

How long will it take?

You can spread the walk over five to eight days, depending on the time available and the pace you find comfortable. Table 1 (left column) shows distances and overnights for the recommended 7-day schedule, as described in sections 3-1 to 3-7. To save a day, bypass Callander and go straight from Aberfoyle to Strathyre, saving about 2½ miles (4 km): see page 39. However, even at 'only' 16 miles (26 km), that's a long second day.

If you have only five days, consider the right column of Table 1, starting from Aberfoyle and

bypassing Callander for a shorter walk. You can create other variations for yourself, e.g. overnighting in Lochearnhead and bypassing Killin, as explained on pages 44 and 45.

For those with more time, there's the Glen Quach extension which adds 17½ miles (28 km) to the overall distance, adding at least one extra day and perhaps two. It leaves the Way at Ardtalnaig and rejoins it at the Birks of Aberfeldy: see section 3-8 (pp 60-61). Note that with the hotel at Amulree closed, you need transport to split this over two days.

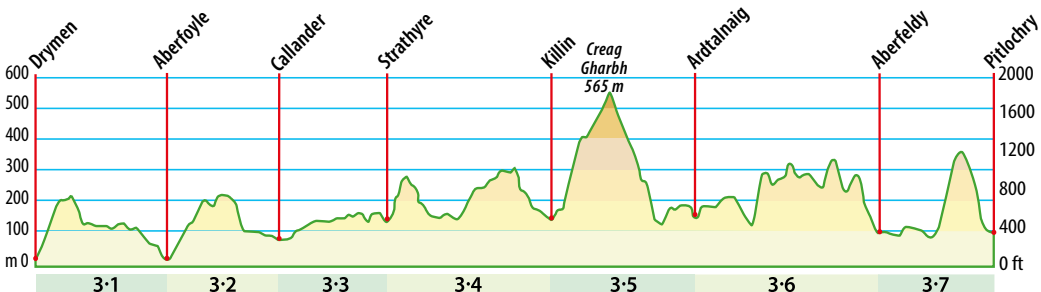
Another extension is to begin from Milngavie and follow the West Highland Way as far as Drymen. If you prefer to extend at the northern end, you could walk on from Pitlochry to Blair Atholl, or even to Aviemore. The possibilities are endless.

Whatever you do, don't underestimate the time needed. If you're under pressure, you won't have time to linger over wildlife or to enjoy the scenery. This is especially fine above Loch Tay, the summit of the Way (565 m/1850 ft) being reached between Killin and Ardtalnaig: see profile below. Consider allowing further time for side-trips and perhaps some hill-climbing: see pages 23-4.

Suggested overnight stops reflect where accommodation and food are available, but book your accommodation well in advance. It can be scarce year-round and, as of 2018, Ardtalnaig Lodge was the only B&B in Ardtalnaig. Refer to www.robroyway.com and online sources: see page 62.

Table 1 The Way fits over 7 days (at left) or can fit into 5 by starting from Aberfoyle (at right)

| | miles | km | miles | km | pages |
|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| Drymen | | | | | |
| 3-1 | 10-7 | 17-2 | | | 32-35 |
| Aberfoyle | | | | | |
| 3-2 | 9-4 | 15-1 | | | 36-39 |
| Callander | | | 18-7 | 30-0 | |
| 3-3 | 9-3 | 14-9 | | | 40-41 |
| Strathyre | | | | | |
| 3-4 | 13-5 | 21-7 | 13-5 | 21-7 | 42-46 |
| Killin | | | | | |
| 3-5 | 11-9 | 19-2 | 11-9 | 19-2 | 47-50 |
| Ardtalnaig | | | | | |
| 3-6 | 14-6 | 23-5 | 14-6 | 23-5 | 51-55 |
| Aberfeldy | | | | | |
| 3-7 | 9-3 | 15-0 | 9-3 | 15-0 | 56-58 |
| Pitlochry | | | | | |
| Total | 78-7 | 126-6 | 68-0 | 109-0 | |



Planning your travel

To plan your travel, consult the cover maps together with the table below. There is a good train service between Pitlochry and Glasgow or Edinburgh. There is no direct bus service between Glasgow and Drymen, but you can change at Balloch. From Glasgow, frequent trains run to Balloch from Queen Street, or there is a frequent but slower bus. From Balloch to Drymen is about 8 miles: take a taxi or a 309 bus which runs almost hourly: www.garelochheadcoaches.co.uk. To reach Aberfoyle from Glasgow use FirstBus with a change at Balfron; five buses a day run from Balfron to Aberfoyle on most days: www.firstgroup.com.

To reach the start and return from your finish, you may need an extra overnight in or near Glasgow, Edinburgh or Pitlochry. Glasgow and Edinburgh are well-served by rail, road and air from elsewhere in the UK: see page 61. Glasgow Airport is about 15 miles west of the city, whereas Glasgow Prestwick is about 30 miles south-west.

