

From this first top it is a short, easy walk to the summit of **Meall Fuar-mhonaidh** (699m) (457 222, 5km, 1hr45) and great views down the whole length of Loch Ness and over the Great Glen.

Return by the same route (10km, 3hr).

## 20 MEALL A'BHUACHAILLE (810M)

*'hill of the herdsman' or 'shepherd'*

<b>Distance</b>	16km
<b>Time</b>	5hr30
<b>Ascent</b>	750m
<b>Difficulty</b>	Good paths and broad shoulders make this a relatively easy route, though care should be taken on the tops in poor visibility.
<b>Maps</b>	OS Landranger 36, OS Explorer 403
<b>Access</b>	The route is in the Glenmore Forest Park. For more information contact the Forestry Commission on 01463 791575.
<b>Getting there</b>	The start is from the Glenmore Visitor Centre (978 098), which can be reached by car by taking the Glenmore road from Aviemore (parking charge) or by the Cairngorm bus from the centre of Aviemore (contact Stagecoach, <a href="http://www.stagecoachbus.com">www.stagecoachbus.com</a> or Traveline Scotland 0871 200 22 33, <a href="http://www.travelinescotland.com">www.travelinescotland.com</a> ).
<b>Something else</b>	Have a picnic on the sandy shores of Loch Morlich before trying your hand at windsurfing (01479 861221, <a href="http://www.lochmorlich.com">www.lochmorlich.com</a> ) and stay at the Glenmore campsite, populated with red squirrels (01479 861271, <a href="http://www.campingintheforest.co.uk/scotland/glenmore-campsite">www.campingintheforest.co.uk/scotland/glenmore-campsite</a> ).

A great circular walk atop broad shoulders and over four tops, accompanied along the way by fairies, rogues and great views of the Cairngorms.



*Meall a'Bhuachaille*

Meall a'Bhuachaille forms part of the Glenmore Forest Park. Rising up from the banks of beautiful Loch Morlich, its good paths and great views offer the walker a wonderful day out. Its wooded slopes are home to red squirrels and pine martens, but once out on the hill it's fairies and the ghosts of local rogues long dead you need to watch out for.

Just as you begin to leave the beautiful remnants of Caledonian pine forest, you come to An Lochan Uaine, 'the green lochan'. Legend has it that the striking green colour came about when Dòmhnall Mòr, King of the Fairies, and his kin washed their clothes in the water.

There appears to be some link between tales of fairy folk, *sith* in Gaelic, and green lochs in Scotland. The Fairy Loch in Arrochar is also known as Lochan Uaine.

Leaving the lochan and fairies behind, you come to Ryvoan Bothy. Ryvoan comes from the Gaelic *ruighe a'bhothain*, meaning 'slope of the bothy', and the building is said to have stood there since the 18th century. One of its occupants was Grigor Ruighe Bhothain, presumably

Grigor of Ryvoan, who was known for his strength and his ability to drink the local liquor. Abandoned as a croft in 1877, Ryvoan Bothy is now managed by the Mountain Bothy Association.

Ryvoan Pass was once a notorious place, being part of the Rathad an Merileach, or 'the cateran's road'. Caterans were rogues and thieves, and this cateran road ran from as far west as Lochaber through Ryvoan to Moray. Keeping away from the main roads and settlements, it allowed the Cameron and MacIntosh clans in the west to steal cattle from the more fertile land in Morayshire. In 1645, Allan Cameron of Locheil was said to have written that 'Murrayland' was the place where 'all men taks their prey'.

Climbing up the slope of the bothy brings you to the broad shoulder and tops of Meall a' Bhuchaille, with their great views over the Rothiemurchus forest to the Cairngorm plateau beyond.

### Route

From the **Glenmore Forest Park visitor centre** take the road signed to **Glenmore Lodge**. After 100m take the wide path off to the left that follows the route of the road until its end. From here a wide, well-maintained track continues northeast into Scots pine forest, passing beautiful **An Lochan Uaine**, *uaine* meaning 'green', which it is. When the track divides, take the left fork, signposted to Nethybridge, to arrive at **Ryvoan Bothy**.

