



26 ARGYLL & BUTE BEN CRUACHAN & MEALL CUANAIL

► Distance: 6½ miles/10.5km ► Time: 6 hours ► Grade: Challenging



Loch Etive and Glen Coe
from Ben Cruachan.

PHOTO: KEITH FERGUS



CHOSEN BY... KEITH FERGUS

The name Ben
Cruachan sends

a tingle down the spine of many a hillwalker, such is the regard this peak holds in the pantheon of exceptional Scottish mountains. This route is tough but good paths run most of the way and there are some incredible views. For a circular route it is worth climbing over Meall Cuanail although the descent is over pathless ground, and so perhaps best left for a clear day.

1 Start

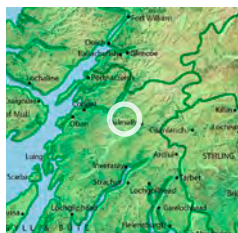
Walk begins from lay-by on A85 just east of Cruachan Dam Visitor Centre – its car park is only for those making use of

centre. Climb steps (signposted Falls of Cruachan) towards Falls of Cruachan Railway Station. Just before platform pass under railway line, continue to path on L. Steep ascent proceeds through woodland high above eastern side of Allt Cruachan gorge. After climbing stile over deer fence, path continues across hillside to gain Cruachan Dam access road.

2 ¾ mile/1.25km

Turn L, cross bridge over river then, when beneath enormous dam wall, turn L over low fence. Indistinct path rises to track, which is followed along western side of reservoir, in full view of Coire Cruachan. After 1.25km it ends at reservoir's northern tip.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking

Lay-by A85 beside Falls of Cruachan Railway Station, PA33 1AN, grid ref NN080267

Is it for me? Woodland and mountain paths, several steep ascents, some bouldery ground. Descent over Meall Cuanail is pathless
Stiles 1

PLANNING

Nearest town Oban

Refreshments Ben Cruachan Inn, Lochawe (Tel: 01838 200 880)

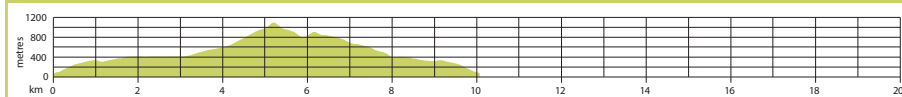
Public toilets None

Public transport

Trains from Glasgow and Oban to Falls of Cruachan; www.scotrail.co.uk. Bus (Scottish Citylink Service 976) from Glasgow to Cruachan Power Station www.citylink.co.uk

Maps OS Explorer 377; Landranger 50

GRADIENT PROFILE



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► OS Explorer map 377 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

3 2¼ miles/3.5km

Make L onto an initially faint path that runs to the R of a fast flowing burn. The path improves as it climbs steadily west into secluded Coire Dearg. Approaching Cruachan's huge headwall, gradient steepens to gain Bealach an Lochain at 840m contour line. Tiny loch that gives pass its name lies here. Views to Mull are superb.

4 3 miles/4.75km

Turn R, ascend north, where there are large boulders to cross. The path can be indistinct and care is required to reach Ben Cruachan's compact 1126m summit, but the rewards is a view of immense proportions. The vista along Loch Etive to the Glen Etive and Glen Coe mountains is phenomenal.

5 3½ miles/5.5km

Carefully descend back to bealach, paying attention to steep, awkward ground. From here steps can be retraced but for fine route extension climb south alongside old fenceposts to reach Meall Cuanail's 918m top and outstanding view of Ben Cruachan's flowing ridge.

6 4¼ miles/6.75km

Initial part of descent keeps L of fenceposts, dropping east then south over pathless ground. Once flatter, boggy section is gained fence veers away southwest. From

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here descend in easterly direction, grassy ground relatively easy to cover, only steepening when it drops down to regain track near the Cruachan Dam wall. Turn R, retrace steps back to Loch Awe. **CW**

**VIEW THE WALK ON
OS MAPS ONLINE:**
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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DATE WALKED
□ □ □ □ □

TIME TAKEN
□ □ □ □ □

YOUR RATING
○ ○ ○ ○ ○