

Route(s)	Beinn A'Ghlo
Elevation(s) (ft/m)	Carn Liath (3,199ft /975m) Braigh Coire Chruinn-Bhalgain (3,510ft /1070m) Carn nan Gabhar (3,678 ft/1121m)
Date(s)	October 30 2018
Partner(s)	Dave H.
Elevation gain/loss (ft/m)	+/- 4,052ft / 1235m
Distance (miles/km)	13.8 miles/ 22.21km
Total time (hours/mins)	7h 10m
Equipment	Trekking poles, snacks and water! Upgraded Gortex jacket! <i>PSA! Time to switch to winter packs!</i>
Weather Forecast	-1C to -8C with a breeze and clouds. <i>Saving grace... mostly dry!</i>
Weather Actuality	Runny nose type of cold, some light snow flurries, windy in the morning dying off later in the afternoon. Low cloud level, rising in the afternoon. <i>General trend of improvement... as we were leaving!</i>
Flora/Fauna	<i>I really need to learn about the local green offerings...</i>
Wildlife	Ptarmigans and deer! <i>Standard game fare!</i>
Starting Point/Trailhead	Loch Moraig (east from Old Bridge of Tilt)
Trail Conditions	Initial road was muddy but solid and fine. Turning off near the old wooden hut, the road became boggy and remained boggy until we started the ascent. Well defined trail. Encountered dusting of snow circa 750m. From this point, varying depths of snow (drifts vs wind-blown). Descent from Beallach Fhioda not as defined and very boggy. Gravel trail encountered circa 580m. Easy going from there.
Grade/Rating	Walking
Accommodations	N/A
Tourist Attractions	N/A
Motto for the day	N/A

Day 1	
Daily 1 Distance	13.8 miles/ 22.21km
Daily 1 Elevation	+/- 4,052ft / 1235m
Day 1 Daily Time	7h 10m
Rise and Shine	<i>Honestly don't remember!</i>
Depart Home	7:45am
Arrive Loch Moraig	9:15am
Depart Car	9:25am
Carn Liath	11:00am
Braigh C. Chruinn-Bhalgain	12:10pm
Carn nan Gabhar	1:35pm
Arrive Car	4:35pm
The Story	

For whatever reason, I've been keen to get out and try Beinn A'Ghlo. I think it was partly the name. *I can say it*. And partly the fact that it was a three-fer and would make for a slightly longer day, and I was craving a longer day. *A little bit more punishment!* Dave acquiesced, for reasons of his own! *Maybe he was tired of hearing me talk about it*. He did send me a message the afternoon before with a picture of the forecast telling me it could be anywhere from -1 to -8C. I promptly, and jokingly, responded "Take backs". It's just that time of the year. It's going to be colder, shorter days and likely more volatile weather. Time to buck up and just get on with it! The winter makes you appreciate the summer and vis-versa. But forewarned is fore-armed, and with that knowledge, I made sure to pack my heavier weight gortex jacket. I even made a sandwich! That is about as prepared as I've been in ages!

Dave picked me up at 7.45am the next morning and away we went. We hit a little bit of the morning traffic near Perth, so Dave and I took turns playing difference songs from our music collections. I opted for a couple country songs. I felt like a little cultural exchange and appreciation was in order. The cringes were not encouraging so I didn't subject him to it for long. Plus, if I'd left it on I probably would have burst into song at any moment and thoroughly embarrassed myself! But really, what type of unhappy person can't get into Alan Jackson's 'Appalachian Mountain Girl'? To say we have disparate tastes in music would be accurate. That being said, I'm more mood based than fixed on one genre. On our way through Perth and northward, the rain moved in. To be expected... fortunately it cleared up as we headed north, and we could see peaks with snow on them.



