Before you go

No public body gives a route, a distance or a time for this hill. By our map it is about 10.6 km (6½ miles) there and back with about 1,010 metres of climb: about 4½ to 5½ hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. The car park is a rough one in the trees at the top of the Glenachulish road. No guide read names toilets there, so plan for none.

Check the mountain forecast, and carry a map and compass: Munro Magic says the way needs map reading and the ability to navigate with a compass. On open ground in poor visibility, it warns, following paths without a compass can get you lost. Munro Magic points walkers to the Hillphones service for stalking: follow any signs. In mist go back west from the summit to the col and north down the corrie. Never follow the ridge east to Sgorr Bhan or the north spur, and at the col do not carry on west up Sgorr Dhonuill. If the cloud comes down, the wind rises or anyone is tiring, turn back.

Under snow Sgorr Dhearg is a winter mountain, and 360munros warns that winter Munro routes with ice and snow can be extremely challenging and dangerous. The Scottish Avalanche Information Service's Glencoe forecast does not name Beinn a' Bheithir, but snow brings the risk here all the same.

After the walk

Many walkers go up the north-east ridge of Sgorr Bhan from Ballachulish village instead, and climb both Munros in one day. That ridge has a scramble near the top, which Steven Fallon grades at Grade 1: this walk does not take it. It goes by Gleann a' Chaolais, with no scramble, to Sgorr Dhearg's summit and back.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/sgorr-dhearg-from-gleann-a-chaolais

It starts at the Gleann a' Chaolais car park, at the top of the Glenachulish road above Ballachulish, NN 047 588.

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. Phone signal in the Highlands is often patchy: register first by texting the word register to 999, so that you can text for help.

HIDDEN SCOTLAND

A MUNRO WALK UP

Sgorr Dhearg



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From Gleann a' Chaolais

Sgorr Dhearg, 1,024 metres, is the higher of the two Munros of Beinn a' Bheithir, the mountain above Ballachulish. This way up follows a waymarked path from the Gleann a' Chaolais car park through the forest and up the corrie to the col. It then climbs east up a ridge of boulders and scree to the summit, and comes back the same way. It is a rough, wet, stony mountain, where mist and winter come in fast: for hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

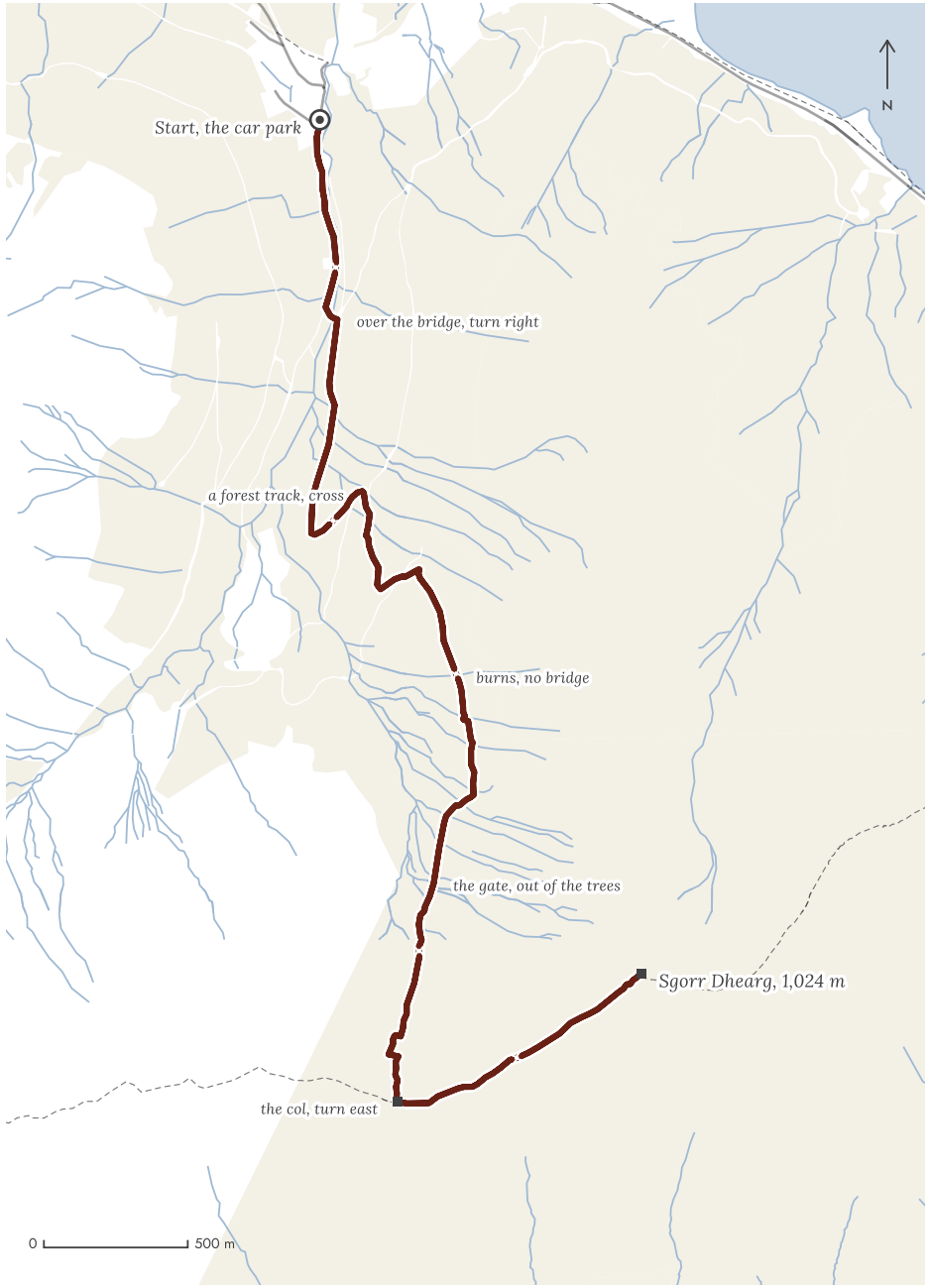
words // Hidden Scotland

From the car park walk up the forest track, past a small hydro building. After about 700 metres a bridge leads off to the left over the burn: cross it and turn right, following the signs for Sgorr Dhearg. About 1 km on, across a forest track, a sign points walkers straight uphill on a path. The path crosses a second track. Follow any felling, diversion and safety signs, and watch for forest traffic on the tracks.

Small burns run across the path through the forest and above it: OpenStreetMap maps eight fords with no bridge between about 1.2 and 3.2 km out. After heavy rain they can rise fast: if one is too full to cross safely, turn back. The path leaves the trees by a gate, about 3.5 km out, and follows old fence posts up the corrie. Steven Fallon calls it very wet, and Scotland's Hills found it wet and boggy.

At the col between Sgorr Dhearg and Sgorr Dhonuill, about 760 metres up, turn left, east, up an obvious path over grass. Higher up it zigzags through a boulder field and scree. Munro Magic warns of steep slopes and of stony, rocky slopes on or near the ways up. The ridge takes the full force of the wind: in strong wind, turn back.

The summit, 1,024 metres, is mostly scree, with a cairn and a broken trig point. Steven Fallon says the north spur is steep on both sides, and OpenStreetMap maps crags about 150 metres north-west of the summit. Come back the way you came: west down the ridge to the col and down the wet corrie path. The boulders and scree are slow going down, so allow time.



Up Sgorr Dhearg from Gleann a' Chaolais and back the same way: about 4½ to 5½ hours.

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