Before you go

No public body gives a way up, a distance or a time for this hill. By our map it is about 7.3 km (4½ miles) there and back with about 640 metres of climb, and it takes about 3 to 4 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. Under snow it is a winter mountain: go only with experience of walking in snow and the right equipment. Killin Mountain Rescue Team says most incidents in its area come from slipping on hard snow without crampons or losing the way in mist. No avalanche forecast covers this hill.

Check the mountain forecast. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them, and do not rely only on a phone or GPS. Many crags need careful navigation, and the cloud can come down fast: if you have not been trained to use a map and compass in poor visibility, turn back early by a safe route. Deer stalking can take place at any time of year, the first three weeks of October being the busiest and hinds being stalked from 21 October to 15 February: find out before you go.

The hill road (U161) is one lane wide, unsuitable for caravans and other large vehicles, not gritted and not kept open in winter, and maintained only as far as the Trust's car park, so the last stretch to the start can be impassable. The parking area is small and free; if it is full, use the Trust's car park, which charges, and walk up the road. Never park in a passing place. There are no toilets at the start or on the hill.

After the walk

The Tarmachan Ridge on over Meall Garbh and Beinn nan Eachan to Creag na Caillich is a longer and harder day, and this walk does not take it.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/meall-nan-tarmachan-from-lochan-na-lairige

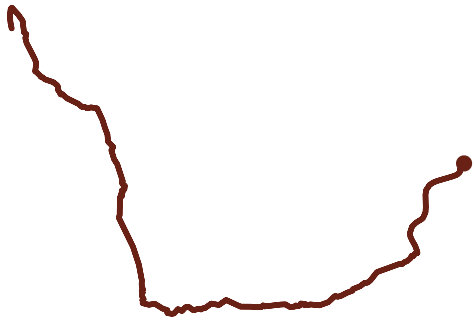
It starts at the roadside parking where an estate track leaves the hill road below the Lochan na Lairige dam, NN 604 383.

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

Meall nan Tarmachan



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From Lochan na Lairige

Meall nan Tarmachan is 1,044 metres, above Loch Tay, west of the Ben Lawers hills. This is the usual way from the hill road below Lochan na Lairige: an estate track, a built path over the South Top, then a steep, stepped climb through crags to the summit, and back the same way. The path is clear, but the last climb is steep and rocky beside crags: for hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

From the roadside parking follow the estate track south-west, over its little bridge and through a gate. About 500 metres out a small cairn beside a burn marks where the hill path leaves the track on the right, and the path from the National Trust for Scotland's car park joins here. The burn is forded, with no bridge, and can rise sharply in a day of rain. Most of the path lies in the Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve: keep to the path, for the mountain plants are fragile, and keep dogs under control.

The path climbs west across the hillside and, about 1.9 km out, turns north up a broad ridge to the South Top, 923 metres, about 2.8 km out. Beyond it a ladder stile and stepping stones cross a boggy dip. Then comes the steep section of built stone steps up through the crags of Cam Chreag: a minor scramble, Munro Magic says, and another guide speaks of some very minor scrambles to the summit. No source grades it. Take it slowly, and use your hands where you need them.

Above the steps the path runs just beneath the summit crags and curves round to the top from the north. The summit, about 3.6 km out, is a cairn on gravelly ground, with crags falling away close on its east side: keep well back. The path goes on south along the Tarmachan Ridge over Meall Garbh, with a bad step and a Grade 1 scramble, and on Creag na Caillich it is exposed. That is not the way home: this walk turns back at the summit. In thick fog and heavy rain, turn back rather than go on along the ridge.



Up Meall nan Tarmachan from Lochan na Lairige and back the same way: about 3 to 4 hours.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

Meall nan Tarmachan