

Route(s)	Schiehallion
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	Schiehallion (3,553ft /1083m)
Date(s)	October 20 2018
Partner(s)	Kyle Finnegan Dave H. Ruth G.
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	+/- 2,413ft / 735m
Distance (miles/km)	6.55 miles/ 10.5km
Total time (hours/mins)	3h 40m
Equipment	Trekking poles, snacks and water!
Weather Forecast	Grey and possibility of being wet improving in the afternoon.
Weather Actuality	Grey, upper portion of hill in clouds with some moisture. Improving later.
Flora/Fauna	N/A
Wildlife	Lots of grouse changing from brown to white. A barn owl and a hare that barely made it out alive!
Starting Point/Trailhead	Braes of Foss
Grade/Rating	Walking
Accommodations	N/A
Tourist Attractions	The Habitat café in Aberfledy and Dewar's Distillery
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Daily 1 Distance	6.55 miles/ 10.5km
Daily 1 Elevation	+/- 2,413ft / 735m
Day 1 Daily Time	3h 40m
Rise and Shine	7:50am
Depart Home	8:40am
Arrive Braes of Foss	10:05am
Depart Car	10:20am
Schiehallion	11:55am
Arrive Car	2:00pm
The Story	



Kyle and I had sort of tacitly agreed to get out on Saturday in accordance with our 'it's a crime to not be outside in Scotland when the weather is dry' resolution. Dave had mentioned he was interested in getting out with another of his friends, and we thought to team up. Kyle and I are trying to be more social. *Or escape each other's company.* However you choose to look at it. With a bit of back and forth, we decided on Schiehallion. It'd be a short day, but it seemed agreeable to all parties, and if it was short then we'd have

time to poke around the local environs.

Kyle had just gotten back from an out of town work trip, so we hastily threw a few things together, but based on the mileage and elevation gain, we didn't really bother to pack much for food. We did, however, manage to pack a change of clothes so we could venture forth afterwards. *Smart move!* The next morning, we got up, at a not so early hour, and Kyle, working on his unappreciated sainthood, made breakfast. For shame, I just wasn't hungry and neither was he. So, while he sat at the table and tried to force down some brekkie, I loaded up our bags in the car and then away we went. I acted as the DJ and Kyle acted as the driver. It took about an hour and a half on some seriously windy roads for us to reach the car park. But, we made it a couple of minutes after the 10am meet time. *We were fashionably late like the cool kids!* But, cool kids needed a minute to put boots and gaiters on. And then I had to go to the bathroom, but the toilets, no matter how nice they were, had a spider or two hanging about, so I decided to opt out. Hence, we got going and I waited to go for a while!

Before we set off, Dave introduced us to Ruth and her chihuahua, Cocoa. I'll admit, I wasn't sure what to expect when he mentioned she was bringing her chihuahua. Was she going to be able to keep up? But, to be fair, she looked like she had longer legs and was cute! *Ruth, not Cocoa.* After introductions were made, we kitted up and headed out on the only trail heading straight towards the nearest large hill! The trail is simple. Get on it, stay on it! We joked around and kept up a fairly steady stream of conversation while going up the hill. All that talking on top of walking had me breathing! It all progressed relatively uneventfully until Kyle realized he hadn't turned the GPS on. I gave him the look and he told me he wasn't usually responsible for the GPS. *No excuse.* I let him keep it. But later, when I went to check a point, I realized it hadn't turned on properly. *That's it! Privileges lost! Give it up!* I confiscated the GPS so that I could use it to check our location. As we ascended, a small breeze picked up and we entered the mist. There was a distinct cloud level. As we gained the ridge and continued onward, it turned from a gravel straight forward path to a bit rockier terrain. The clouds also held some moisture and the rocks became a bit slippery. *Or, in Scottish lingo: soapy, greasy and slick!* That, however, was not a deterrent, because this hill was buuusy! Though, I was not that surprised as the parking area was already filling up fast by the time we arrived.

We continued on through the mist. And, little Cocoa only had to be carried once, but other than that, she kept up like a tiny, cute, little trooper. Just below the summit we ran into a massive party of individuals. They asked us if we'd seen part of their group. I wasn't sure what they were talking about, so Dave jumped in and informed them that their party was right behind us. It seemed like they were waiting so they could all summit together. A thoughtful gesture, but with their huge party in the misty breeze, I was more inclined to tag it and move on! They looked a bit wet and huddled together. The kind of fun you have to



convince yourself you're having. We hopped over the last large rocks to the summit, tagged it and retreated down a little bit so we could stop on the leeward side and have a quick bite and drink. Between us, Kyle and I hadn't really packed food, so we tried some of the new chipotle seed trail mix. Kyle called it bird food. *Not a win I guess.* To be fair, it was okay, but I wouldn't write home about it. *Only write about it here!* Dave gave us a small little orange to share and then I pulled out a packet of sport beans. Though, honestly, I wasn't starved. This was going to be such a quick trip it was more of a 'social stop' than one of necessity. Even at that, it was a quick stop. From there, we bailed straight downhill. Dave kept up a constant stream of banter and fell back on his providing some accurate information and some terribly off information. I must say it is way more amusing watching someone else try to figure out what is correct or not! *Especially considering my cultural handicap!* But, I must say, the mischievous spirit in me appreciates its counterpart in others!

