Before you go

No public body gives a route, a distance or a time for this walk. By our map it is a little under 9 km (5½ miles) there and back with about 550 metres of climb, and it takes about 3 to 4 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. Under snow Meall Buidhe is a winter mountain, for walkers with winter skills, an ice axe and crampons. In mist or under snow the crags along the plateau's eastern edge are hard to see: keep well back from them. No avalanche forecast covers Meall Buidhe, which is no sign there is no risk.

Check the mountain forecast: the Mountain Weather Information Service's Southeastern Highlands forecast and the Met Office's mountain forecast for the area cover the hill. MunroMagic lists crags on or near the way up, and crags near the summit. It grows colder as you climb, about 1°C for every 100 metres, the wind usually rises with height and visibility can change markedly with the cloud, MunroMagic says. Paths come and go in boggy ground and near the top, one guide says: on open ground, following paths without a compass may get you lost in poor visibility. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them, with warm, waterproof clothing, food and drink: phone reception in the Highlands is often patchy or missing, Mountaineering Scotland says. Leave word with someone of where you are going and when you will be back.

Stags may be stalked at any time of year, busiest in the first three weeks of October, and hinds from 21 October to 15 February, most of it on weekdays and often none on a Sunday, Mountaineering Scotland says. The Heading for the Scottish Hills tables give no stalking contact for this hill: follow reasonable local guidance, read the notice board at the start, and if in doubt keep to the well-known way. Both roads into Glen Lyon are narrow, twisting single track and slow to drive, and in winter may be untreated: one guide says to avoid the high pass on the direct road then. The road from upper Glen Lochay is closed to cars. Plan for no toilets.

After the walk

Stuc an Lochain, across the loch, is climbed from the same car park, and many walkers do both in a day.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/meall-buidhe-from-the-giorra-dam

It starts at the small car park below the Giorra dam at the east end of Loch an Daimh (the nearest postcode one guide gives is PH15 2PP), NN 511 463.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for Police and Mountain Rescue, Mountaineering Scotland says, and give a six-figure grid reference and a named feature if you can. To text 999 where a call will not connect, register first by texting register to 999.

A MUNRO WALK UP

Meall Buidhe



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From the Giorra Dam

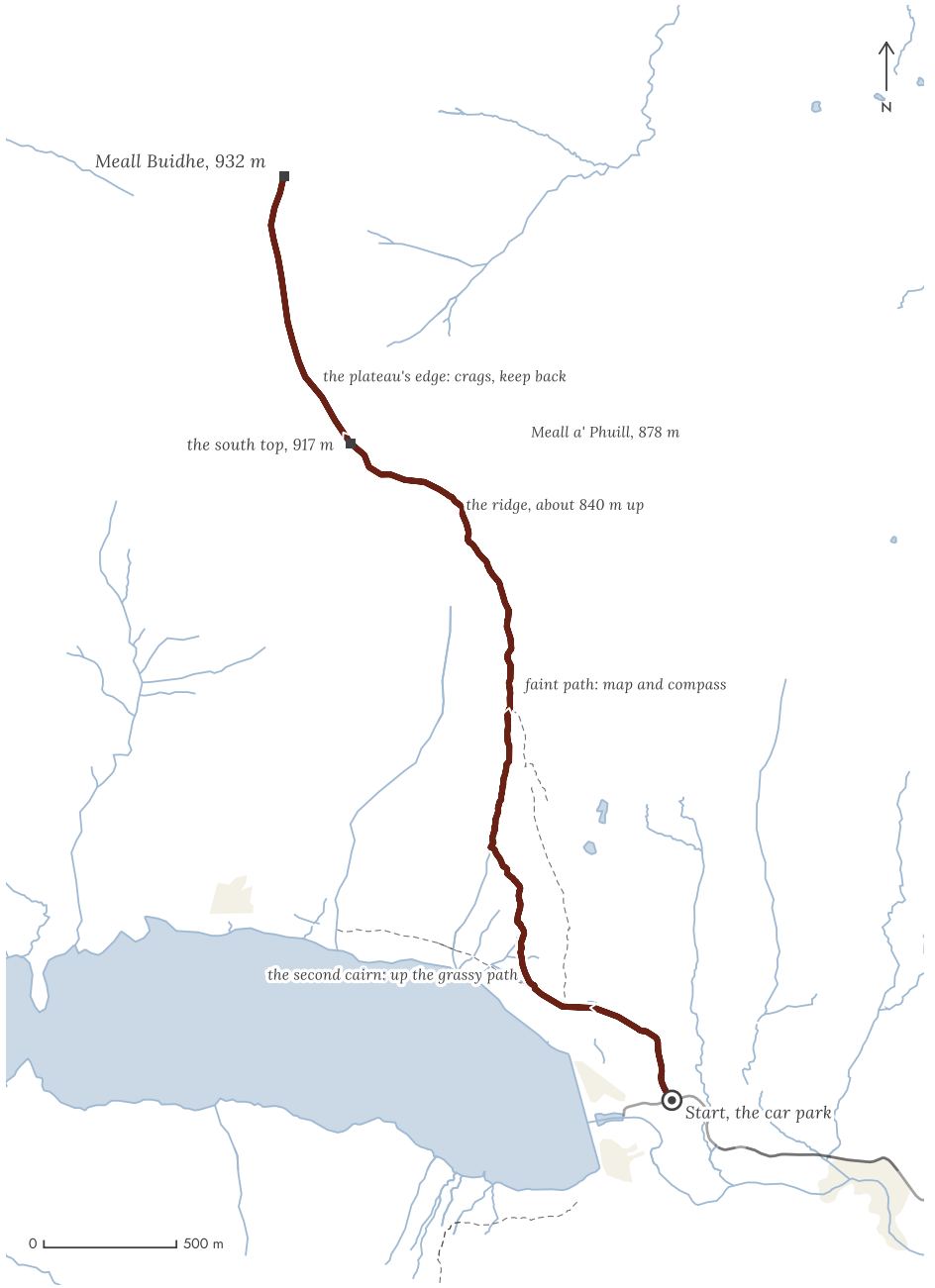
Meall Buidhe, 932 metres, stands on the north side of Loch an Daimh, above Glen Lyon. This is its usual way up, from the Giorra dam up the grassy slopes to the ridge and over the south top to the summit, and back the same way. The path is faint in places high up, and crags edge the plateau near the summit: a day for experienced hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

From the car park take the track on the right before the dam, beside the estate notice board: read it before you set off. Through a gate the track climbs north to a junction, then swings west past the dam along the north shore. About 600 metres from the car park a small cairn marks a path straight up the hill, very boggy, one guide says: walk on, slightly downhill, about 140 metres more to a second small cairn. Here a grassy path slants up the hillside. The road on west to the bridge below the dam leads to Stuc an Lochain, not this walk.

The path crosses a small ditch with no bridge, and streams can rise markedly in a day, MunroMagic warns. Higher up it is faint: by our map it is hard to follow for almost 900 metres, from about 720 metres up to the ridge. Where it fades, one guide says to aim for a perched boulder on a grassy knoll. Keep your map and compass to hand. The path reaches the ridge about 840 metres up and follows it north-west past a small cairn to the 917 metre south top. If the cloud is coming down, the wind is rising or anyone is tiring, turn back here.

Beyond it a broad, stony plateau runs north to the summit, 932 metres. By our map crags fall from the plateau's edge within about 20 metres of the path on the right, to the east, for about half a kilometre, and more lie about 150 metres north-east of the summit: keep back from the edge, above all in mist. The ridge on north to Garbh Mheall is not this walk. Come back the same way. In cloud check your line with the map and compass at the summit and where the path leaves the ridge for the loch.



Up Meall Buidhe from the Giorra dam and back the same way: about 3 to 4 hours.

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