use them. No avalanche forecast covers it: the Scottish Avalanche Information Service forecasts six other areas, which is no sign there is no risk here.

Check the mountain forecast, and under snow the snow and avalanche conditions too. It is often much colder and windier on the hill than in the glen. Wear good walking boots and carry warm, waterproof clothing, plenty of food and drink, and a torch in case the day runs long. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them, and do not rely only on a phone or GPS: in many parts of the hills there is little or no signal. Leave word with someone of where you are going and when you will be back.

Forestry and Land Scotland's car park and picnic site at Bridge of Orchy is the best place to park for the hill path, it says: turn off the A82 at the hotel and cross the bridge, postcode PA36 4AB. When we checked in October 2026 it charged £1 for up to an hour and £3 for all day, by card or RingGo. Trains and buses between Glasgow and Fort William stop at Bridge of Orchy, and the walk passes the station. The nearest public toilets are in Tyndrum. Stags may be stalked at any time of year and hinds from 21 October to 15 February, Mountaineering Scotland says: check Heading for the Scottish Hills before you go.

After the walk

Beinn Dorain was celebrated in one of the great Gaelic poems by Duncan Bàn MacIntyre, who worked on these hills as a gamekeeper.

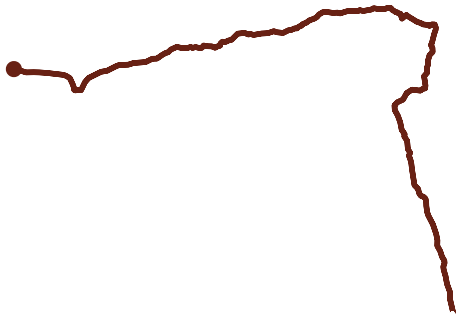
The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/beinn-dorain-from-bridge-of-orchy

It starts at Forestry and Land Scotland's car park at Bridge of Orchy, by the hotel, NN 295 396.

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the police, then mountain rescue, Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team says, and give a six-figure grid reference. Do not rely on a phone: in many parts of the hills there is no signal.

A MUNRO WALK UP

Beinn Dorain



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

By Coire an Dothaidh

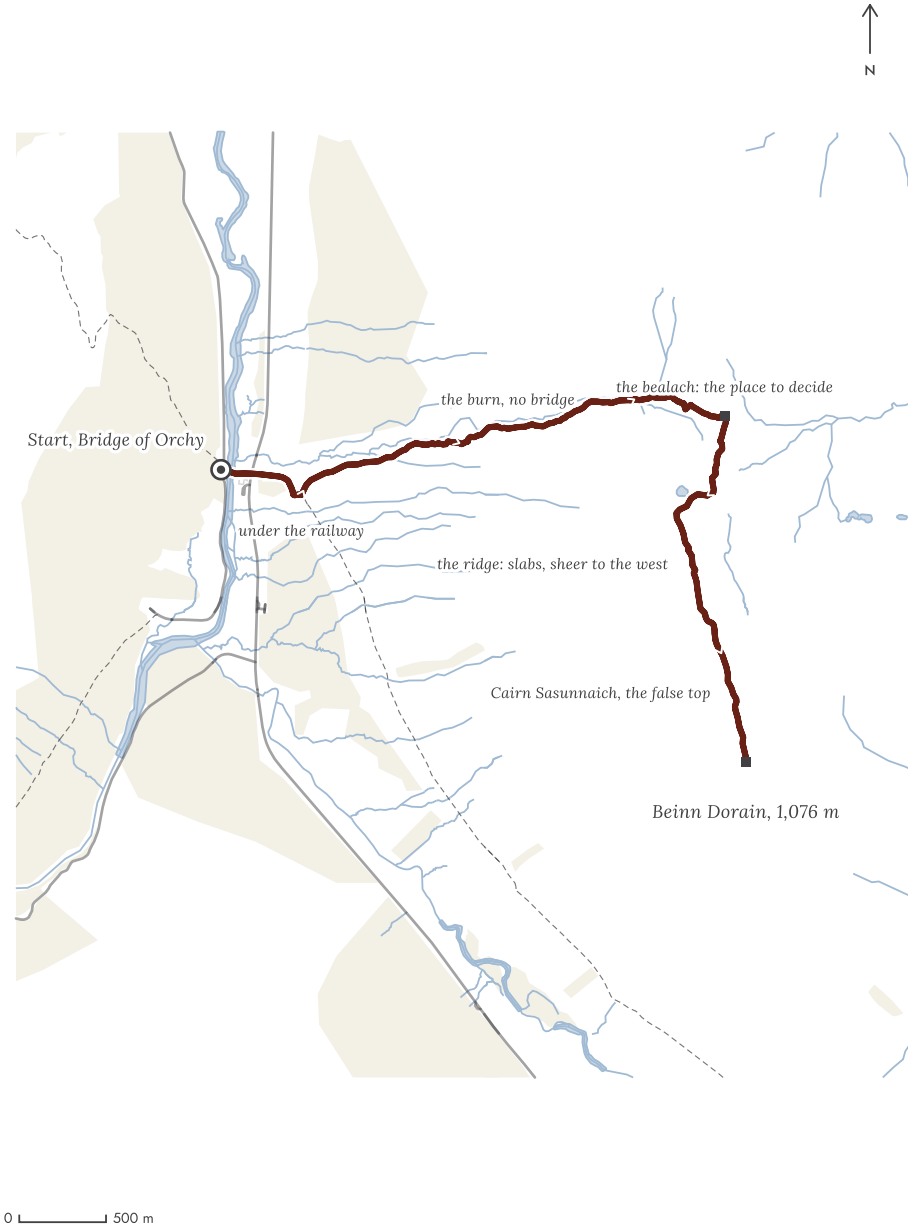
Beinn Dorain is a great steep-sided cone of 1,076 metres, a Munro, rising east of Bridge of Orchy. This is its usual way, from the station: under the railway, up Coire an Dothaidh to the bealach with Beinn an Dothaidh, then south up the ridge over Cairn Sasunnaich to the top, and back the same way. The ridge is steep and rocky, with sheer slopes to the west. A day for experienced hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

From the car park walk back over the old bridge, past the hotel, and cross the A82 with care. Station Brae climbs to the station, where the West Highland Way runs under the railway by an underpass. Go through the gate beyond and across the Way's track, where the hill path leaves it. It passes to the left of a mast, then bears right and climbs east beside the Allt Coire an Dothaidh into the corrie. By our map it crosses a small burn on stepping stones about 1.1 km from the car park. Much of the path is wet, eroded peat. About 2.7 km out, by our map, it crosses the main burn with no bridge. After heavy rain, if a crossing looks unsafe, turn back.

The path steepens through the head of the corrie, past a field of boulders. By our map it passes within about 20 metres of a mapped crag below the bealach. The bealach between Beinn Dorain and Beinn an Dothaidh is about 740 metres up, with a cairn. Turn right, south, for Beinn Dorain. This is the place to decide: if the cloud is coming down, the wind is rising or anyone is tiring, turn back.

From the bealach a steep path climbs to a small lochan, then comes a second steep stretch. Skirt the right side of a rocky outcrop and bear left onto the broad ridge. There are no waymarks. In mist the path is hard to follow over bare rock slabs, and walkers lose their way. Keep away from the west edge: the slopes to the south and west are sheer. Cairn Sasunnaich, a large cairn at 1,063 metres, is often taken in mist for the summit, which is about 400 metres on, down a little and up again. Go down the way you came, and at the bealach turn left, west, down the corrie to Bridge of Orchy.



Up Beinn Dorain and back the same way: about 5 to 6 hours.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors