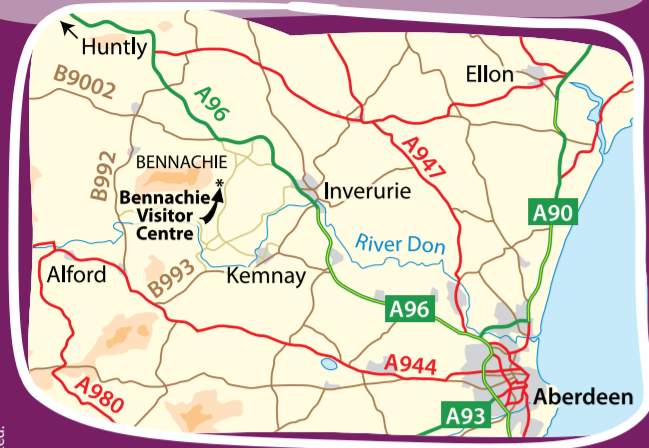


For more information

Tel: 0300 067 6380
Email: enquiries.east@forestryandland.gov.scot



Getting to Bannachie

The Bannachie Visitor Centre is the best place to go if this is your first visit to Bannachie:
Bannachie Visitor Centre, near Chapel of Garioch, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, AB51 5HY
Tel: 01467 681470
Email: bannachie.warden@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Use **#FoundMyForest** on your pictures and videos, and we'll share them on social media.



Find out more:
forestryandland.gov.scot

For information on public transport services contact: Traveline Scotland, 0871 2002233 or www.travelinescotland.com

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People of the hill

The first people may have come up the River Don and settled here more than 2000 years ago. They lived in circular ring and ditch homesteads like those at Mithergarth and worked the land with simple tools.

Around 1500-2000 years ago the Picts built a massive stone fort on **Mither Tap** and may have fought the Romans here in AD 83 (Bannachie is a possible site for the Battle of Mons Graupius).

More recently, Bannachie colonists established small crofts on the lower slopes of the hill. They built two-roomed **houses** and **drystone dykes**, hauled **peat** for fuel, and cut stone in the **granite quarries** nearby.

Now Bannachie's forests produce valuable **timber** for construction and green energy as well as being excellent habitat for **wildlife and plants**. People come here to picnic, walk and cycle - and enjoy the freedom of the hill.



George Esson, the last Bannachie colonist, died in 1939



Photo of George Esson from the Baillies of Bannachie archive / Pictish Warrior © Djanine Sutherland, Licensor www.scran.ac.uk

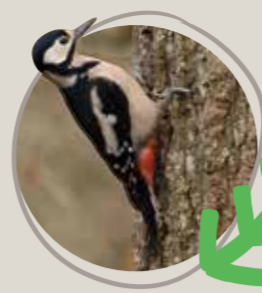
Wildlife on the hill

You don't have to go far to see wildlife. There's a world of small creatures living complex lives beneath your feet. Look down to find chains of ants carrying food to their nests, tiny swirls from a **newt's** tail in a wet ditch or **dragonflies** flitting across Bannachie's many burns.



In July and August, bees collect nectar from the flowering heather

The high slopes of Bannachie are important heathland habitat for **meadow pipits** and **red grouse**. Overhead, **buzzards** soar black against the sky, while fast-moving **peregrines** occasionally swoop down on prey hiding in the heather.



Woodpeckers visit the wildlife viewing screen, near the Bannachie Visitor Centre



Listen for the red grouse call ending "Go-back, Go-back, Go-back"

The many peaks of Bannachie

Photo: Bannachie, from Millstone Hill



The **hard granite tors or taps of Bannachie** give the hill its distinctive shape. They were formed about 425 million years ago, around the same time as the mountain tops of Lochnagar and Mount Keen.

