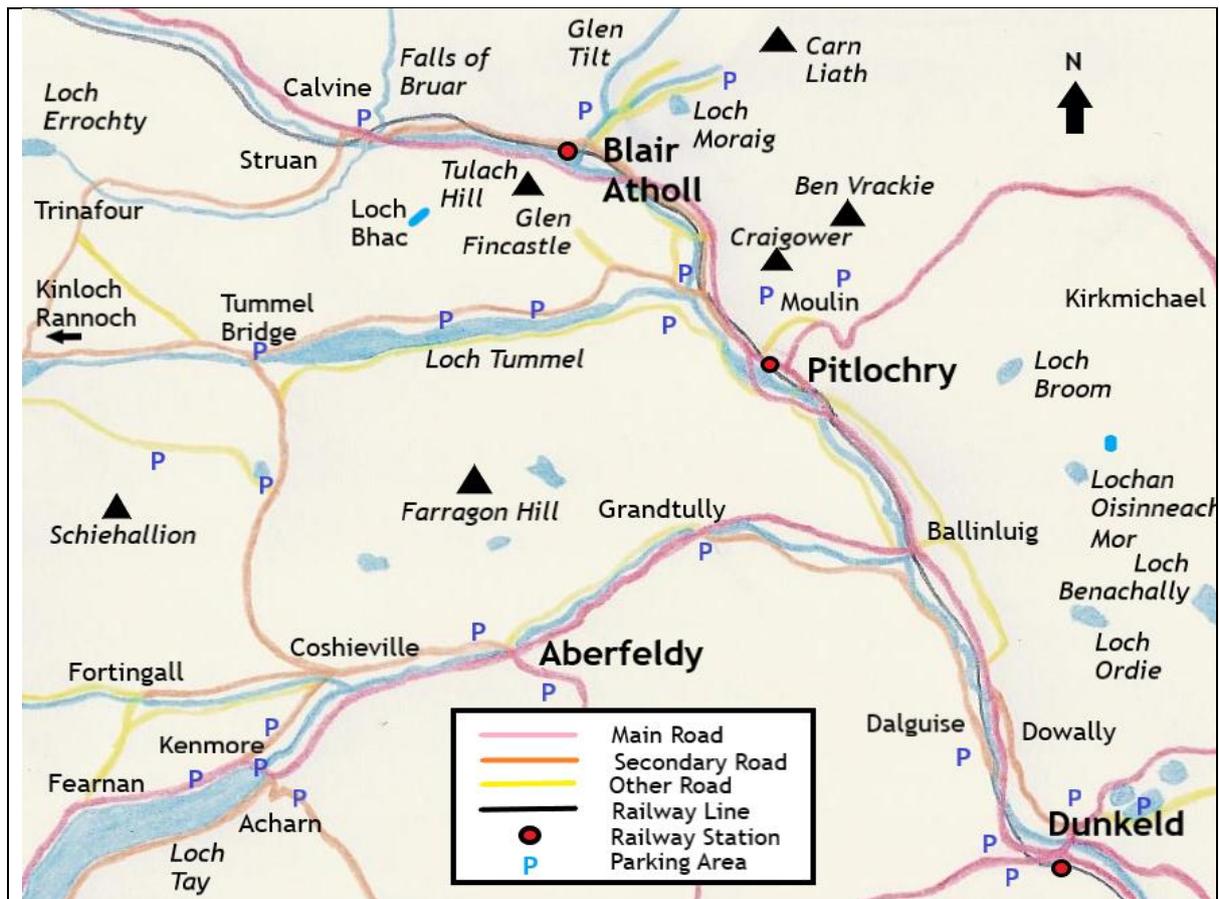


## AN INTRODUCTION TO WALKING IN AND AROUND PITLOCHRY

### Spoilt for Choice

Pitlochry and its surrounding area offer visitors a splendid array of walking opportunities for all ages, abilities and expertise. This ranges all the way from relatively flat, short ambles starting in the town itself through to more challenging, longer distance, higher level tracks through the surrounding countryside, and almost everything in between. You can plan circular walks from Pitlochry or from starting points that are easily reached either by means of a short car trip or by using the extremely useful local public transport network which opens up enticing prospects for linear walks.



### Mapping Your Route

The sketch map should give you some idea of the prominent features, public roads and useful parking sites in this area. However, a proper map is essential for the actual details of your planned route. You will find that most walks starting in Pitlochry are well signposted and conveniently colour-coded. These are clearly set out in highly recommended leaflets such as “Pitlochry Walks for All Seasons” (available from the local Tourist Information Centre) and “Explore Pitlochry Path Network” ([www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)). “Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 386” will give you all necessary details, at 1:25,000 scale, for other paths and tracks in the wider surrounding area. For the more adventurous, check out the “Walk Highlands” website ([www.walkhighlands.co.uk](http://www.walkhighlands.co.uk)) not only for details of other routes but also the tricky pronunciation of Gaelic placenames.

