

Ben Venue (gaelic = mountain of the caves)

5 mile from Loch Achray Hotel;

7 mile from Ledard Farm

Climb Ben Venue from:

- (1) Loch Achray Hotel just past the Loch Katrine road – 5 mile
- (2) Ledard Farm on Loch Ard (head west at Aberfoyle) – 7 mile

A serious walk in winter conditions - be properly prepared and add 50% to your time. Note that recent forest operations may have altered the Achray Hotel end of this route

(1 - Red line – best with a 1/25000 map) The most popular route up Ben Venue starts at the car park at the west end of Loch Achray near the pier road. Unfortunately, this shorter steep route is also an unpleasantly wet route as most of the hill tracks are very badly eroded and are spongy to say the least.

Views are limited until the open hill beyond Gleann Riabhach.

Behind the Achray car park neat the pier road (not the Ben A'an park) take the left track up a small rise and follow to the access road for the Katrine dam (where you may also find limited parking space). Take the water board road for about 1/2 mile then turn left to cross a new arched bridge over the Achray Water. Turn right onto a forest road and then left onto an uphill track by some rocks. Follow up through woods then drop down to a T junction, turn right and walk uphill to another forest road. Turn right here and follow the road round to the left until you see a narrow track leading uphill to the right – take this track and follow about ½ mile then through forested Gleann Riabhach you come to the forest edge where a stile leads to open moorland. Continue towards the lowest point on the skyline, with the burn on the left.

The track here meanders all over the place due to walkers trying to avoid the very wet eroded peat. Very often you are best advised to simply follow the main route as most of the wet parts are in fact only soft at the surface and will bear weight without sinking badly.

Soon after passing a waterfall on the left and ascending a steep wet bank followed by yet another wet moss, join the Ledard path at a cairn where the path goes steeply right towards the twin summits of Ben Venue (2420ft).

The remainder of the route is obvious with several steep scrambles. Don't be tempted to try any other route down to the Achray Hotel - the route you used to ascend the hill is the only safe route down to Achray.

The splendid vista includes Lochs Katrine, Achray and Venachar, Ben Ledi, Stuc a' Chroin and Ben Vorlich, Ben Lawers, the Crianlarich 'Munros', Ben Lomond, the Arrochar Alps, the Arran peaks and the Lowland Kilpatrick, Campsie, Ochil and Pentland ranges, with Glasgow's high flats appearing beyond Strath Blane.

The Forth may also be seen away to the south west beyond Dum-yat near Stirling.



(2 - pink line) From Ledard take the track off B829 which leads to Ledard Farm. Cross a stile and a footbridge left over the Ledard Burn (Right) before reaching the farm and ascend a steep slope and cross a stile then follow the burn by a path through the woods, with the burn on the right.

The path temporarily crosses the fence on the left before re-crossing to avoid a boggy patch. The path emerges from the woods, crosses to the east side of the burn by means of some wobbly iron rails, (impassable after heavy rain, necessitating a far harder walk over unmarked ground to cross the burn much higher up), and veers right towards a high pass. Open views to the north and west are impressive here. The Loch Achray path joins (Right) at a cairn, before continuing towards Ben Venue's twin summits.

Whichever route is chosen, the last few hundred feet of this walk are often over broken rocky scrambles requiring care and good footwear.

The walk may be extended to the second summit at the trig point where views to the south and east are better.

Remember that there is no public transport at either end of this walk so if you plan to walk from Ledard to Achray or vice versa make sure you have arranged transport to meet you!