Braith oo the Ben is girse an whin, Heather afore an trees ahin

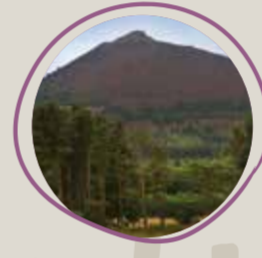
Bannachie by Sheena Blackhall

The Bannachie ridge stretches west to east for **8 km** with many **taps or peaks**, including: Black Hill (430m), Hermit Seat (478m), Watch Craig (493m), Oxen Craig (529m), Garbet Tap (468m), Craighannoch (418m), Mither Tap (518m) Millstone Hill (409m), south of the main ridge, is an excellent place to view them.

Language in the landscape

Place names beginning **pit** are usually **Pictish**, the Celtic language of the people who carved the Maiden Stone at **Pittodrie**.

Gaelic began to be spoken here from the ninth century and place names like **Craighannoch** (hill of the foxes), **Clachie Burn** (stony burn) and **Bannachie** itself (hill of the breast/the hill of Chie) have Gaelic roots.



Later, **Scots** or **Doric** was spoken here and words like **brig** (bridge), **Mither Tap** (mother top) and **craig** (rock/crag - the Scots version of Gaelic **creag**) appear.

Scottish-English names like **Millstone Hill** could be translations - which means that some Bannachie place names may have had the same meaning for hundreds of years!

Hear the voices of past peoples in the place names of Bannachie:
The Maiden Stone near Chapel of Garioch

Welcome to Bannachie

Visible for miles around, the graceful outline of Bannachie has been a symbol of 'home' for generations of families in the north east and a favourite landmark for those who love being outdoors.

On the ancient tops of Mither Tap and Oxen Craig, panoramic views stretch to Lochnagar and across Aberdeenshire. The sheltering forest on the lower slopes is a haven for woodland birds and animals, with lots of different trails and quiet picnic spots to enjoy.

Bannachie's rich cultural heritage is part of the hill's attraction, from the Pictish fort on Mither Tap to old stone quarries and colourful legends of giants and pretty maidens.

Explore this magical landscape for yourself through one of four very different gateways...



Bannachie Centre

The heart of the hill

This is a good place to start if you're exploring Bannachie for the first time. You'll find the easiest forest trails here as well as the shortest (and steepest) route to Mither Tap hill fort. For long-distance walkers this is where the Gordon Way begins.

On a summer's day you might hear woodpeckers tapping in the tall pines and spot dragonflies beside the Clachie Burn. If you just want to relax, there are plenty of picnic places to enjoy.

Bannachie's rich heritage is explained in the Visitor Centre, but you can see some of it for yourself in the ruined homesteads on the Colony Trail.



The Baillies of Bannachie is a voluntary conservation society whose objectives are to encourage and stimulate the public's interest in Bannachie. Find out more about the hill or get involved through our facebook page or www.bailliesofbannachie.co.uk

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Bannachie Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre is the focus for events and activities. It is a great place to learn about Bannachie, with useful information on the hill and its trails. It's also the base for the **Aberdeenshire Council Garioch Ranger who delivers environmental education and public events throughout the year.**

The main indoor exhibition tells the stories of the people who lived and worked here and describes how Bannachie was formed millions of years ago. Additional exhibitions change through the season, so there's always something new to discover.

There is a Community Room which can be hired during opening hours. The Visitor Centre is managed by The Bannachie Centre Trust.



Bannachie Visitor Centre facilities

Open every day from 10am, April to October. Free entry.

- exhibitions
- maps, snacks and gift shop
- hot and cold drinks
- accessible toilets including baby changing
- public access defibrillator

Back o' Bannachie

A hard-working hill

This is a favourite starting point for people climbing **Oxen Craig**, Bannachie's highest top, and gives a superb three-peak route across the open hill to Mither Tap and back.

Along the way you'll see amazing views, find a deserted quarry at Little Oxen Craig and a giant's enormous sleeping place.

Down below, enjoy the gentle pleasures of the **Gillree Burn** and a large welcoming picnic area.



