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 710 metres of climb, and it takes about 3½ to 4½ hours, more with stops, in poor weather or under snow. Under snow it is a winter mountain, for walkers with winter skills, an ice axe and crampons. The steep north-facing slope above the dam holds ice, and a slip there would be hard to stop, one guide warns. The ridge can be corniced above Lochan nan Cat. No avalanche forecast covers Stuc an Lochain, 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 South Grampian and Southeast Highlands mountain forecast cover the hill. MunroMagic lists steep slopes and 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, and the wind usually rises with height, MunroMagic says. 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. Plan for no toilets.

After the walk

Meall Buidhe, across the loch, is climbed from the same car park, and many walkers do both in a day. Another way comes up from Pubil in Glen Lyon to the south, a rougher approach with more climb, Steven Fallon says. This walk keeps to the way from the dam, there and back.

The walk online, with its film and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/stuc-an-lochain-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

Stuc an Lochain



A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

From the Giorra Dam

Stuc an Lochain, 960 metres, stands on the south side of Loch an Daimh, above Glen Lyon. This is its usual way up, from the Giorra dam over Creag an Fheadain and Sron Chona Choirein, and back the same way. The first climb is steep and eroded, and crags edge the ridge and the summit: a day for experienced hillwalkers who can find their way with a map and compass.

words // Hidden Scotland

From the car park cross the bridge over the Allt Conait below the dam. By our map gates stand at the bridge and just beyond it, one marked as locked, which may be to keep vehicles out: every guide read crosses the bridge on foot. A tarred road climbs beside the dam. About 170 metres along the shore track, by our map, a small cairn on the left marks where a rough path leaves it. It is easily missed: if you reach the building by the shore, you have gone too far. The track north from the car park leads to Meall Buidhe, not this walk.

The path crosses two small burns with no bridge, and streams can rise markedly in a day, MunroMagic warns. Then it turns almost straight uphill, very steep in places, badly eroded and muddy in wet weather. The slope faces north and can hold snow and ice well into spring. At the ridge, about 800 metres up, fence posts lead to a steep pull up Creag an Fheadain, 887 metres. By our map crags lie within about 20 metres of the path on that climb. If the cloud is coming down, the wind is rising or anyone is tiring, turn back here.

Past Sron Chona Choirein, 927 metres, the path heads west round the corrie rim above Lochan nan Cat to the summit, 960 metres. By our map crags lie within about 20 metres of the path on the right, and about 75 metres from the summit: keep back from the edge, above all in mist. A path goes on west towards Meall an Odhar: 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. Take the steep slope down slowly: it is where a slip is most likely.



Up Stuc an Lochain from the Giorra dam and back the same way: about 3½ to 4½ hours.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors