

Acharn to Aberfeldy - with Ardeonaig Hotel on Loch Tay

Distance: 10 miles/16.5km (one way only)

Time: 5 - 6 hours

Read EatScotland's review of [Ardeonaig Hotel & Restaurant](#)



Image: A cascading burn on the Birks of Aberfeldy walk

There are great views from this high level linear route which links two wonderful woodland gorges, a pine wood and an expanse of heather moorland.

The route begins at Acharn village, on the shores of Loch Tay. The village was built for estate workers in the 1800's and the water of Acharn Burn was used by the mill, the wheel of which can still be seen.

The route follows the signposted track to the viewing platform at the top of the falls. From here turn right onto the main track towards the open fields and follow the distinct route upwards and then east away from the gorge. The way ahead is clearly marked, passing through several gates and by Balmacnaughton Farm before reaching Kenmore Hill Pinewood. The high grassy path in this section is known as the Queen's Drive, in memory of Queen Victoria's visit to this spot whilst she was staying at nearby Taymouth Castle.

Cross a wooden stile at a quiet minor road and walk up the road for just over a mile to reach a fishing hut and small loch. (Do not take the lower road near Tombuie Cottage). Cross the stile and follow the main estate track, keeping to the right where the route meets a junction. The sounds of moorland birds carry clearly in the wind and, as the path descends, the Urlar Burn runs close by.

At Urlar Farmhouse walkers are directed through a gate and around a field. A minor road then leads down towards Aberfeldy. At the tiny Urlar Reservoir, turn right, across a stone wall, to join a small track through the birch wood.

After a few minutes the track emerges at the top of the Birks of Aberfeldy, one of Perthshire's best loved beauty spots. A bridge allows tremendous views of the roaring Falls of Moness as they tumble through the gorge and provide a dramatic centrepiece, especially good after rain! Robert Burns wrote 'The Birks of Aberfeldie' here in 1787. A quote from one of the verses sums up the splendid scene:

"The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roarin' fa's"

The Birks still cloak the steep slopes of the Moness gorge, along with oak, ash and elm. Much of the gorge is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its botanical features and it is likely that there has been continual woodland cover at the site for up to 8000 years. The gorge is a place of immense natural power and beauty in any season

Good paths descend on either side of the gorge taking you back to Aberfeldy town centre.

Aberfeldy is situated in Highland Perthshire, on Scotland's longest river, the River Tay. The town grew up around Wade's Bridge, the first bridge built across the Upper River Tay in 1733 by the English general who subjugated the highlands after Bonnie Prince Charlie's rebellion in 1745. Aberfeldy has now become one of Scotland's best-known holiday towns.

After your walk, head back in the direction of Loch Tay and pay a visit to the loch-side Ardeonaig Hotel. The hotel has a number of dining rooms and an open-kitchen policy so that you can really check out what is being prepared for you by the team of chefs. The restaurant takes advantage of excellent local meats and game as well as fresh fruit and vegetables from their garden. They even have the most northerly vineyard in the UK!