



25 COUNTY DOWN SLIEVE DONARD

IRELAND

► Distance: 6 miles/9.75km ► Time: 4½ hours ► Grade: Challenging



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FEATURE
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Dundrum Bay from
Slieve Donard.

PHOTO: KEITH FERGUS



CHOSEN BY...

KEITH FERGUS

At 850m (2790 feet)
above sea level,

Slieve Donard is the highest mountain in Northern Ireland and one that dominates the town of Newcastle in County Down. It is the focal point of the Mourne Mountains and the magnificent Mourne Wall crosses its summit.

A superb path rises from sea level all the way to the top of Slieve Donard alongside the gorgeous Glen River. And as you would expect, the views are breathtaking.

1 Start

Begin from Donard Car Park in Newcastle. Walk to southwestern corner of car park, follow access road to fork. Keep L as it rises gently through parkland then keep L when it splits again. Path enters woodland of Donard Forest Park and climbs

alongside Glen River to reach bridge spanning river. Go L over bridge, bear R and continue upstream. Path is a little rough underfoot. Keep on to next bridge, cross this then go L, follow better path alongside northern bank of Glen River. Soon a marvellous view of Newcastle and Dundrum Bay opens out. In time, path gains upper bridge.

2 ¾ mile/1.25km

Don't cross the bridge, instead keep straight on along the superbly engineered path, flanked with rowan and Scots Pine, that ascends gradually southwest past wonderfully preserved ice house. This was built during 19th century as part of the Donard Lodge estate and was used to provide ice for deserts and cooling wines. The slopes of Slieve Donard now come into view as woodland is left behind. Crystal clear waters of Glen River

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking

Donard Car Park,
Newcastle, grid ref
J375306, BT33 0HL

Is it for me? Clear paths
and tracks, steep ascents/
descents

Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town

Newcastle

Refreshments

The
Maghera Inn, Newcastle
(Tel: 028 43722236)

Public toilets

None to start

Public transport

Buses from Belfast
to Newcastle

Maps OSNI Discoverer 29

plummet downhill, surrounded by mountains including Slieve Commedagh. Eventually the path crosses Glen River via the stepping stones.

3 2 miles/3.25km

A wonderful path rises steadily towards the saddle separating Slieve Donard and Slieve Commedagh with stunning outlook extending across Dundrum Bay to St



25 COUNTY DOWN
SLIEVE DONARD► OS Discoverer 29 ► Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shopDATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

John's Point Lighthouse. In turn the path curves R then rises all the way to top of saddle beside the incredible Mourne Wall. The wall has stile in it so a decision can be made which side to choose depending on direction of wind.

4 2½ mile/4km

Turn L for a steep pull along path in easterly direction for just over ½ mile to gain

summit of Slieve Donard, marked with large cairn on summit at junction of Mourne Wall. The view is absolutely stunning, taking in a large portion of the central Mournes, down into Annalong Valley and out over the Irish Sea.

5 3 miles/4.75km

From the summit, it's a matter of retracing steps, taking care on the steeper

sections to the saddle before descending alongside Glen River, enjoying magnificent scenery, back to the start. **CW**

**VIEW THE WALK ON
OS MAPS ONLINE:**

lfto.com/cwroutes

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YOUR RATING
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