## Handy Public Transport

Two bus companies provide good public transport services locally. Elizabeth Yule Coaches ([www.elizabethyulecoaches.co.uk](http://www.elizabethyulecoaches.co.uk)) run buses from Pitlochry through Killiecrankie, Bridge of Tilt, Blair Atholl, Blair Castle, House of Bruar (for the Falls of Bruar), Calvine and Struan to Old Struan Road End, and through Fincastle (end of the glen), Queen's View and Tummel Bridge to Kinloch Rannoch. Stagecoach ([www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)) provide links from Pitlochry to Aberfeldy and Dunkeld/Perth (with connecting bus changes at Ballinluig) with many useful stops in between. Check dates of local school terms/holidays as these can affect some bus timetables ([www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)). Scottish Citylink coaches ([www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk)) call in at Pitlochry to provide services to North to Inverness and South to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Regular ScotRail train services ([www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk)) connect Pitlochry with Blair Atholl going North to Inverness, and Dunkeld and Perth going South to Edinburgh and Glasgow (with trains stopping less frequently at some smaller stations). The London North Eastern Railway (LNER) also operates the long-distance "Highland Chieftain" service through Pitlochry once a day in each direction between Inverness and London Kings Cross via Edinburgh with limited stops ([www.lner.co.uk](http://www.lner.co.uk)). Check the relevant websites for route details and full timetables.

## Be Prepared

For all walking routes, you probably already know that sturdy footwear and suitable clothing for the forecast conditions are advisable. For more remote routes, it is always prudent to pack a compass or GPS device, waterproofs, a small medical kit (with usual items plus sunblock, midge repellent, insect bite cream and tick removers), and adequate food and drink (as suitable places for refreshments can be few and far between). Be aware that mobile 'phone coverage can be limited, often to just within sight of the A9 main road. Mountain Rescue Service coverage (call 999 or 112) may extend a little further. Information should also be checked on current path closures in the Highland area ([www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)). Atholl Estates, which covers much of the area to the North of Pitlochry provides guidance for public access during the deer stalking season between 1 August and 20 October ([www.atholl-estates.co.uk](http://www.atholl-estates.co.uk)). Lastly, please remember to follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code ([www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot)).

## Local Ambles

There are plenty of easy circular routes which begin in Pitlochry. For a leisurely stroll, try the relatively flat and mainly paved circuit of part of Loch Faskally which takes in the Boating Station, the Clunie aluminium footbridge, and either the footway over the hydro-power dam or the Tummel suspension footbridge near Port-na-Craig. This route (around 2.5 miles/4.0 km) provides excellent views of both the loch and the dam. Another circuit, which is also quite short (about 3.0 miles/4.8 km) but with somewhat wetter and rougher conditions underfoot, takes in the Black Spout waterfall and Scotland's smallest traditional whisky distillery at Edradour, where guided tours can be arranged ([www.edradour.com](http://www.edradour.com)). For a longer and much hillier walk with panoramic views of Pitlochry, there is the Clunie walk which passes by the Pitlochry Festival Theatre, crosses the A9 main road (take care for fast-moving traffic), up Fonab Hill past Middleton of Fonab and Netherton to circle around Carra Beag. This route combines a mix of walking on paths and tracks through forest and over moorland (approximately 7.0 miles/11.3 km, and 950 feet/290 m of ascent).

## Round Trips

There are at least four walking routes connecting Pitlochry to Killiecrankie which you can combine into good day round trips with plenty natural and historical interest. Whilst one route travels through the Pass of Killiecrankie, all the others provide views of this heavily-wooded gorge which has colourful displays of bluebells in Spring and changing leaves in Autumn. Migrating salmon can sometimes be seen at the adjacent Linn of Tummel and, as with most woods in the area, red squirrels are frequently sighted. Neighbouring the site of a major battle in 1689, the Pass contains the Balfour Stone, Soldiers' Leap, and the Killiecrankie Visitor Centre with its wealth of information on local wildlife and conservation activities as well as the battle itself (check [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk) for opening times of the Centre and public conveniences).

