

GINNY'S HIGHLAND WALKS



SHIELDAIG
LODGE

JACK RUSSELL WALK

Website

Stage 1: [Walk Highlands](#)

Stage 2: [Walk Highlands](#)

Distance - 5 miles

Duration - 3 hours

Difficulty - Moderate

Stage 1: This short but varied walk takes in the stunning Gaineamh Mhòr beach of Gairloch before climbing across to the pier at Charlestown. The return walk is via the Flowerdale Arboretum.

Stage 2: A delightful waymarked walk up a sheltered glen to an attractive waterfall. The Flowerdale Glen was given its English name by the MacKenzies of Gairloch (the owners of the estate) for its impressive displays of wild flowers.

STAGE 1

- Begin from the large public car park by Gairloch golf club. From here a wooden walkway slopes down towards the beach; at one point it forks - the left branch continues through the dunes but unless the tide is very high, continue ahead down to the golden sand. The beach, known as Gaineamh Mhòr in Gaelic, is truly stunning, all the better for being between the two built-up parts of Gairloch (Charlestown and Strath) and thus backed by the verdant green of the golf course and hills.
- Turn left and cross the sands to the far end of the beach where a clear path climbs up. The dune path rejoins from the left, here, beside a buoy; instead head slightly to the right and then left, as indicated 'To the Pier' on a wooden signpost. Before

taking the path, it's worth exploring the tiny An Dùn headland on the right, the name being an indicator that this was once the site of an ancient fort.

- Continuing the walk, the excellent path climbs south above a rocky bay before passing through native woodland via a wooden walkway. Another signpost then indicates where to turn left (counter intuitively) and climb across the moorland above the beach. There are stunning views over the sands to the Strath part of Gairloch.

- After passing a bench, the path becomes rocky as it curves round to the right, with magnificent views to the mountains, dominated by the great square block of Baosbhein. The path soon begins to descend beside a fence as the buildings of Charlestown and the pier come into view below. Another signpost indicates where to turn right down the steps to emerge on the road beside the chandlery. Charlestown has both a cafe and a shop. The walk continues by turning left along the road.

- Cross directly over the main A832 to reach a parking area opposite the Old Inn (see Gairloch hotels for details). Don't cross the bridge but instead take the Flowerdale path that continues parallel to a track. This soon passes a pond with a beautiful view up the Flowerdale Glen.

- Look out for a wooden signpost that indicates a left turn for the 'Flowerdale Arboretum circuit', which continues directly across the track. This ascends slightly and is marked by green spots on posts; turn left at the next two path junctions. Now continue on the main path as it winds up to the top of the

Ord na h-Eaglaise. A bench provides an opportunity for a break with a great outlook over the golf course to the sea beyond. Continuing, the path now descends gradually through the fine woodland, decorated with rhododendrons.

- At the bottom of the slope, again keep to the main path as it swings back to the left before heading right across a small wooden bridge, and pass along the edge of the woodland. Cross the flat valley floor and climb slightly up into the trees on the far side to reach a clear path at a t-junction. The waymarkers head back to the right, across a bridge, to return to the Flowerdale Glen here.

- Our walk instead turns to the left and continues to contour the slope through the woods. Once level with a cemetery follow the path as it turns down to the left and across the back of the cemetery. At the far end, turn right onto a broad lane that leads back to the main road immediately opposite the car park and the start. Before leaving the area, be sure to enjoy the view of the beach from the viewpoint a short distance north along the road.

STAGE 2

The fine Old Inn is situated just across the old bridge over the river here. Don't cross the bridge; instead take the track up the valley, almost immediately bearing right to walk along the footpath that runs parallel to it. The path passes a pond with many varied trees and rhododendrons. Ignore the signed route off to the left ('Arboretum Circular') and instead keep straight on, on the signed 'Waterfall Walk'.