Public transport is ideal for the unsupported walker. If your group has a non-walking driver, it's easy enough to meet walkers at a road, but please be very considerate about where you park. It is a major annoyance to landowners, and can cause real hazards, if walkers leave cars in passing-places or obstructing gates.

| | <i>miles</i> | <i>km</i> | <i>train</i> | <i>bus</i> | <i>train and bus</i> | <i>car</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Glasgow / Pitlochry | 80 | 129 | 1h 40m | 2h | | 1h 45m |
| Edinburgh / Pitlochry | 75 | 121 | 1h 45m | 2h 15m | | 1h 45m |
| Glasgow / Edinburgh | 48 | 77 | 50m | 1h 20m | | 1h |
| Glasgow / Drymen | 18 | 29 | <i>Glw to Balloch</i> | <i>Balloch to Drymen</i> | 1h 45m | 45m |
| Glasgow / Aberfoyle | 26 | 42 | | 2h 30m | | 1h |

Table 2 shows the fastest scheduled times for bus and train (as of 2018). Car journeys are the best times likely within speed limits, not allowing for any traffic hold-ups or other stops. All figures are rough guidelines only: check timetables carefully before making plans. Not all services are daily and winter timetables are often restricted.

Toilets and phones

Public toilets (rest rooms, WCs) are becoming very rare in parts of Scotland, mainly because of the costs of maintenance. Instead the council agrees a 'comfort partnership' with a local business which then allows the general public to use toilets inside their buildings, free of charge: look for such signs. The survival of public phone boxes is threatened by near-universal use of mobile phones (cellphones) and thousands of them have been withdrawn or repurposed.

What is the best time of year?

Fortunately for those who have little choice, there is no bad time of year to walk the Way. You should be prepared for cold, wet and windy weather at any time. This book was researched and photographed mainly in winter, and revisited in all seasons. If you can walk with the benefit of a recent weather forecast, winter may reward you with gin-clear visibility and more of a wilderness experience.

Here are some factors to think about:

- Winter days are less flexible, because of the short hours of daylight: at this latitude they vary from 6-7 hours in late December to 17-18 in late June.
- Winter restricts your choice of side-trips, open mainly from April to October.
- Winter hikers are free from insect pests such as midges and clegs.
- On winter timetables, public transport is less frequent.
- In summer, more tourists are around and there is pressure on accommodation; however, from October to March many B&Bs are closed for the season.

On balance, the ideal months are probably May/June and September/October. July and August are the busiest times both for tourists and midges. Having said that, much of the Way is very peaceful and rich in wildlife year-round. Take precautions if walking alone, especially on exposed sections: see page 23.

Waymarking

The Way was developed by two walking enthusiasts from our own resources, and it still relies on volunteers: see page 62. Later we secured funds for waymarking with the RRW logo, but there are places where you need to follow mixed signage.



Scottish Outdoor Access Code and dogs

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you're in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to

- **take responsibility for your own actions**
- **respect the interests of other people**
- **care for the environment.**



Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or by contacting Scottish Natural Heritage; see page ?? for details.

Scotland has enlightened laws that allow everybody access to open land, including privately owned, provided only that they exercise that access responsibly. The nature of those responsibilities is summarised above and explained in detail online in the Code.

Any long-distance walk relies on goodwill from landowners, and a single careless walker (e.g. one who leaves a gate open or fails to control a dog) will damage good relations as well as breaching the Code. Remember that the countryside provides a livelihood for its residents: your playground is their workplace. Do not climb over fences or gates if there is a stile or any means of opening and re-fastening the gate. Take your litter away with you, and guard against all risk of fire. Help to safeguard water supplies and take care of wildlife, plants and trees.

Nearly half of the Way that runs offroad is on tracks owned by the Forestry Commission Scotland. During felling operations, the FCS sometimes posts diversions and may have to close a section: always follow local signage. Be alert for timber traffic, especially on weekdays.

Take extra care around livestock. Stay well away from young lambs and their mothers, and never disturb pregnant ewes. Give cattle a wide berth, especially if they are with young. Read page 10 carefully before taking a dog along the Way.

Deer stalking is an important part of the rural economy for some estates. Deer can become victims of uncontrolled populations, leading to loss of habitat and death by starvation. Walkers should never disrupt deer stalking on the estates they walk through. For roe deer stalking, the season is year-round and the times to avoid are early morning and late evening. For red deer, the main season for stags is August to 20 October, any day except Sunday, and at any time of day.

Loch Lubnaig

The Way is generally suitable for well-behaved dogs. If you are concerned about taking your dog among livestock on Brae Farm (see pages 47 and 49) you could use the South Loch Tay road instead.

Always think carefully, before deciding to bring your pet along. Dogs must be kept under close control, not only to avoid stress to livestock but also for their own safety. Do not let even a well-trained dog off the lead anywhere near livestock, especially around lambing time (March to June). A farmer who sees a dog running free near his animals will put concern for his livestock first.

If you are walking with your dog on the lead, keep well away from cattle: both dog and owner can be put in danger by this combination. Cattle protect their young fiercely, and may attack walkers, especially those with dogs. Serious injuries and even deaths have been caused by ignorance of the danger of coming between a cow and its calf.

Finally, here are four practical points about taking your dog along:

- 1 If your dog fouls the path at any time, please clear up after it.
- 2 Some sections of the Way have tall ladder stiles. Lifting your dog over can be both strenuous and awkward, depending on the dog's weight and attitude.
- 3 Many accommodations do not accept dogs: check carefully before booking.
- 4 Dogs may disturb ground-nesting birds or young mammals: keep your dog under especially close control during the breeding season (April to June).



Cattle protect their young fiercely



An obstacle to dogs and owners

What to take with you

Review the packing list on page 11 before deciding what to take along, and consider whether you need help with baggage-handling: see www.robroyway.com. If you're new to long-distance walking, consult our *Notes for novices*: see page 62. Well in advance of setting off, complete a few long day hikes, to test your feet and gear.