We arrived at Loch Moraig and Dave pointed out some swans on the nearby loch. He has got a true affinity for the bird! Boots, gaiters, gloves, buff – roll! Dave was moving at a good clip. On the flat I think I do pretty well keeping up with his general speed, but as soon as we hit the uphill, I slow down a bit. In my head I was having a good chuckle about the fact that the Dave I hit the hills with in the States I jokingly called 'One Speed Dave', and by whatever serendipitous chance the Dave I walk with in Scotland happens to be of a similar bent! *Haha!* There is some delightful symmetry there. Down off

the hill, a wool quarter zip was enough, but as soon as we started ascending and the breeze picked up it became clear I'd have to layer up sooner rather than later. But, layering up can mean slowing the pace a little so I don't overheat. *Could I slow down Dave anymore?* The wind kicked up more and more the higher we went. *Ooh why not? It was happening!* I had to stop and put on another layer. I was thinking about just adding my merino air hoody, but I looked back and Dave was adding an insulated outer layer. Okay. I'm convinced... I'll add the gortex and leave the pit zips open for breathability. And my shell pants! It worked well... because I stayed in that for nearly the rest of the day!

The ascent itself was fairly clear. The trail was apparent to start, and a little higher up we followed the footprints of another gent who had gone slightly ahead of us. We crossed paths as he turned around to descend. I lost his tracks in the rocky section. We tagged the top and kept moving. The wind was biting and it was bringing some precipitation with it. We did check our GPS to make sure we were headed off

in the correct direction though. Visibility was definitely reduced. So a combination of GPS and generally 'feeling our way down the ridge' sufficed. At about 825m the visibility improved a little as we dropped below the cloud level, but that gave us just enough time to enjoy the low point before we headed back uphill into the clouds again! *What a reprieve!*

It was on this uphill that Dave and I came across some animal tracks in the snow. I love this time of the year!! We can see evidence of all the life around us that we normally don't get to see! We had a bit of a debate on whether or not they were from a hare or a fox. Then compromised by deciding it must have been a fox chasing a hare. *The only logical conclusion to be had.* I was definitely breathing hard and felt like I was moving snow. *Maybe that was just because we were in a cloud?* Dave kept telling me we would reach a plateau of sorts, then we'd encounter a cairn and then we'd keep walking a



distance before hitting the cairn. Turns out, that was the other summit. *Surprise! No plateau here!* We hit the summit of Braigh Coire Chruinn-bhalgain first go! *What luck?!* Again, we didn't stick around too long. I'd started rationing out some sport beans, because between the last summit and this I'd become fiercely hungry. I didn't particularly want to stop and have anything at the moment, but I just needed my stomach to think it had gotten something, so it'd simmer down. With that in mind, I kept slowly nibbling on my packet of beans! As we descended off in an east-north-eastern direction, the cloud level continued to rise and the day appeared to be clearing. In fact, we were finally able to take in some of the natural beauty of the area – The white snow line on the hills and the stark colors changing from a predominately greyscale environment to a more colorful one. We did stop at Beallach an Fhioda for a quick bite before ascending Carn nan Gabhar. There were parts here when my feet punched about mid-calf in the snow. *So exciting!! It was invigorating and brought me home! My muscles and memory all screamed out in joy. They remember this!* Turns out, this was the one with the plateau with a cairn before the true summit cairn. Once we reached the initial cairn the terrain became rockier underfoot, but it was covered in a fair dusting of snow which made it just hard enough to see what your foot was stepping on. *Ankle-benders for sure! Ah the joys of early season snow!*



We tagged the summit, marked it, and moved on. Descended back to the bealach and followed a thread downhill. It was snowy that turned muddy, that turned boggy. *Basically... it was messy.* And, as we descended it warmed. For the first time that day, the layers came back off. I was happy to hit the actual trail at 550m. *As fun as mud is...* Thank the lord it was gravel! From there, we kept up a steady path heading back towards the road, and then followed it back out. As we worked our way around the hills and back towards the car, the sun started to lower in the sky and it lit up with such beautiful colors to the west of us. I could see rays poking through the clouds as it set the skies alight in pinks and purples that faded once the sun finally dipped behind the hills. *Glorious.*

At the car, we quickly changed and headed back towards the A9. We opted for a stop at a café in Pitlochry. Lovely bit of tea and company before hopping in the car and driving south. Somewhere along the way Dave told me he could see me being a prairie woman! *Haha, what?* Is it because I'm American? Self-sufficient? We had a chuckle about that! Another great day out in the hills!

Lessons Learned

The town name 'Bridge of Tilt' might just be one of my favorite!



