

Introduction

The Wicklow Mountain range was formed through volcanic activity and is the largest single mass of granite anywhere in the British Isles. The mountain range itself is a long backbone stretching from Tallaght to Aughrum, with numerous spurs and subsidiary peaks stretching to the east, whilst the western slopes quickly merge into the plains of Kildare and Carlow. Glaciation has played a major part in the shaping of the landscape and many classic features are visible such as U-Shaped Valleys, Hanging Valleys and Corries.

The route itself starts and finishes in the Glenmalure Valley, home of the O'Byrne Clan and for many centuries the centre of Irish rebellion and resistance against British rule. Michael Dwyer took refuge in the Valley from the British, as did Eamon De Valera in the War of Independence.

Map & Directions to Start

The map to use is the Discovery Series Sheet 56 (1:50,000). Other maps you might consider using are the East West Map (Lugnaquilla & Glendalough) at 1:30,000 scale and the Harvey's Map (Wicklow Mountains) at 1:30,000 scale. Both of these cover the route in more detail.

Coming from Glendalough take the Rathdrum road, and about 1.5km outside the town there is a turn off to the right onto the old military road. Follow this road along past the Shay Elliot Monument and down to Drumgoff Crossroads. Take a right at the Cross Roads and follow the road up into the Glenmalure Valley. There is a car park just before the Baravore Ford and this will be the Check-in Point.

Route Overview

Friday: The route follows the Table Track uphill to reach low camp at the top of the Glenmalure Valley.

Saturday: The route continues to the top of the Table Track and then south along the edge of the Military Range to Lugnaquilla Mountain (the highest mountain in Leinster). From here it heads towards Clohernagh before descending to High Camp.

Sunday: The route starts off with a difficult decent alongside the waterfall in the Fraughan Rock Glen before picking up a forest track which is then followed to the car park / finish.

IMPORTANT NOTICE. The Friday night walk, although quite straightforward navigationaly, is quite long. Therefore check-in will close promptly at 10.00pm to allow the last teams and check-in staff to reach low camp at a reasonable hour.

Route Outline

Friday Night

Car Park /Start (T 066 941) to Low Camp (T 034 963)

After your gear is inspected you will be checked out by a member of staff. You can cross the ford (water level permitting) or follow a path to the right of the ford which leads to a forestry bridge. Either way you then follow the forest road on the far side of the river up past the hostel to a T-Junction. Stay right and continue uphill. A little later you will come to another T-Junction (T 047 953) where you again take the right option. After about 400m there is a turn across the river over a damaged bridge. Do not cross this but continue straight ahead. Shortly after this a smaller track splits from the forest road. Both lead to low camp and while the track is more direct there is a lot of tree felling in the area, so you may be better to stay with the forest road. At T 035 962 the track (which is actually the Table Track) crosses the forest road. Continue straight ahead on the forest road and low camp is located to the left, just before the road crosses the river.

Saturday

Low Camp (T 037 961) to Top to Table Track (T 021 967)

After been checked out of low camp return to where the Table Track crosses the forest road and turn right onto it. Continue upward along the track until you reach its crest in the col between Table Mountain and Camenabologue.

Table Track (T 021 967) to Camenabologue (T 034 960)

From the checkpoint you start to ascent through peat hags towards the summit of Camenabologue.

Camenabologue (T 034 960) to Spot 712 (T 032 939)

From Camenabologue you start to cross an area of open hillside. There is a track along this section but parts of it are well eroded.

Spot 712 (T 032 939) to Lugnaquilla Plateau Checkpoint (T 035 921)

From 712 the ground starts to rise toward the summit area of Lugnaquilla. You will need to plan a dogleg route on this leg turning once you ascent to the main ridge at Cannow Mountain (T 029 928)

Lugnaquilla Plateau Checkpoint (T 035 921) to Summit Lugnaquilla (T 032 9180) and return.

If you wish you may drop you bags the Plateau Checkpoint and head up to the summit of Lug. On a clear day (once every 10 years) you can see as far as Wales to the east, Mount Leinster and the Black stairs to the south, and the Mourne and Coolies to the north.

Lugnaquilla Plateau Checkpoint (T 035 921) to Clohernagh 712 (T 058 919)

Clohernagh is a less visited mountain at 800m. It is the fourth highest in Leinster but is overshadowed by its larger neighbour. It is a classic ridge walk with views to the South Prison and the Ow valley to the south, and Glenmalure and the Fraughan Rock Glen to the north.

Clohernagh 712 (T 058 919) to Start of Stream (T044 927)

In order to have a safe decent into the Fraughan rock glen, descend across the contours to pick up the stream head.

Start of Stream (T044 927) to High Camp (T 045 932)

Follow the stream down and around into the flat area at the top of the waterfall. Camp will be a little back from the edge on the left side of the stream.

Sunday

High Camp (T 045 932) to Base of Fraughan Rock Waterfall (T 048 934)

Carefully make you way down the left hand side of the waterfall. There is an old track and this offers the quickest and safest decent. The forest in this area has been replanted however and the line of the track may be easily lost.

Base of Fraughan Rock Waterfall (T 048 934) to Finish (T 066 941)

Pick up the forest road at the base of the waterfall. Follow the road out. When you swing around the 90 degree turn at T 062 941 you can continue along the forest road to the hostel and back along the road to the ford. Alternatively a little further along the road there is a path on the right which will lead you down through the forest and will take a few minutes off.

And that's it, you are finished. Well Done!