- Feel the weight of history in the **lintel quarry**
- Cook up a feast at the **barbecue area**
- Look for **cloudberries** around Bannachie's highest peak

the landscape o langin

Donview

Bannachie's quiet side

A slightly longer route to Mither Tap starts from this peaceful picnic spot and makes its way over a hill which may have supplied grinding stones for the mills along the River Don. It's a steep climb, but worth it for the superb views of Bannachie's southern side - arguably, the best there are.

You can continue on to Mither Tap by **Heather Brig** (marking the spot where the Clachie Burn flows east and Birks Burn flows west) or circle back towards Scare Hill.



- Cross the **Heather Brig** watershed
- Enjoy rare views from **Millstone Hill**
- Watch for **osprey** and **dippers** on the river

aybydan Mither

Rowantree

Bannachie's legendary side

Stories and legends surround the **Maiden Causeway** - was it built by Pictish road makers or by the Devil himself? Whatever you believe, it's a popular, more gradual approach to Mither Tap, with sweeping views to the north and pretty picnic spots along the way.

An old **turnpike road** through the woods links Rowantree to the Bannachie Visitor Centre, giving an alternative route back from Mither Tap.

Pittodrie Estate looks after the hillside surrounding Rowantree and much of the Turnpike Trail



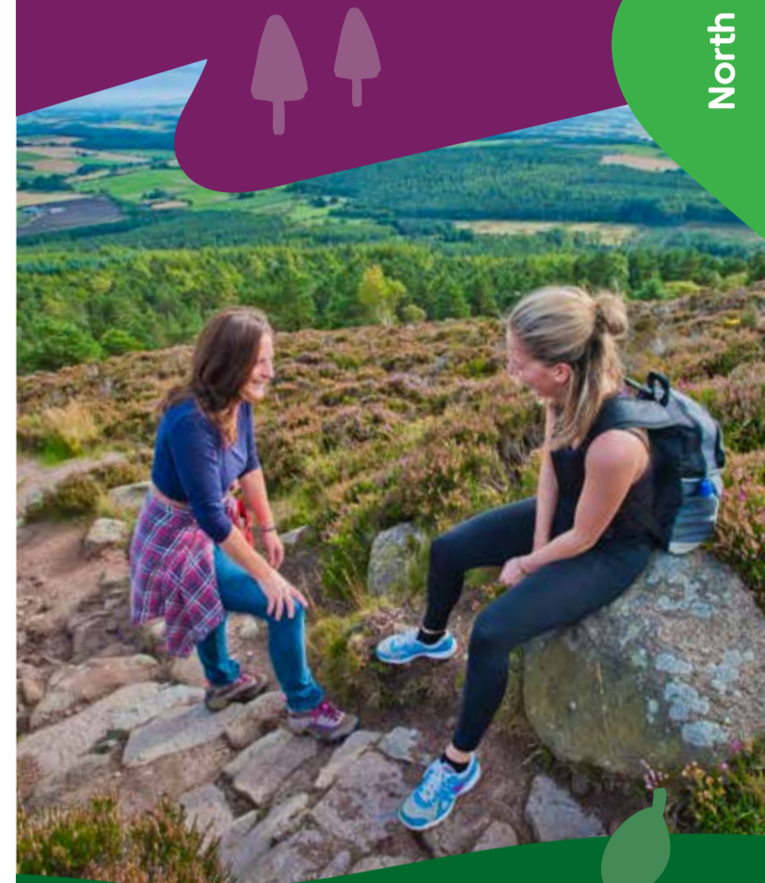
- Follow an ancient way to Mither Tap
- Picnic with panoramic views at **Hosie's Well**
- Take a turn along the **Turnpike Trail**

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Poem: Bannachie by Sheena Blackhall

Bannachie

A special hill like no other, with stories, wildlife and many trails to explore



forestryandland.gov.scot

North East

map inside

map inside

Trail information

Back o' Bennachie

The Larick Trail ●●●

From a fresh green burst in spring to an autumn blast of gold, the larick (larch) here provides a different colour for all the seasons.

