Before you go

No public body gives a route, a distance or a time for this hill. By our map it is about 6.75 km (4¼ miles) there and back with about 770 metres of climb, and it takes about 4 to 5 hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. This is a serious hill. The Mountaineering Council of Scotland's safety adviser has named Coire na Tulaich among the main accident blackspots in the Highlands, and people have died on the mountain in avalanches, in a fall and from the cold.

Under snow Stob Dearg is a winter mountain, and the corrie is very prone to avalanches when it holds snow: avoid it then. It is a terrain trap. Three people died in an avalanche there in January 2009, and two slides crossed the main path in February 2014. The top may be corniced, with ice. Check the Glencoe avalanche forecast: before its full winter service, no forecast does not mean no risk. Go then only with winter gear and the experience to use it.

Check the mountain forecast. Carry a map and compass and know how to use them: in mist the ridge and the head of the corrie are hard to read, and three young men died in the corrie in January 1983, coming down in a gale, driving snow and poor visibility. If the cloud comes down, the wind rises or anyone is tiring, turn back. Streams can rise markedly in a day after rain.

The A82 here is a trunk road, 60 mph and unlit. Mountaineering Scotland calls the parking at Altnafeadh inadequate and increasingly dangerous, and it is very busy in summer and at weekends. Keep children and dogs close, and take the same care on the road at the end of the day. Lagangarbh has no camping and no fires near it. No source lists toilets, so plan for none.

After the walk

Stob na Broige, the mountain's other Munro, lies along the ridge to the west. This walk keeps to Stob Dearg and comes back the way it went. The National Trust for Scotland manages Buachaille Etive Mor, with no stalking issues listed.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/stob-dearg-from-altnafeadh-by-coire-na-tulaich

It starts at the parking area on the south side of the A82 at Altnafeadh, NN 220 563.

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.

A MUNRO WALK UP

Stob Dearg



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From Altnafeadh

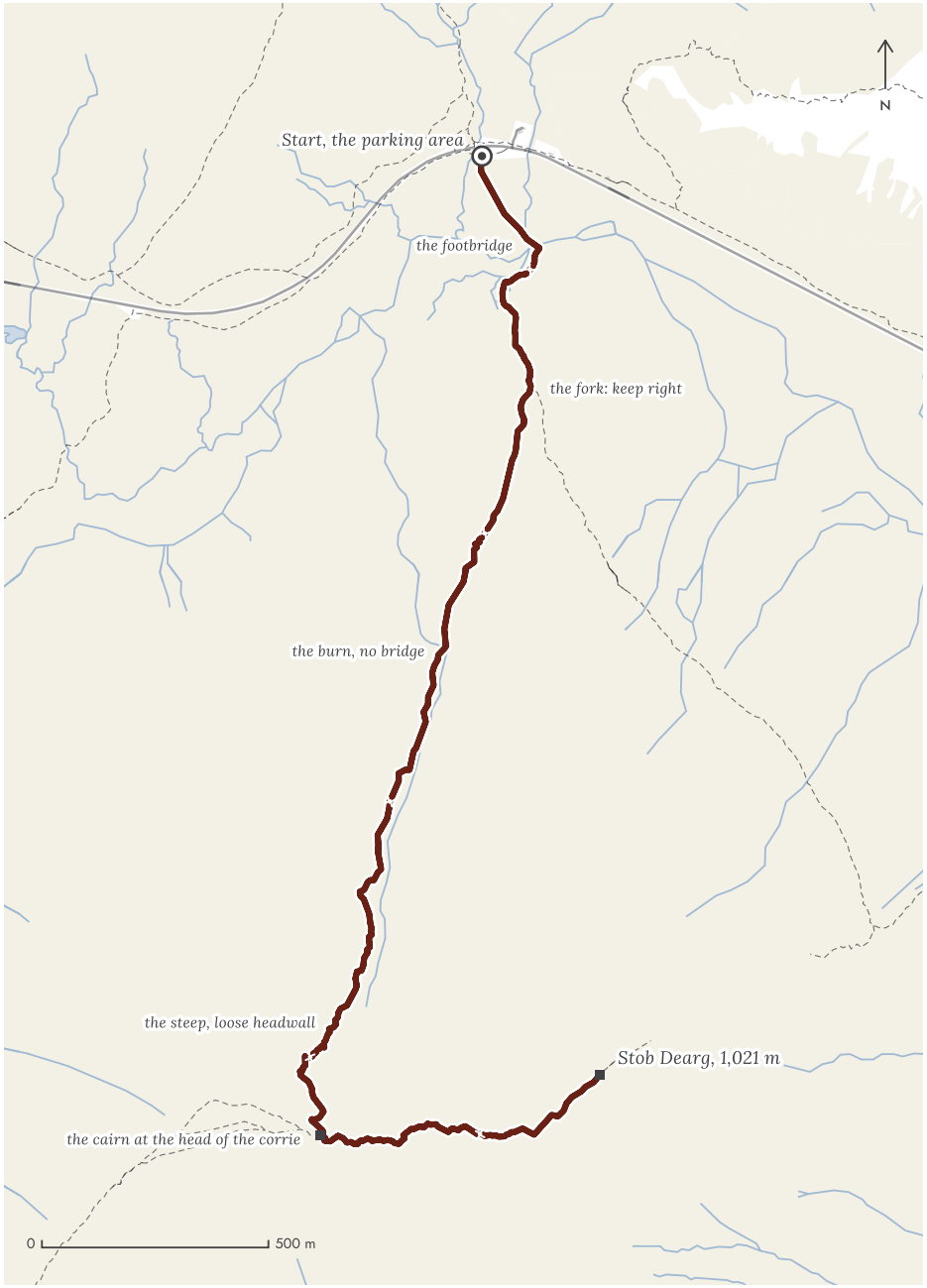
Stob Dearg is 1,021 metres, the higher of the two Munros on Buachaille Etive Mor, at the eastern end of Glen Coe. This is its usual way: over the River Coupall and up the steep, loose corrie of Coire na Tulaich to the ridge, then east to the summit and back the same way. It is a serious hill, with a loose headwall, cliffs beside the summit and a corrie known for avalanches: for experienced hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

From the parking area a short path joins the track south to Lagangarbh. Never walk along the A82: it is a fast trunk road, often called one of the most dangerous in Scotland, and closed to traffic in snow. If you park across it, cross with great care. About 270 metres out the track crosses the River Coupall by a footbridge. Lagangarbh, the white hut beyond, is not a public shelter. About 200 metres past it the path forks: keep right, for Coire na Tulaich. The left fork runs under the north-east face and is not this walk.

The path climbs the corrie and fords the Allt Coire na Tulaich about 1.3 km out, with no bridge on our map. It is an eroded, steep path with loose ground and rough slabs that can catch hillwalkers out. The headwall is steeper still, about 470 metres in 1.3 km, and hands are needed on it. The last climb to the ridge is a short scramble on pink, loose rock and scree. One walker found it loose and slippery, with slips and falls on the way down. Take it slowly.

The path tops out on the ridge, about 2.6 km out and 870 metres up, at a cairn. A path goes on west to Stob na Doire: turn left, east, for Stob Dearg. A clear path zigzags up to the summit cairn. Crags and cliffs fall away to the north and east: Curved Ridge, Crowberry Ridge and Rannoch Wall are climbers' and scramblers' ground, never the way. Keep back from the edges. Go down the way you came, turning right, north, at the cairn. The first steep drop into the corrie needs care.



Up Stob Dearg from Altnafeadh and back the same way: about 4 to 5 hours.

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