

Route 1: Whitemuir

Length: 2.5 miles

Going: A little uphill, clear footpath

From the level crossing, head away from the village along the pavement and then path on the left side of the road. Directly after the house by the layby where the lorries park there is a gate on the left with a signpost to "Gleneagles".

Pass through this gate and follow the path up and right until you reach another, metal, gate. At this point, we're leaving the main path to Gleneagles, so directly after the gate take a left along a fainter footpath beside the fence which heads through the woods. After a while the path emerges from the woods and takes a line up and right (the only steep bit of the walk) before heading through the broom bushes across the moorland. At this point if the weather is clear there is a fine view to your left of the pointed peak of Ben Vorlich, by Loch Earn. After a while you pass through a gap in an old stone wall and the path starts to descend towards a couple of lochans which are the source of the Water of Allan. Keep on the main path along the right hand side of the water (though the smaller path going off to the left between the lochans offers a great picnic/birdwatching spot), and after leaving the water behind the path becomes slightly fainter, but soon emerges at a junction with the main Gleneagles path by a line of deciduous trees and a sheep field. Be very cautious at this point during the lambing season. Turn right onto this path, after a while reaching the gate you passed through earlier, and retrace your steps to Blackford.



Route 2: Way of the deer

Length: 3.5 miles

Going: A fair bit uphill but it's never steep. 1 stile, vehicle tracks and a short section on a faint path or "way of the deer"

At the junction of Stirling Street and Post Office Entry, take the alleyway (heading to backyards) in the opposite direction from Moray Street and at the end cross a footbridge with a green signpost. Once across the bridge, carry on straight for a few yards then take another bridge on the left and follow the footpath beyond it up to a gate by the A9. Crossing the A9 can be daunting, but this 'official' crossing is marked both for pedestrians and drivers so with a little patience is perfectly safe and after a couple of times using it will become second nature.



Once safely across the road, pass through another gate and follow a faint path across a field to reach the Bardrill road then turn right onto it. Follow the road past the Roadmen's Cottages and up a hill, at the top of which there is a gate on the left hand side with another green sign. Take the track beyond this gate.

Numerous tracks cut off the central one but stay on this one for a while, passing a small hut on the left after which the track bends right, passes a green painted gate and comes to a junction. At this junction turn left, up towards the heathery hill called Kinpauch Hill.

A short uphill bit follows at the end of which the track once more bends right along the base of the heathery hill. At this point you can carry on along the track (see route 3) but we've had quite enough uphill for one day. So instead, turn left, following a faint heathery path along the side of an old wall towards some woods in the distance. This is the roughest section of the walk but it's pretty short. Once you reach the woods, pass through a small stone enclosure with a gate in the wall on the left – do not go through this gate – and carry on a few more yards to a clear vehicle track heading down through the woods.

Follow the vehicle track down the hill, ignoring any lefts and rights (it is dead straight save for a single wiggle about halfway down) until you reach a T-junction with no option to go straight on. Turn left at this point, following the track to the hut you passed earlier, and turn right to retrace your steps to Blackford.

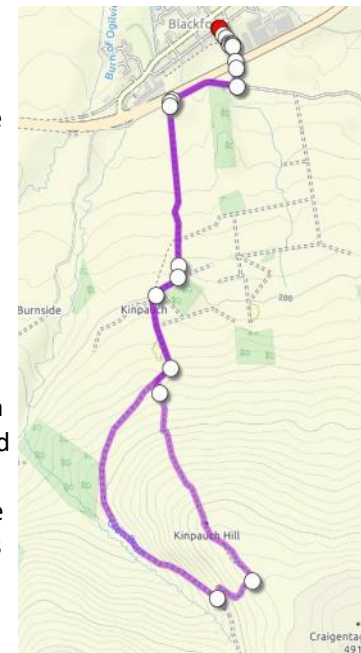
Route 3: Kinpauch Hill

Length: 5 miles

Going: about 1000ft ascent – sounds like a lot but it's mostly on good clear tracks

Follow route 2 until the bend in the track mentioned in that description at the base of the heathery hill. Carry on up the main track, passing a small wooden bridge on the left (this is our descent route) and heading around the side of the hill. After some woods there is a small quarry and the path descends briefly before a fairly long quite steep uphill section to a gate. When you reach the gate, breathe a sigh of relief because you're nearly there! Don't pass through the gate, but instead follow the zig zags of the main track up the hill, eventually emerging onto the summit plateau.

Follow the path left across the moorland to reach the cairn of Kinpauch Hill, and one of the best views of Blackford and Strathearn. From here, a well trimmed footpath heads, a little steeply at times, directly down the hillside to the little bridge we passed earlier, and from here retrace your steps to the village, or if your appetite is only whetted, take the continuation of the "way of the deer" in route 2.



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