

Pitlochry to Pitt of Tummel - taking in Dunalastair Hotel

Distance: 19km

Time: 5 ½ hours

Read EatScotland's review of [Dunalastair Hotel](#)



Image: Edradour, Scotland's smallest distillery, Perthshire

Just off the main A9 route north, Pitlochry is a busy stop-off point for tourists heading into the Highlands. It has a good-looking setting, on the River Tummel and backed by Ben Vrackie.

There are wonderful walks along the River Tummel and through the woods around Loch Faskally, and there is the beauty of the Scottish Plant Collectors Garden. An unusual attraction at Pitlochry Power Station and Dam is a salmon ladder, which helps the fish by-pass the dam and get into Loch Faskally. Downstream is the nationally renowned Pitlochry Festival Theatre. Climb the serious hill of Ben Vrackie, or take a more leisurely walk to the Edradour Distillery - Scotland's smallest - for an intimate tour and, of course, a wee dram.

This walk has it all - a spectacular gorge, crags, huge dizzying bridges and viaducts, a loch, waterfalls, salmon ladders, luscious woodlands, ancient drove roads, monuments ... there was even a battle here long ago! The walk passes through the Pass of Killiecrankie and Linn of Tummel, both areas of outstanding natural beauty.

The walk starts by optionally visiting the famous dam and fish ladder at Pitlochry, then following the bank of Loch Faskally, through pleasant mixed woodland and past a small loch - the area is popular with the locals. It skirts Faskally House, detouring again by Loch Faskally. The path climbs into the dramatic Pass of Killiecrankie, passing Garry Bridge, an old roadbridge.

The Pass of Killiecrankie near Pitlochry is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This spectacular deep river gorge is cloaked in ancient woodland, has unique flora and fauna, and has many associations with the Battle of Killiecrankie in 1689 (the first Jacobite rebellion). The narrow, mile long property is bounded to the west by the River Garry.

The property includes such famous sites as the 'Soldier's Leap' and 'Trooper's Den', where the first shot was fired in the Battle. An impressive railway viaduct built in 1863 and some remains of Generals Wade's military road dating from the 1720s are also contained within the property. Woodland and riverside birds and animals present include wood warbler, dipper and buzzard, as well as otter, roe deer and red squirrel.

Loch Faskally is a man-made reservoir held back by the Pitlochry Dam which was completed in 1950. The water passes through two generators as well as a salmon ladder. You could enjoy a picnic on the northwest shore accessed through the Clunie Memorial Arch.

The route goes right through the gorge, to Soldier's Leap - a spectacular viewpoint where Donald McBean fighting on the side of the Red Coats made an amazing 18 foot leap across the gorge to escape marauding Scots at the Battle of Killiecrankie, then visiting Killiecrankie Visitor Centre run by the National Trust for Scotland, which includes an excellent exhibition. The route then heads down into Killiecrankie Village itself, crosses the River Garry and climbs up a steep, small road, to the parish church at Tenandry, an extraordinary beautiful location.

It then drops to the Garry road bridge which is perched dizzyingly above the gorge and into Linn of Tummel, providing wonderful autumnal views towards the Ben a Ghlo range of hills at that time of year, eventually reaching the Coronation Bridge over the River Tummel.

Through the woods a path leads to where an obelisk commemorates a visit by Queen Victoria in 1844. The Tummel used to drop dramatically to meet the River Garry, but in 1950 the fall became the Linn (Gaelic for pool). The Linn was gifted to the national Trust for Scotland in 1944.

Finally the way back follows a small, winding country road for several kilometres, crossing Loch Faskally by Clunie Bridge, in the shadow of the dramatic A9 bridge. The last kilometre of the walk returns along the outward route.

The Battle of Killiecrankie was fought on 27 July 1689 between the Scots and 3500 English Government troops (many of which were actually Lowland Scots). The Government army was forced to march through the Pass of Killiecrankie where it met 2400 Scots.

The ensuing battle resulted in 800 casualties for the Scots and 2000 for the Government troops and was a stunning victory for the Scots, despite losing their Commander, John Graham of Claverhouse - Viscount Dundee (or 'Bonnie Dundee' as he was known).

The Pass of Killiecrankie, is renowned for its outstanding beauty and natural history. It has been gouged into the landscape by successive ice ages and meltwaters. The River Garry flows at the bottom of the Pass, while ancient mixed woodlands dominate the sides. Located 3 miles north of Pitlochry the site is owned and managed by The National Trust for Scotland.

Killiecrankie is a remnant of semi-natural ancient woodland (i.e. there has been woodland on this site continually for almost 8000 years.) Less than 1% of Scotland's woodlands are considered ancient and semi-natural. This wood is an example of what most of Perthshire would have looked like several thousand years ago had man not cleared the woodlands (for timber and agricultural land). The woodland at Killiecrankie is predominantly sessile oak with birch, hazel, ash, alder and wych elm present.

The woodland supports a diverse range of native wildlife including a wealth of birdlife. Notable summer migrants include the pied and spotted flycatchers and wood warbler. Look out also for resident species such as buzzard, great-spotted woodpecker and treecreeper. Red squirrels are frequently seen and the scarcer pine marten is known to be a nocturnal visitor.

When you finish, head Kinloch Rannoch and stop in at the Dunalastair Hotel. This hotel boasts a selection of local ales and over eighty single malts. Just what you need to warm you up after your walk! The restaurant here has won recognition for its food, based on the strengths of the local Highland and Perthshire produce.