Before you go

No public body gives a route, a distance or a time for this hill. By our map it is about 6.8 km (4¼ miles) there and back with about 870 metres of climb: about 4 to 5 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. The A896 is a narrow single-track road, and the larger car park at Coire Dubh Mor, 2 km west, can be nearly full early. No toilets are published at either.

Check the mountain forecast, and carry a map and compass: visibility can change markedly with the cloud level, Munro Magic warns. The Torridon Mountain Rescue Team says its rescues here can be among the most technically demanding in Scotland. In mist the way off the summit is back to the trig point, south to the cairn and east, down into the corrie. If the cloud comes down, the wind rises or anyone is tiring, turn back.

Under snow this is a winter mountain, and a cornice can form above the head of Coire an Laoigh. The Scottish Avalanche Information Service counts the mountains and corries round Beinn Eighe as the core of its Torridon forecast: check it before you go. Phone signal is often patchy here.

After the walk

Ruadh-stac Mor, the higher Munro, lies about 2 km north-west along the ridge, a long, harder day with scrambling. This walk keeps to Spidean Coire nan Clach and comes back the way it went.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/spidean-coire-nan-clach-by-coire-an-laoigh

It starts at a small car park off the A896 in Glen Torridon, about 7 km west of Kinlochewe, NG 977 578.

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

Spidean Coire nan Clach



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

By Coire an Laoigh

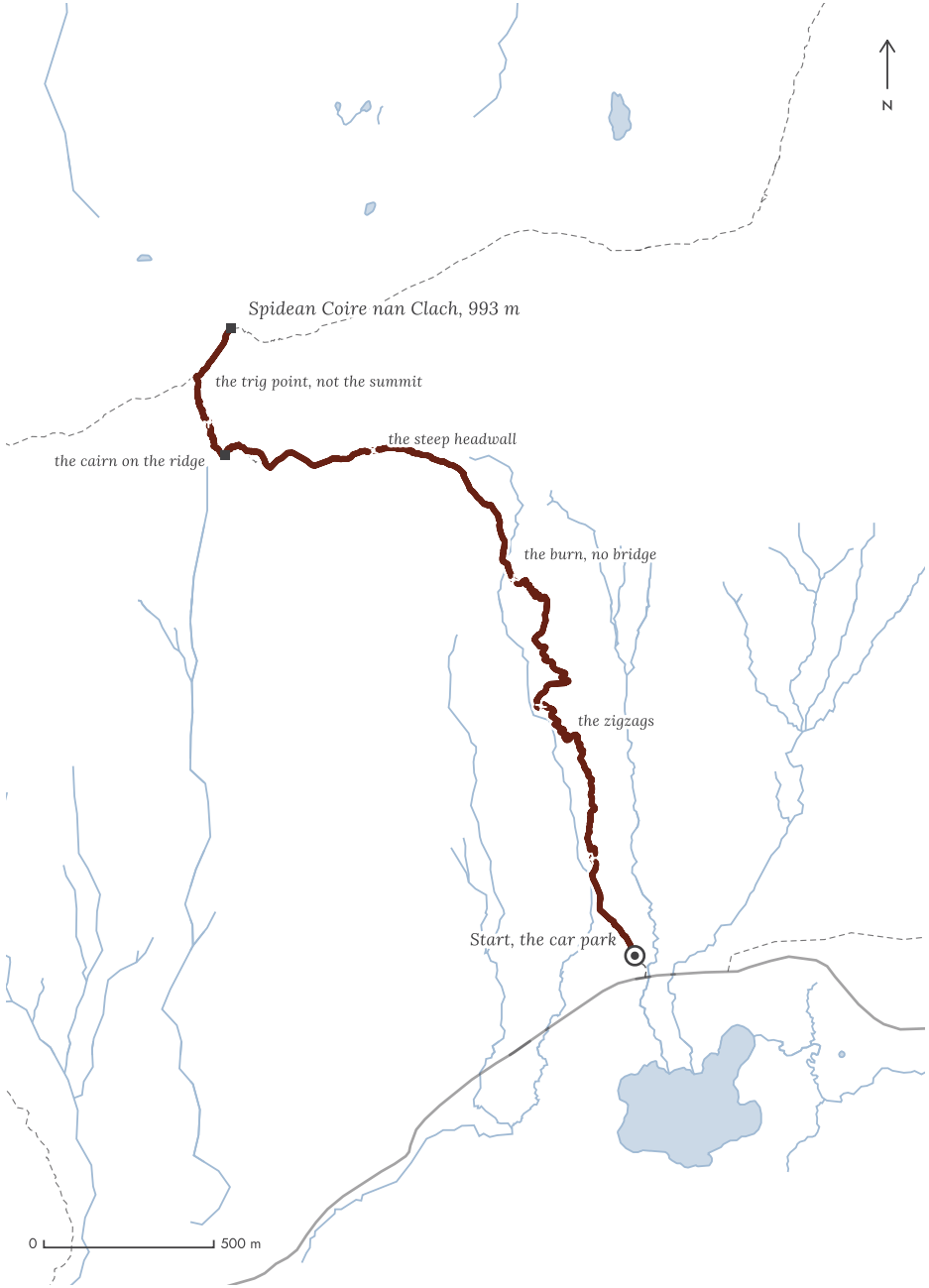
Spidean Coire nan Clach is 993 metres, the lower of Beinn Eighe's two Munros, above Glen Torridon. This is its usual way: a built path in zigzags into Coire an Laoigh, the steep head of the corrie to the ridge, the trig point and a narrow ridge with a short scramble to the summit, and back the same way. It is a steep, 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 to the square of trees and pick up the path by an information board. It is a well-made path and climbs north in a long series of zigzags towards Coire an Laoigh. Stalking can take place even where no notice is posted: follow any signs. Just as the path enters the corrie the built path ends and a worn, eroded and wet path takes over. About 1.8 km out and 480 metres up it crosses a small burn with no bridge. Stream levels can rise markedly in one day: if the crossing looks unsafe, turn back.

The path turns west for the head of the corrie and climbs steeply up grass and loose gravel, with crags close by. It is the steepest part of the walk, about 50 metres up in every 100. About 2.9 km out and 860 metres up it reaches a small cairn on the ridge. Turn north, up grass, gravel and slippery quartzite scree, to the trig point on the main ridge, about 3.2 km out. The trig point is not the summit: in mist it is easily taken for it.

The summit is about 170 metres to the north-east, along a narrow ridge with a short scramble over shattered quartzite pinnacles and boulders, where hands are needed. Scrambling can be the most dangerous of all mountaineering activities, and grades hold only for dry summer rock: if the rock is wet or icy, or the wind strong, the trig point is a sound place to turn back. The ridge west to Ruadh-stac Mor, the very steep, loose gully into Coire Mhic Fhearchair and the Black Carls (Grade 1) are not this walk, and never the way back. Come down the way you came.



Up Spidean Coire nan Clach by Coire an Laoigh and back the same way: about 4 to 5 hours. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

Fold here, the cover outwards