A moderate to fairly steep trail, with varied surfaces: firm forest roads, earthy paths that can be muddy and rough sections with rocks, roots and large steps.



1½ miles / 2.4 km
Allow 1 hr

Mither Tap Quarry Trail ●●●

A great workout on the hill, visiting the Mither Tap and Bennachie's highest summit - Oxen Craig.

A very steep, rough trail with long climbs, large steps, rocky and some areas on the summits which may be muddy.



5½ miles / 9 km
Allow 3¼ hrs

Donview

Millstone Hill Trail ●●●

Up through beautiful woods to heather hills and superb views from the top of Millstone Hill.

A very steep, rough and rocky trail, with large steps and roots. Generally narrow, and has a narrow timber walkway. Can be wet and muddy.



3¾ miles / 5.6 kms
Allow 2½ hrs

Mither Tap Heather Brig ●●●

This grand, adventurous route crosses Millstone Hill and on to the landmark of the Mither Tap. Stunning views.

A very steep, rough and rocky trail, with large steps and roots. Generally narrow, and has a narrow timber walkway. Can be muddy.

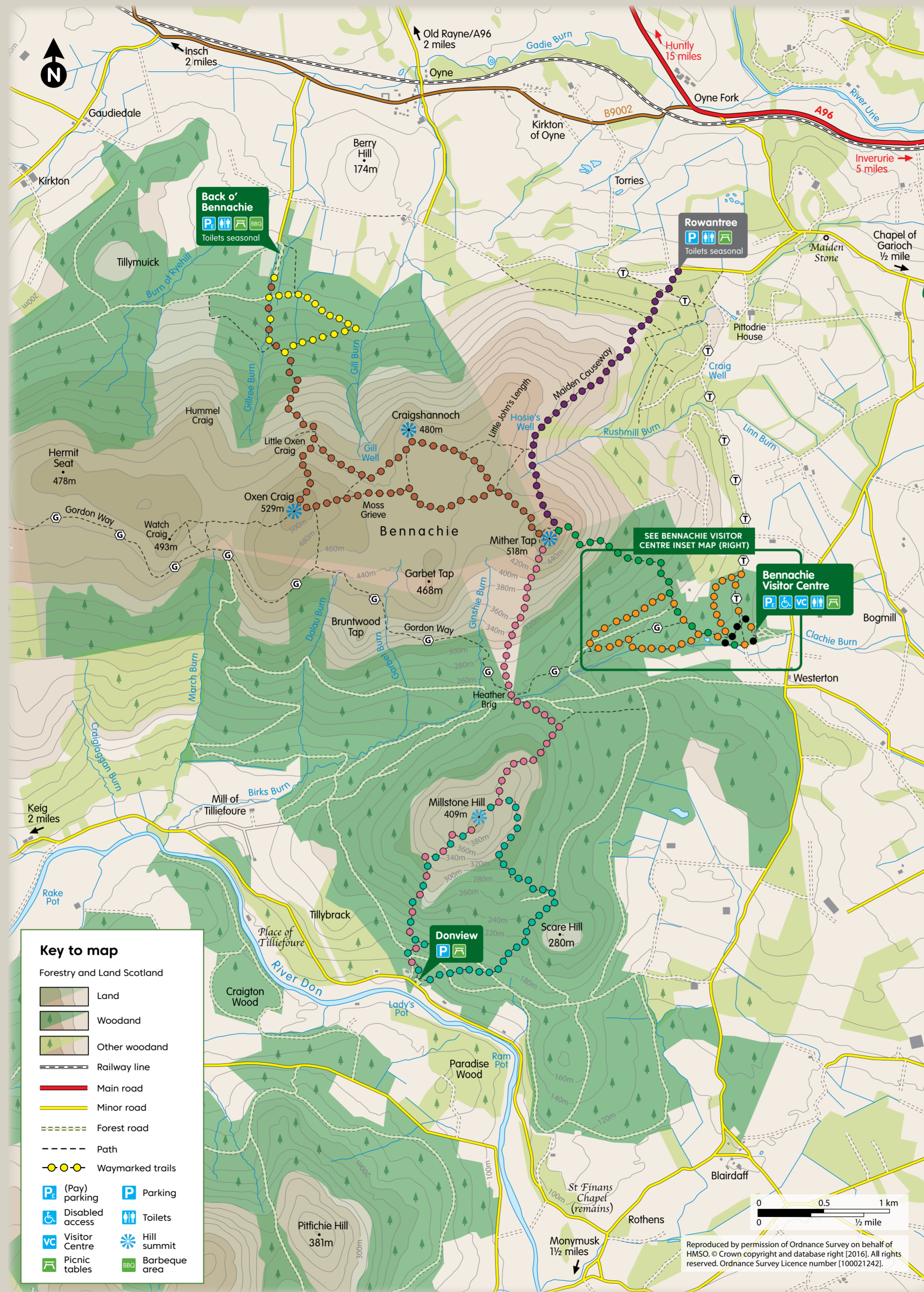


6 miles / 9.6 km
Allow 4 hrs

Enjoy Scotland's outdoors responsibly

- take responsibility for your own actions
- respect the interests of other people
- care for the environment.

KNOW THE CODE BEFORE YOU GO
SCOTTISH OUTDOOR ACCESS CODE outdooraccess-scotland.com



Key to map

Forestry and Land Scotland

- Land
- Woodland
- Other woodland
- Railway line
- Main road
- Minor road
- Forest road
- Path
- Waymarked trails

- (P) (Pay) parking
- (P) Parking
- (♿) Disabled access
- (♿) Toilets
- (VC) Visitor Centre
- (♾) Hill summit
- (BBQ) Picnic tables
- (BBQ) Barbecue area