On our way back to the car Kyle and I suggested we stop in Aberfeldy on our way back, for a coffee. I definitely owed Dave a coffee for the last two he'd covered, and Kyle has a book on posh coffee shops in Scotland, and there was supposedly one in Aberfeldy. Since we were in the neighborhood, we might as well stop by! Once back at the car, it took the space of a wink to change out of our trail clothes into urban clothes. I fortunately had left a pair of tennis shoes in the car, but Kyle was relegated to a pair of Texas. *Unh. He's part furnace and it wasn't that cold out.* The one issue was we couldn't remember the



name of the coffee shop. *But, really, how big could Aberfeldy be?* Without any cell reception we couldn't know for sure, so we just told Dave and Ruth to head towards Aberfeldy and I'd send them a message, en route, once I was able to look it up online. That is how I found myself trying to google coffee shops in Aberfeldy while driving to Aberfeldy. I'd narrowed it down to two (*there were more than I thought!*) and had Kyle weigh in. We agreed on the one we thought it was and sent the message to Dave. Minutes after I sent that message, I noticed a tiny spider fall from the ceiling in front of me. I was able to brush it to the dash and kill it.

Before everyone gets their knickers in a twist, I normally don't like to kill them, but I can't have it getting big in the car and then popping out at me later! That is an actual driving hazard. Made even clearer when I noticed more movement out of the corner of my eye. Another spider!!! It was right at the cusp of 'I might be able to deal with it myself', but I thought I'd better tell Kyle to pull over, so I didn't miss getting it, and then lung at him while he was driving. *Good to be realistic. Know your own strengths and all that.* Like a good husband, he exasperatedly pulled over and got the spider out from near the visor above my head. Then walked back to the driver's seat, got in, and started back towards Aberfeldy. No questions.

Once we arrived in town, we quickly found the café, The Habitat, and fortunately, parking right out front. Dave drove by and was able to find parking not long after. I skipped off into the shop and got the last four-person table. It was a nice shop and my chai drink was very fancy. I felt a bit bad ordering a sandwich for Kyle and I to split when no one else was eating, but needs must, and we were thinking of hitting the distillery next! *Hey! We we're having an all-day adventure!* After a quick drink Dave and Ruth headed back towards Glasgow and Kyle and I for the distillery. Kyle bought our entrance tickets, where they told him he couldn't wear Tevas on the tour, so he was forced to go back to the car and put on his sweaty, muddy boots. I laughingly told the employee he might live to regret letting Kyle wear his boots. I don't think his face moved at all. Kyle returned armed with the fact that we hadn't been to a distillery since June.

Okay? Was this realization causing some sort of post-knowledge withdrawals or something? Remain calm! The tour was pretty good, although I admit I spaced out and started letting my brain wander. When I came to, we were being led to Kyle's 'reserved table'.

Apparently, he'd signed up for the connoisseurs' tasting, but since I was driving, I just got to sit there and watch. *Not happening.* Instead, I wandered around and took pictures while he made notes in his newly acquired whiskey tasting book. Kyle had a dram on the tour and five drams now to taste. He told me which he preferred, and I went to check the price of a bottle. *Well, that isn't happening.* He moseyed to the bar and told them I was on the tour but wasn't able to drink mine since I was driving and asked, if instead, he could taste two other whiskeys to decide if he preferred one over the other. When I came back he'd decided on a new one – a 21-year-old Aberfeldy. The shop was supposed to close in thirteen minutes, and we were wandering around looking at bottles, taking notes and picking out the items Kyle wanted, all the while with the eyes of the employees on us. Purchases made, we headed to the car and Kyle told me the whiskey was hitting him. *Great. Just get in the car and buckle up. I'll take it from here.*

For anyone who has ever said I'm not a good wife, I had to listen to Kyle tell me he felt like he was driving through space on the ride home. *For the love of Mary! Was there something else in that whisky?* I told him to go to sleep, but he wouldn't. And at first, he wasn't willing to put on music. *I'm not listening to you all the way home!* I enjoyed the first part of the drive with the dusky twilight fading around the



hills and trees. I saw a barn owl on a fence post. He was gorgeous. But, not long after that, a car flashed its lights at me. I looked down at my dash to make sure my lights were on – not brights, etcetera, and then quickly back up at the road, just in time to see a huge hare dart out in front of my car. *Guess that light flashing was a warning I was supposed to decrypt in ten seconds!* I slammed on my breaks hard!! I was almost certain I was going to hit it though. Getting thrown against his seat belt shook Kyle out of his stupor. I stopped the car and looked, I didn't see anything on the road behind us. Kyle popped out and said he didn't see anything either. *Thank the Lord!* I think it just missed the wheel! But, now my adrenaline was through the roof. Good timing, since a light mist and fog moved in just in time for all the really curvy roads ahead. All in all, I think there might have been more excitement on the latter half of the day. But, we made it back in one piece, and the hare made it out alive! Between the hills, the whisky and the adrenaline, I welcomed the comfort food that was my faux BLT, for dinner.

Lessons Learned

Seven drams of whisky and Kyle gets a little towards the tipsy and chatty side of things!

My cars brakes work!