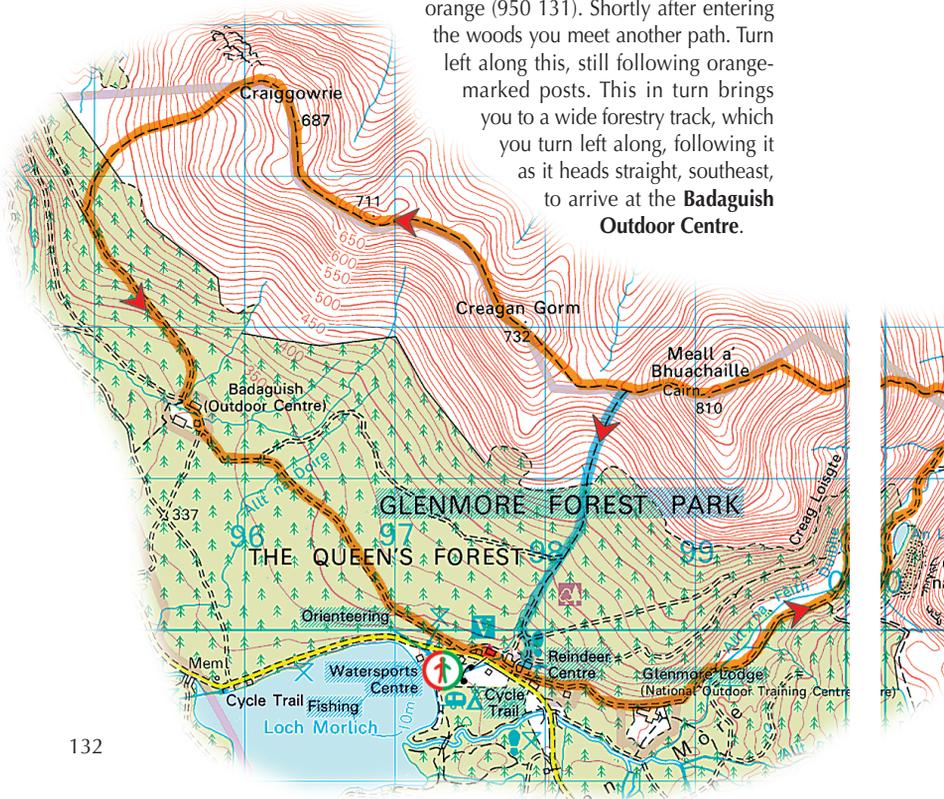
From Ryvoan, take a small path that heads up northwest from behind the bothy. The path climbs steeply on stone steps to gain the shoulder of **Meall a' Bhuchaille**. From here views back to Braemar and across the Cairngorm plateau emerge. Follow the shoulder to the summit (810m) (990115, 6km, 500m).

From the top, stay on the path as it descends down the west shoulder, with lovely views over Loch Morlich, to reach the col at 650m (985 115). From here you can choose to either go down to return to the visitor centre, or continue along the shoulder to complete the circuit taking in the peaks of Creagan Gorm and Craiggowrie.

To complete the circuit, continue along the shoulder, climbing to 732m to reach the summit of **Creagan Gorm**. From here the path becomes less distinct and boggy. Keep heading in the same direction to pass over another minor **unnamed top** (711m), with views over Boat of Garten and Aviemore.

To reach the last top, Craiggowrie (687m), continue along the shoulder for a 1km, heading northwest then north to reach the stone shelter that marks the summit of **Craiggowrie**.

From Craiggowrie the path continues briefly in the same direction before taking a sharp left downhill, to enter the woods by a wooden post marked orange (950 131). Shortly after entering the woods you meet another path. Turn left along this, still following orange-marked posts. This in turn brings you to a wide forestry track, which you turn left along, following it as it heads straight, southeast, to arrive at the **Badaguish Outdoor Centre**.





Head left through the outdoor centre complex on a small road, then left again to head back onto a forestry track (957113), where the orange posts reappear. Follow this track, ignoring one turning to the left, to arrive back at the Glenmore Forest Park visitor centre (16km, 5hr30).

*A bracing wind at the top*

### Alternatives

#### A shorter circuit

A shorter circuit can be completed by returning to the visitor centre from the col at 650m (985 115). Take the path downhill from the col to enter the pine trees. Ignore a path to the right and continue down through the trees. Take the next turn to the right to arrive back at the visitor centre (9km, 500m, shown in blue).