- You'll soon see Flowerdale House over to the left, seat of the Mackenzies

since 1738. The house remains a private residence so please respect the owners' privacy. Keep on the path as it curves right, then turn left at the next junction (again signed 'Waterfall Walk'). The path crosses a bridge and boardwalk, and then another bridge. Beyond this follow the main path upriver to reach a track at a 'T' junction. You'll return to this point later; turn left now, cross a bridge over the main river and then turn right, still signed for the waterfall. The path passes a hydroelectric station and then meets a main track - bear right along this.

- Keep straight on at the turning area (where another track goes right). Later, bear right off the track onto a signed path. You'll now see the Flowerdale Waterfalls ahead, actually two falls known as the Eas Dubh and the Easan Bana. Cross a bridge to reach them. Although not particularly high or big by Highland standards, this is an attractive spot. The path becomes a bit rougher here as it climbs up the slope to the left of the falls. Above the waterfall the glen is barer and the path soon reaches another bridge. Cross this and follow the path back down the far side of the stream.

- There's a beautiful view back down the Flowerdale Glen to the sea and islands beyond. The route crosses a bridge and then reaches a track at a t-junction; on the left, note the memorial to the Blind Piper of Gairloch. Turn right to follow the track to a bridge, crossing and then rejoining the outward route at the wide turning area. Turn left here to retrace your steps back towards the start.

- Keep retracing steps - forking left off the track onto the path past the hydro, and left over the bridge. At the next junction the outward route came in on the path

on the right. Ignore this and instead keep ahead, signed for Cherry Tree Hill.

- You soon reach another junction; keep right here, now following a path which was until the 19th century the main road to Gairloch from the south. Further on, keep left on the main path at a fork. It soon leads to a DIY store; continue to reach the Old Inn. Pass round the front of the Inn and cross the old bridge back to the car park.

SPANIEL WAY

Website: [Walk Highlands](#)

Distance - 3 miles

Duration - 2 hours

Difficulty - Moderate

There are two spectacular sandy beaches at Red Point; this walk combines both to make a short but rough circuit with great views out to the islands on a fine day.

- Park at the car park at the very end of the Red Point public road, though before reaching the parking it's worth making a brief stop at the viewpoint overlooking the western beach. Begin the walk by heading through the farm gate and continue along the track to the farm.

- Follow the track as it swings right and then left to pass through the farm, leaving at a gate. Follow the next section of fenced green track through to more gates to reach the open machair (shell-based grassland, rich in flowers where not grazed). To reach Red Point south beach, bear right once through the gate, crossing the grassy ground and then finding a way down through the gorse to reach the sands. The wide beach here has great views

across to the Applecross peninsula and to the mountains of Torridon. The little island of Eilean Tioram can be reached across the sands unless the tide is right in.

- To continue the walk, go to the west end of the sands and then pick up the muddy path that ascends onto the edge of the moor just above the beach. From here there are great views back across the beach to Beinn Alligin and its neighbours. Follow the faint traces of a path round the coast, keeping just above where the land slopes down towards the sea. The going is very boggy in places, particularly when crossing numerous swampy ditches, but it does improve as you go further.

- As you round the ill-defined point itself, there are grand views of Skye's Trotternish Ridge and out to Harris and Lewis if the weather is kind. Continue round the coast for a couple of kilometres; as the coast bends back east there's a fence with a stile to cross.

- The coast now bends back to Red Point North Beach, which is backed by a gigantic sand dune. Descend to the beach and cross the stream that flows out across it (this may be easiest towards the top of the beach).

- Head out into the centre of the sands, which are busier but possibly even finer than those at the south beach. From the centre of the beach there is a gap in the dunes; head up a sandy path which leads straight back to the car park.

