

Scotland's Mountains: The Munros [B2]

Ogni anno, migliaia di appassionati di alpinismo scalano le Munro, le montagne più alte della Scozia. Sotto questa denominazione rientrano 282 picchi, tutti superiori ai 3000 piedi (914,4 metri).

Scotland's landscape is like nowhere else in Britain. Vast and remote, its mountains are higher, wilder and more numerous than in England or Wales. Ben Hope, in the far north, is an isolated monolith rising 927 metres above a vista of lochans (small lakes) and wilderness. Some four hundred kilometres to the south, the slopes of Ben Lomond reflect in the waters of Loch Lomond. What connects these two mountains is that they are both Munros: the most northerly and southerly of the 282 mountain peaks that appeared in Sir Hugh Munro's Tables in 1891.

TABLES

Sir Hugh Munro was born in London in 1856, but grew up on the family estate near Kirriemuir in the east of Scotland. An enthusiastic climber and walker, in 1889 he became a founding member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club (SMC). He set out to climb and survey all of the mountains in Scotland of three thousand feet (914.4 metres) or higher, including those on the islands. His now famous list, known as Munro's Tables, was published in 1891. It surprised many people, as no one had realised how many mountains of that height there were in Scotland. The mountains listed became known as 'Munros'.

EQUIPMENT

In the 19th century, boots and clothing were heavy, especially when wet. Few motor cars could access the beginning or end point of walks. Sir Hugh Munro made many long, cross-country treks through remote areas, often lasting several days. In his rucksack, he carried an aneroid barometer to help him calculate the height of each summit he climbed.

COMPLEATORS

Those who manage to climb the full round of Munros, all 282 [summits](#), are known as ‘compleators’. The names of the eight thousand or so ‘compleators’ (an archaic spelling) are officially recorded by the SMC. Sadly, the list does not include Sir Hugh Munro himself. He died in 1919, having climbed all but one mountain. He was saving Carn Cloich-Mhuillin, located in the Cairngorms, for last, as it was near to his home.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Climbing a Munro is known as '[bagging](#)'. If this makes the climb sound easy, think again! The Munros are not as high as some of Europe's highest mountains, and are not usually snow-peaked. However, the Scottish weather can be wild and unpredictable. The Highlands and Islands are subject to Atlantic weather systems with extremely strong winds. In addition, many of the dramatic Munro peaks rise straight up from sea level. The [height gain](#) for a day's walking can be similar to what might be expected in much larger [mountain ranges](#).

THE HEIGHTINGS

The original list of Munros used the maps and [surveying](#) techniques of the time. Not all summit heights were accurate and the list was revised, initially by Sir Hugh himself, and later by The Munro Society and SMC. In 2006, modern technology was used to accurately measure the heights of two mountains shown as 914 metres high on maps, as well as all nineteen peaks of around 914.4 metres. Eight years later, a process that became known as The Heightings was finalised. The official total is currently agreed at 282 Munros.

RECORD BREAKING

Munro [bagging](#) attracts all sorts of people. Some climb the Munros in alphabetical order, some by geographical areas, others in order of height. On

average, it takes around ten years to ‘compleat’ the Round of Munros, but some do it faster. In 2023, [**endurance**](#) athlete Jamie Aarons broke the world record when, travelling only on foot, by bike and by kayak, she climbed all 282 Munros in just 31 days, 10 hours and 27 minutes.

www.themunrosociety.com

Glossary

- **slopes** = pendici, pendii
- **wet** = bagnati
- **lasting** = durare
- **mountain ranges** = catene montuose
- **endurance** = resistenza
- **summits** = cime
- **climber** = scalatore
- **height gain** = dislivello
- **estate** = tenuta
- **set out to** = decidere, avere intenzione di
- **survey** = rilevare, mappare
- **treks** = escursioni
- **rucksack** = zaino
- **bagging** = l'atto di scalare le cime delle Munro