

TARMACHAN RIDGE (Strenuous)

What you'll see: Soaring, craggy peaks, spectacular mountain views and a National Nature Reserve

THIS is a superb and very accessible ridge walk at the heart of high mountain country. The ridge itself is broad, but impressive and the peaks climbed, both craggy and interesting. The Tarmachan Ridge is a route for a sunny day, when the mountain views in all directions are spectacular and offers an excellent

and satisfying introduction to longer and harder traverses, or for those occasions when time or energy levels are limited.

Starting from the high road linking Loch Tay and Glen Lyon has one considerable advantage; the first half of Meall nan Tarmachan is climbed in the car! Consequently, it is possible to tick this Munro by putting in half the effort. Furthermore, while there are four high peaks on the ridge only Meall nan Tarmachan sticks up far enough from the surrounding terrain to have been awarded Munro status.

While this might be disappointing for a Munro bagger the modest rise and fall between the summits does mean less effort than if they



were all Munros. Not that the Tarmachan Ridge is either easy or dull. It most certainly is not. The ascent to Meall nan Tarmachan and the descent from Craeg na Caillich require effort and concentration and the track back to the car can be wearing at the end of the day.

Both Meall nan Tarmachan and adjoining Ben Lawers are owned by the National Trust for Scotland. Lawers was bought in 1950 and Meall nan Tarmachan more recently in 1996. The whole property makes up a National Nature Reserve, renowned for its rich variety of mountain plants.

Park up at the Ben Lawers car park and follow the road north towards Lochan na Lairige. Leave the road on the left to gain the track which skirts the

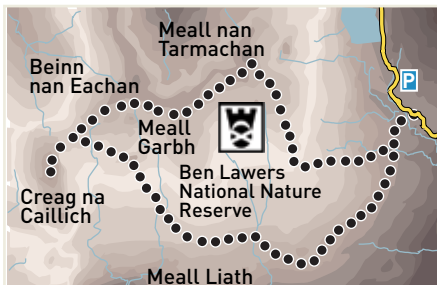
ridge to the south.

Follow this for a short distance before striking west up grassy slopes to gain the broad south ridge of Meall nan Tarmachan which leads to below the rocky south-east face. Here a grassy gangway is ascended across the face, until a short ascent gains the summit cairn.

The route now follows the obvious

path along the broad ridge to rocky Meall Garbh, Beinn nan Eachan and Craeg na Caillich. There are a couple of interesting, short sections of scrambling descent, but most of the route is straightforward. At Craeg na Caillich two exits from the ridge are possible. Either retrace your steps northwards back to the col with Beinn nan Eachan and descend east into Coire Fionn Lairige to meet the higher of two tracks leading to an old quarry, or descend the south ridge of Craeg na Caillich to weave between crags and pick up the lower track. The first descent is probably the easier and safer, especially in poor visibility. Follow the tracks back to the road and car park.

The Trust provides a ranger service offering guided walks.



The essentials

MAP OS 1:50,000 SHEET 51
 DISTANCE 9 MILES [14.5 KM]
 GRADE STRENUOUS
 APPROX TIME 5-6 HOURS
 START/FINISH BEN LAWERS
 CAR PARK



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