DOBERMAN HIKE

Website: [Walk Highlands](#)

Distance - 3.5 - 10 miles

Duration - 2 - 6 hours

Difficulty - Moderate

A short circular hill walk into an area of small rocky hills with many small lochs and excellent views to both the coastline and mountains. The route includes a visit to a memorial marking the site of a fatal WW2 air crash. Much of this walk is very boggy, though it does have the benefit of a rough path. It crosses exposed moorland so waterproof and windproof clothing and footwear are essential.

- The walk starts along a track off the B8056, just southeast of Shildaig Lodge hotel. If you want to get closer to the start of the walk, there is very limited verge parking where the track leaves the road and layby parking further west along the roads.

- From Shildaig's car park, head back east along the road, passing the hotel. The track on the right is marked by a public footpath sign and mountainous country warning. Go along the track, passing a building and some livestock pens. When the main track veers right at a fork, keep ahead on a narrower track.

- Continue for another 100 metres to a sign and a tiny cairn; turn left here, up a narrow path. A short distance on this path forks once more at another small cairn; again take the leftmost path, which heads up towards the birchwood and passes through part of it, continuing to climb uphill. The surface is rough, both rocky and boggy, and care is needed to stay on the route. The path crosses a boggy area and bears

right; you'll see another signpost. There are superb views back over Loch Gairloch.

- There are cairns at intervals along the way. The path gains further height, eventually reaching a deer fence and passing through a gate. On the far side, follow the path as it keeps to the right above a loch. There are views to the surrounding hills, dominated by Baosbheinn (The Wizard's Mountain).

- Eventually the path begins to descend towards the left side of a second lochan. There are aircraft remains next to a rock, together with a nearby engine, while a propeller sticks out of the loch. This is the scene of an air crash where a USAAF Liberator crashed, killing all 15 on board. It's a dedicated war memorial and it's forbidden to move any of the wreckage. (Note that OS maps show the memorial and the path in the wrong place, by a different lochan).

- Continue on the now fainter path which runs around the left side of the lochan. At the far end of the lochan the path continues ahead but becomes faint and very boggy - it is marked first by cairns atop rocky outcrops.

- It leads down to a much larger body of water, Loch Braigh Horrisdale, where a track is reached. Turn right on the track which gives easy walking.

- After leaving the loch the track descends back down to the glen and rejoins the outward route - keep ahead to return to the road and the start.

- The other option is to continue south past the loch into the wilderness. This will take you down to Loch a Bealaich.

WOLFHOUND WANDER

Website:

Stage 1: [Walk Highlands](#)

Stage 2: [Walk Highlands](#)

Distance - 6.3 miles

Duration - 3.5 hours

Difficulty - Moderate

Stage 1: A delightful circuit through the replanted and regenerating Loch Bad an Sgalaig native pine wood. There are waterfalls and lochs and a chance to see wildlife. The first half of the route is a vehicle track; the second half - the return journey - is very boggy, on a faint, rough but way-marked path.

Stage 2: This walk follows a stony track to a large, quiet loch surrounded by magnificent mountains. There is a rough vehicle track throughout this walk which leads into a remote area. One stream crossing could be difficult in spate.

STAGE 1

- Park in the small car park beside the green barn a few hundred metres east of Loch Bad an Sgalaig. The walk begins on the track opposite, with a large wooden sign proclaiming 'Bad an Sgalaig pine wood'. Leaflets for local trails can be picked up from the wooden shelter. The track crosses the bridge across the outflow of the reedy Am Fear-loch and ascends gently at first; there is a distant view of the northern buttresses of Baosbheinn.

- The track passes through a gate in the deer fence and enters the Bad an Sgalaig native pine wood. More than a million native trees have been planted by the

estate over an area of several square miles. The trees are small and need protection from overgrazing by deer, but in time it is hoped the forest will regenerate enough to allow removal of the fence.

- The track gains height slowly, with views over to Lochan a Chleirich on the left and the mountain fortress of Slioch in the distance. Continue on the track, ignoring the blue waymarker posts leading off right, to climb over a low pass. Some distance beyond the high point a smaller track goes off to the right, with a yellow waymarker post. Turn right onto this track; you are following the yellow markers from now on.