The simplest and most direct route between Pitlochry and Killiecrankie is through Faskally Wood, then beside the River Garry through the Pass and eventually up to the Visitor Centre (4.0 miles/6.4 km, and 260 feet/80 m of ascent). Another fairly gentle route which involves crossing over the River Tummel in Pitlochry and following a relatively quiet minor road (listen for any traffic) through Wester Clunie, past the Clunie hydro power plant, across the Coronation suspension footbridge and the chance to visit the Linn of Tummel before passing under the Garry Bridge (4.6 miles/7.4 km). At this point, you can either join the route up the Pass by crossing the green footbridge (a further 1.0 miles/ 1.6 km to the Visitor Centre), or walk along a minor road through Tenandry and Killiecrankie (adding 1.6 miles/2.6 km, and another 265 feet/80 m of ascent to reach the Visitor Centre)

The other two routes are a little more strenuous but with more expansive views. One consists of walking up towards Moulin from Pitlochry and then heading East through Balnacraig, across the Pitlochry Golf Course (exercising necessary caution), by Upper Drumcherry and into the forest where a track continues until signposted under the A9 viaduct to join the path beside the B8079 road to the Visitor Centre (3.7 miles/6.0 km, and 510 feet/155 m of ascent). A diversion to Craigower can be included in this route (adding 0.5 miles/0.8 km, and an extra 490 feet/150 m of ascent). The highest route involves heading through Moulin and picking up the path to Ben Vrackie before turning off left where signposted to climb over the Bealach na Searmoin and then dropping down to the Visitor Centre (5.2 miles/8.4 km, and 1,495 feet/455 m of ascent).

The popular Ben Vrackie walk itself is often tackled as a short linear route from Pitlochry (round trip of 7.0 miles/11.3 km, and 2,415 feet/735 m of ascent). The path is clear, well-maintained and in good condition with stone steps starting the main climb after you have passed the end of Loch a'Choire. In good weather conditions, the panoramic view from the top takes in many prominent local features. Regardless of the weather, be prepared with warm clothing since, as you would expect, the summit is very exposed.

## Car-free Adventures

Previously-listed public transport enables you to attempt numerous linear walks in this area and brief summaries of a small sample are provided here. You can use the Rob Roy Way between Pitlochry and Grandtully or Aberfeldy in conjunction with bus services that involve a change at Ballinluig. Starting in Pitlochry, the route takes you into Strath Tay to reach Grandtully (4.0 miles/6.4 km, and 805 feet/245 m of ascent). You can return by

buses from here, or from Aberfeldy by extend your walk accordingly (adding another 4.9 miles/7.9 km, and 95 feet/30 m of ascent). The bus to Struan provides access to the route up to Loch Bhac where you can head down to Balnanstreuartach for Blair Atholl (8.0 miles/12.9 km, and 720 feet/220 m of ascent) or continue through the Allean Forest and down into Glen Fincastle before picking up the path to Blair Atholl (11.0 miles/17.7 km, and 1,230 feet/375 m of combined ascent), returning to Pitlochry by bus or train. By catching the Kinloch Rannoch bus, you can walk up a minor road from the other end of Glen Fincastle for a short walk to Blair Atholl (3.7 miles/6.0 km, and 690 feet/210 m of ascent) or a longer one into Killiecrankie (5.5 miles/8.9 km, and 720 feet/ 220 m of ascent). Alternatively, it is possible to walk all the way back into Pitlochry by the most scenic but longest route extending through Balrobbie Wood, up Creag Fonvuick and down Creag na h-Uamha returning via Tenandry, Garry Bridge, the Linn of Tummel, the Coronation suspension footbridge and Wester Clunie (for a total of 12.7 miles/20.4 km, and 1,755 feet/535 m of ascent). Further details of these and other walks can be found in the “Highland Perthshire Walks” section of the Tigh Na Cloich Hotel website.

### Further Afield

Pitlochry is also an ideal base for accessing more distant walking areas either by car or by public transport. Numerous walks are available in the Dunkeld and Birnam area which can be reached by car, bus or train. Colour-coded routes are set out in “Explore Dunkeld Path Network” ([www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)). Other leaflets, available from the Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust ([www.pkct.org](http://www.pkct.org)), include “Explore the Birks of Aberfeldy” and “Explore Rannoch Path Network” in areas accessible from Pitlochry by both car and bus, and “Explore the Kirkmichael Path Network” and “Explore the Cateran Trail” for neighbouring Strathardle which is only accessible from Pitlochry by car. Additionally, the Pitlochry area is on the edge of the Cairngorms National Park. Indeed, the boundary crosses the new and old A9 main road just South of Killiecrankie. This entire area offers exhilarating walking opportunities ([www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)) within easy reach of Pitlochry by car, or by train with railway stations at Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Kingussie, Aviemore and Carrbridge, or by Scottish Citylink coaches with stops at Dalwhinnie and Aviemore ([www.citylink.co.uk](http://www.citylink.co.uk)).