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Rowantree

Mither Tap Maiden Causeway ●●●

A walk of legends to the impressive Pictish hill fort. The Maiden Causeway itself is named after a local girl who bet the devil that she could bake a batch of oatcakes before he could build a road up Bennachie.

Steep, rough and uneven rocky trail with steep rock steps. Some parts are narrow and can be wet and muddy after rain.



3¾ miles / 5.6 km
Allow 2½ hrs

Bennachie Centre

Discovery Trail ●●●

A gentle wander through the forest. Wildlife rubbing posts are dotted along the trail; collect paper and crayons from the visitor centre.

A smooth firm trail, with short gentle slopes and no obstacles.



½ mile / 1 km
Allow ½ hr

Colony Trail ●●●

An easy-going trail winding through attractive open woodland and the ruined houses and fields of the Bennachie colonists.

Firm and generally smooth, with some uneven areas. Generally moderate slopes, with some short fairly steep parts. Includes steps, roots and rocky areas.



2½ miles / 4 km
Allow 1½ hrs

Going to the top?

It may not be a Munro, but climbing Bennachie can be a real mountain experience with real mountain dangers.

Ice and snow make the paths extremely hazardous in winter and spring. Even in summer the wind blows constantly at the top and temperatures will drop suddenly in rain.

Don't get caught out - dress warmly, take boots and waterproofs and be prepared to turn back when the weather changes.

Mither Tap to Oxen Craig: 1½ miles / 2.3 kms, allow 1 hour each way
Mither Tap to Craighannoch: 1 mile / 1.5 kms, allow ¾ hour each way
Craighannoch to Oxen Craig: 1 mile / 1.5 kms, allow ¾ hour each way (following waymarked trail)