- The track winds downhill and becomes a boggy path. Once down to the boggy flat ground the path bears right, still marked by waymarker posts.

- The original waymarked path leads to a broken bridge, so turn left when you reach two marker posts close together at right angles to the path turn, leaving the path and following a line of posts that lead to a bridge above a waterfall. Cross it and turn right, walking across the moors parallel to the far bank of the river - there is only a faint path, but occasional marker posts - for some distance until the original route is rejoined by the defunct bridge (don't cross here) above a gorge.

- The path now descends the southwest side of a little gorge, cutting across steep slopes which you might find uncomfortably exposed. It descends to another, larger, bridge. Cross this and follow the path down to the deer fence beside Loch Bad an Sgalaig. The river falls down into the loch in a series of impressive waterfalls.

- Soon the path comes alongside a deer fence and bears right alongside it, with

views over Loch Bad an Sgalaig on the far side. Note the ancient stumps of pine trees by the loch shores, a reminder of the original Caledonian forest here, now being restored through regeneration.

- After half a kilometre or so the path turns right away from the fence, following a line of marker posts that climbs up towards a notch, crossing a low pass between the rocky hills. The path then descends to rejoin the track followed earlier; turn left to return to the car park.

STAGE 2

- Park in the small car park beside the green barn a few hundred metres east of Loch Bad an Sgalaig. The walk begins on the track opposite, with a large wooden sign proclaiming 'Loch Bad an Sgalaig pine wood'. Leaflets for local trails can be picked up from the wooden shelter. The track crosses the bridge across the outflow of the reedy Am Feur-loch and ascends gently at first; there is a distant view of the northern buttresses of Baosbheinn.

- The track passes through a gate in the deer fence and enters the Bad an Sgalaig native pine wood. The track gains height slowly, with views over to Lochan a Chleirich on the left and the mountain fortress of Slioch in the distance.

- Continue on the track, ignoring the blue waymarker posts leading off right, to climb over a low pass. A yellow waymarked route goes off here to the right, and further on a black waymarked route also goes off right - ignore these and keep on the main track.

- The track gives views of the isolated peak of Beinn an Èoin before reaching a giant boulder known as the 'Grouse stone'. This rock was where shooting parties

used to leave their bag of birds; a ghillie from Gairloch would then come up to the rock each day to collect them. Just beyond the stone the track goes through a gate in the deer fence and the pinewood project area is left behind - empty moorland stretches ahead. The track climbs round to the right of the hillock of Meall Lochan na Geala before descending slightly and crossing the Abhainn Loch na h-Oidhche using stepping-stones. This is usually easy but the crossing can be dangerous if the stream is in spate. Beyond the track climbs gently once more before a first glimpse of Loch na h-Oidhche is seen ahead, ringed by great mountains. Beinn an Èoin is on the left, and Beinn Dearg closes the view at the head of the loch, whilst our objective of Baosbheinn is on the right.

- Beyond the track climbs gently once more before a first glimpse of Loch na h-Oidhche is seen ahead, ringed by great mountains. Beinn an Èoin is on the left, and Beinn Dearg closes the view at the head of the loch, whilst multi-summitted Baosbheinn is on the right. Continue along the track which follows the eastern shore of the loch, giving great views of Baosbheinn across a couple of sandy beaches.

- At the far end of the loch the track rises slightly and then ends at Poca Buidhe, a private estate both for shooting and fishing parties (kept locked). There is a path beyond which leads to several small fishing lochs, but the main attraction is the great views of the mountains all around. Beinn Eighe can be seen ahead, with Beinn Dearg now closer at hand in the centre as well as the peaks of Beinn an Èoin and Baosbheinn on each side of the loch. The return is by the same route; a longer alternative is to take the yellow waymarked route off left once back in the pinewood. ■