## *Before you go*

No public body gives a distance or a time for this way. By our map it is about 21 km (13 miles) there and back with about 1,260 metres of climb, and it takes about 7 to 9 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow: leave plenty of daylight for the way down. Under snow it is a winter mountain, for walkers with winter skills and the gear to match, with cornices over the corries. The Scottish Avalanche Information Service counts Braeriach among the outlying mountains of its Northern Cairngorms area: read that forecast.

Check the mountain forecast. 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. Out on the hill there are no waymarks or signposts. Leave word with someone of where you are going and when you will be back. Read the closure notices of Forestry and Land Scotland and the National Park Authority on the day.

The Sugarbowl car park is on a sharp bend of the ski road about 3 km beyond Loch Morlich: pay and display, 8am to 10pm, £2 up to an hour, £3 up to three hours and £5 for the day in 2026, and the council's record says no staying overnight. We found no toilets there: by our map the nearest are at the Cairngorm Mountain car park, about 1.5 km up the ski road.

## *After the walk*

The pull of about 110 metres up from the Lairig Ghru to the Chalamain Gap comes late in a long day, and then the boulders again. Others start in Rothiemurchus or at Loch Morlich and walk up the Lairig Ghru, or take in Cairn Toul as well: this walk keeps to the usual way.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/braeriach-by-the-chalamain-gap

It starts at the Sugarbowl car park on the Cairngorm ski road, about 3 km beyond Loch Morlich, NH 984 073.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for Police and Mountain Rescue, Mountaineering Scotland says, and give your location as exactly as you can, ideally a six-figure grid reference and a named feature. Do not rely only on a phone or GPS.



HIDDEN SCOTLAND

A MUNRO WALK UP

# Braeriach



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

# By the Chalamain Gap

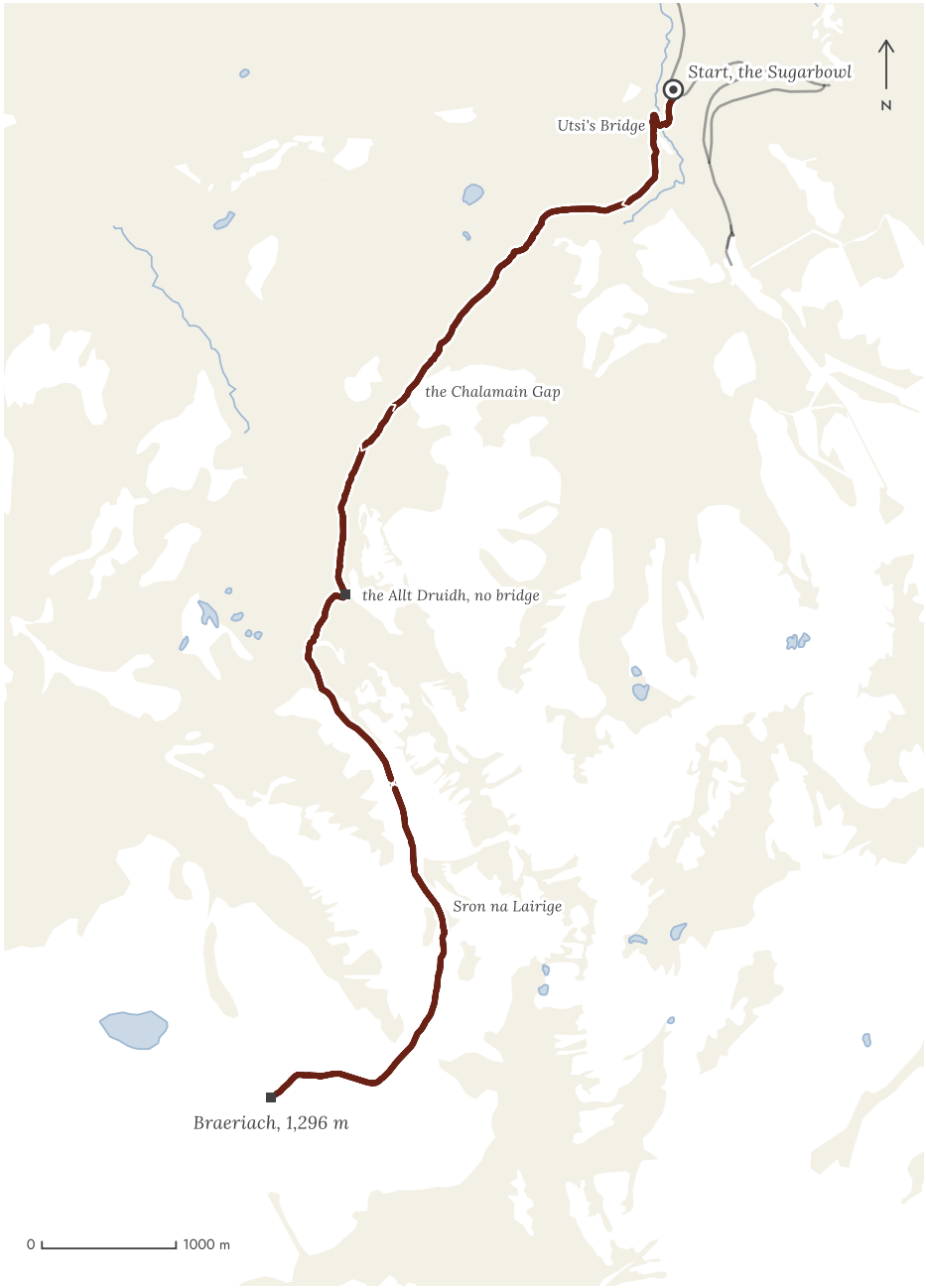
*Braeriach is 1,296 metres, the third highest mountain in Britain, above the Lairig Ghru in the Cairngorms. This is the usual way, from the Sugarbowl car park: through the boulders of the Chalamain Gap, over the burn in the Lairig Ghru and up Sron na Lairige to the rim of Coire Bhrochain, and back. It is a long, remote day on high, open ground where navigation in mist is the danger: for experienced hillwalkers with a map and compass.*

*words* // Hidden Scotland

From the car park cross the ski road with care, take the path opposite down the steps and cross the Allt Mor by Utsi's Bridge. Keep west over open moor: the paths up and down the burn from the bridge are not this way. By our map it crosses three small burns with no bridge, two by stepping stones. About 3 km out it climbs into the Chalamain Gap, a jumble of boulders with no clear path: for about 650 metres it is a slow clamber, harder still when banked with snow.

Beyond the gap the path drops about 100 metres into the Lairig Ghru and meets the path along it about 5.2 km out. The burn here, the Allt Druidh, has no bridge. Keep south up the glen for about 150 metres and cross where it comes out from under the boulders. After heavy rain or snowmelt it can run high: if the crossing looks unsafe, turn back. Then the path climbs steeply onto Sron na Lairige, faint in places and close above crags, and eases onto a broad crest that drops about 40 metres to a col.

From the col a wide path climbs to the edge of the cliffs above Coire Bhrochain and turns west along the rim, within about 10 to 50 metres of mapped cliffs for the last kilometre by our map. Keep the edge well to your left, above all in poor visibility, and in snow beware of cornices. The plateau beyond the summit is particularly hard to navigate in mist: take a bearing off the top. Go down the way you came, with the edge on your right, and cross the burn where you crossed it before.




Up Braeriach by the Chalamain Gap and back the same way: about 7 to 9 hours.

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