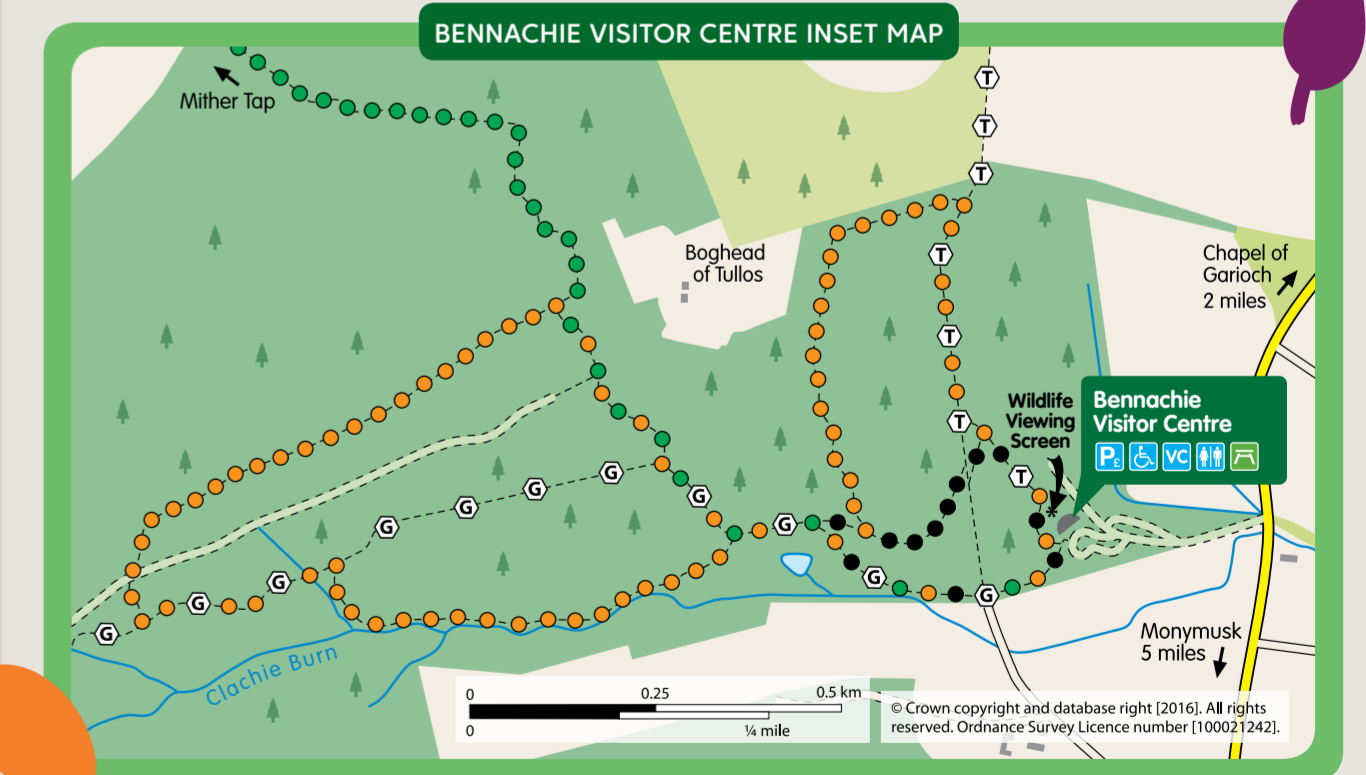
Mither Tap Timeline Trail ●●●

Climb to the rocky, granite summit of Mither Tap for superb views and to explore the impressive Pictish fort.

A very steep, rough trail with roots, rough rock steps and drains. Narrow in places. The summit is slab rock and can be slippery when wet.



3¾ miles / 6 km
Allow 2¾ hrs



Turnpike Trail -T-

The Turnpike Trail is a pleasant 4 mile (6.4 km) link between the Bennachie Centre and Rowantree car parks. You follow an old turnpike route through Pittodrie estate woodlands and over the Rushmill Burn. The route is not well-marked from the Rowantree end so taking a map is recommended.

Gordon Way -G-

The Gordon Way starts at the Bennachie Centre and runs for 11.5 miles (18.5km) along the southern side of Bennachie and on to the Sueie car park, 3 miles south east of Rhyndy. You walk through forests, farmland and open moorland, stout boots are recommended as some sections are muddy.