Silverbridge, its two arches over the Black Water Falls

Before you go

A loop of 3.3 km (2 miles): Forestry and Land Scotland says to allow about an hour and a half. It grades the trail strenuous, with steep slopes, several flights of uneven steps and rough, narrow stretches, though only about 35 metres separate the lowest and highest points.

Start at the Little Garve car park, signed off the A835 about two miles north of Garve: there is no charge to park, and IV23 2PU is the nearest postcode. Scottish Citylink's 961 from Inverness stops at the Garve Hotel, about 2.2 km away by road, with no pavement.

There are no toilets at Little Garve: public toilets stand by the Silverbridge car park, at the far end, usually open all year. Keep dogs under control and in sight, on the lead when in doubt, as Forestry and Land Scotland asks. Watch children closely by the fast water, and check for ticks afterwards. From November to January, set off by 1.30pm.

After the walk

Highland Farm Cafe, above the Cromarty Firth near Dingwall, opens every day. The Falls of Rogie, seven minutes away by road, is a waterfall on the same river with a suspension bridge, where wild salmon leap in autumn.

The walk online, with its photographs and map:
hiddenscotland.com/walks/the-black-water-walk-from-little-garve-to-silverbridge

It starts at the free Little Garve car park, signed off the A835 north of Garve, NH 395 629.

In an emergency, call 999 or 112 and ask for the police.

A WALK ROUND THE

Black Water

A HIDDEN SCOTLAND WALK

Between Two Old Bridges

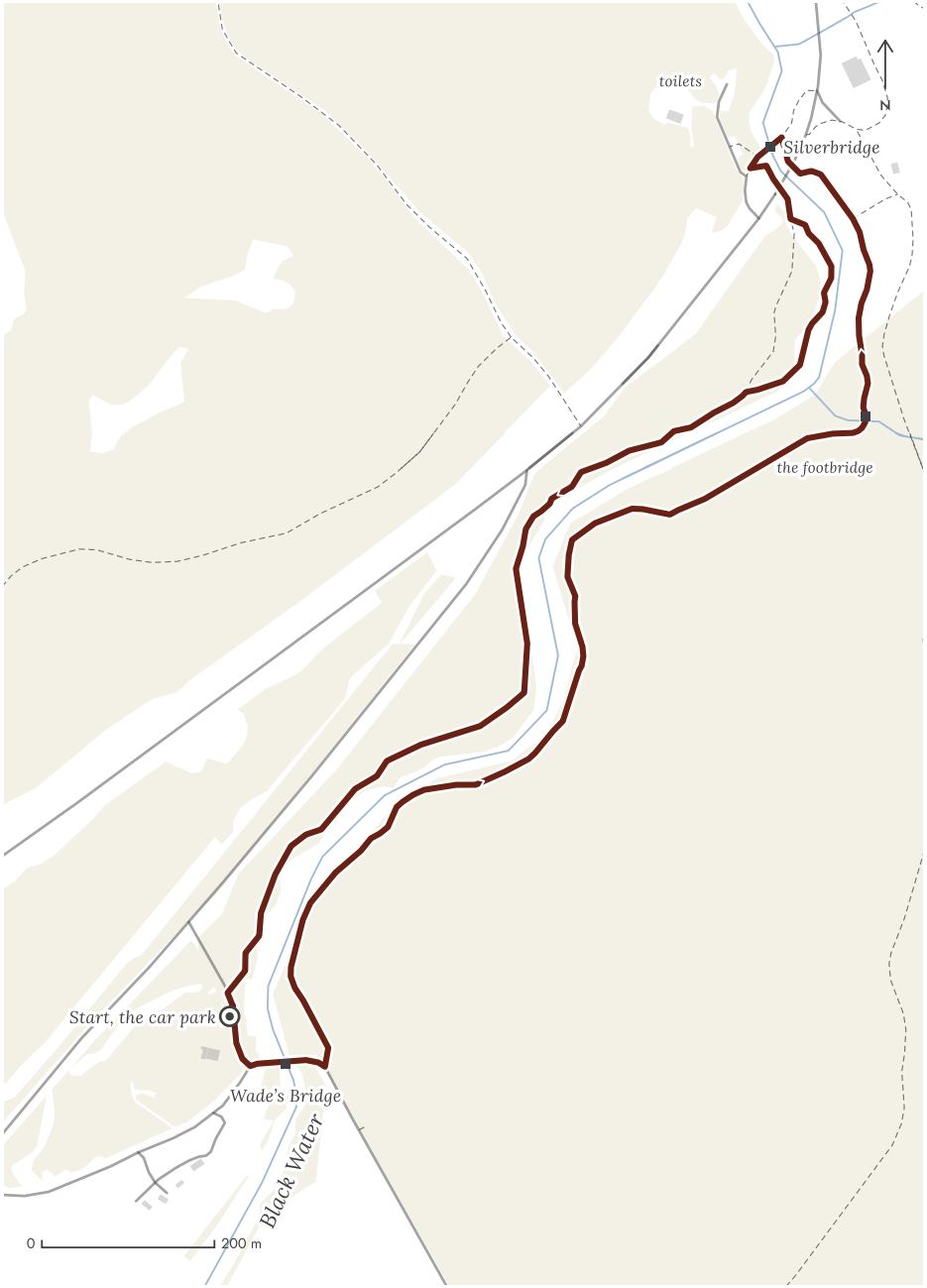
North of Garve the Black Water comes down through woodland in a run of peaty pools, rapids and small falls, with an old stone bridge at each end. Forestry and Land Scotland's Two Bridges Trail is a loop between them, up one bank and back down the other.

words // Hidden Scotland *photography* // Hidden Scotland

Start at Forestry and Land Scotland's car park at Little Garve, where a picnic table stands by the cars and a natural play park is beside the path to the bridge. The high stone arch carried a military road built about 250 years ago from Contin to Poolewe. It is known as Wade's Bridge, though it was built by his successor, Major William Caulfeild. Look for brown trout in the pools below it, then cross to the east bank.

The path climbs above dark, peaty pools and rapids, past a bench with no back, the only seat mapped on the round. Near the highest ground, about 117 metres up, it crosses a short wooden footbridge, and a grass spur leads off to a viewpoint by the river. Rock steps with no handrail climb to Silverbridge, the old stone bridge of two arches over the Black Water Falls. Forestry and Land Scotland says it is part of an ancient route used by cattle herders on their way to the markets in the south.

Over the bridge, 17 rock steps drop to the west bank, and the path passes under the A835's own bridge. The way back runs down the west bank, a little rockier than the east, with steep, narrow stretches and flights of uneven steps: take them slowly when they are wet. In autumn, Forestry and Land Scotland says, the native trees are particularly colourful and high water makes the river roar.



Forestry and Land Scotland's Two Bridges Trail, a loop from Little Garve: 3.3 km, or 2 miles.

Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors

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