Before you go

No public body gives a distance or a time for this walk. By our map it is about 11.5 km (7¼ miles) there and back with about 930 metres of climb, and it takes about 4½ to 6 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow: leave plenty of daylight for the way down. Under snow and ice Ben Vane is winter mountaineering ground, for crampons, an ice axe 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 by the loch. Wear good walking boots and carry warm, waterproof clothing, plenty of food and drink, and a torch in case the day runs long. There is no water to count on once you leave the glen. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them, and do not rely only on a phone or GPS. Leave word with someone of where you are going and when you will be back.

Inveruglas is on the A82 on the west shore of Loch Lomond, north of Tarbet. The car park is a private one, pay and display for the day, and no current price is published. The café and toilets have undated hours: do not count on them being open. Citylink buses stop at Inveruglas: check the stop and the times. Keep dogs on a lead near the power station and wherever there is livestock. Work may start at the Sloy power station: follow any signs on the road.

After the walk

Ben Vane is Beinn Mheadhain in Gaelic, the middle mountain, standing between Beinn Ime and Ben Vorlich. An old quarry on its southern slopes gave the crushed stone for the Loch Sloy dam in the late 1940s.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/ben-vane-from-inveruglas

It starts at the car park at Inveruglas, on the A82 by the Loch Sloy power station, NN 322 098.

In an emergency, dial 999 and ask for the police, the national park authority says, and give a grid reference if you can. The police may send a mountain rescue team.

A MUNRO WALK UP

Ben Vane



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

By the Loch Sloy Road

Ben Vane is a steep, rocky Munro of 916 metres in the Arrochar Alps, above Loch Sloy and west of Loch Lomond. This is its usual way, from Inveruglas on the A82: up the Loch Sloy road, left over the Inveruglas Water below the dam, then up the steep south-east side of the hill to the top, and back the same way. Higher up, the path is forced up crags, and in a couple of places it needs hands on the rock. A day for hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

A footway runs south beside the A82 from the car park to the foot of the road up to the Loch Sloy dam. Its main gate is locked: walkers go through the kissing gate beside it. The road is private to traffic. It climbs in zig-zags under the railway, then runs west up the glen of the Inveruglas Water. About 1.7 km past the gate, by our map, a track goes off on the left: keep on the road towards the dam. Other private roads round here end at locked gates with no way onto the hill, so keep to this one.

About 2.3 km past the gate, below the dam, the road forks. Go left, over the bridge on the Inveruglas Water, and along the track. About 400 metres on, by our map, the hill path leaves the track on the right: it is easily missed, so watch for it. Just above the track it crosses a small burn with no bridge, by our map. After heavy rain, if the crossing looks unsafe, turn back. The path climbs north-west up the steep south-east side of the hill, wet and boggy at first, then steep and badly worn. There are no waymarks or signposts on the hill.

At about 550 metres the path is forced up crags, and in a couple of places it needs hands on the rock. Nothing calls for a rope, and the guides say there is an easier line off to either side: in the wet take it, as wet rock and wet grass are treacherous here. Above the crags the hill rises in a series of false tops, and in cloud it is easy to stop at a knoll and take it for the summit. Near the top there are a couple of rocky steps. Go down the way you came, slowly: scrambling is harder going down, and the best line is not always plain to see. If the cloud is coming down, the wind is rising or anyone is tiring, turn back.



Up Ben Vane and back the same way: about 4½ to 6 hours.

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