

The Mack Walks: Short Walks in Scotland Under 10 km

Suie Old Military Road-Knock Saul Circuit (Aberdeenshire)

Route Summary

Although Knock Saul is a low-level hill, with an uncomplicated approach and ascent to the summit, it provides great views in all directions. The view over the Howe of Alford is also particularly good as you walk around the south side of the hill at a mid-level. Cleared forestry also provides the initial and final sections on the route with excellent views down the Tullynessle glen, and beyond, to the south-west.

Duration: 2.25 hours.



Route Overview

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Transport/Parking: No public transport. There is parking space for more than one vehicle at the walk start/end point on the Suie Road between Tullynessle and Clatt, on the southern side of the Suie Hill. See Waypoint 1 for more information on the location.

Length: 8.2 km / 5.1 mi **Height Gain/Loss:** 241 meter.

Max Height: 412 meter. **Min Height:** 304meter.

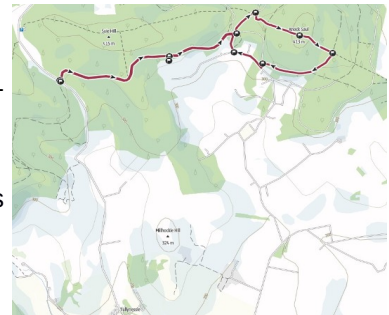
Surface: Moderate. Mostly good forest roads. Narrow path, steep in places to and from summit area. A modified version of the route, excluding the summit area, is believed suitable for off-road mobility scooters. See Waypoint 4 for details.

Difficulty: Medium.

Child Friendly: Yes, if children are used to walks of this distance and overall ascent.

Dog Friendly: Yes, but keep dogs on lead on public roads and near farm animals.

Refreshments: There are options in Alford.



Description

There are some fantastic views on this approach to Knock Saul (412 m) from the west, starting and finishing from a point above the hamlet of Tullynessle, on the Old Military Road that crosses the Suie Hill. Much of the route is on good forest roads, although the paths to and from the summit of Knock Saul are narrow, and can be fairly steep in places. Overall, the route is a mix of fairly open ground and conifer woodland of varying maturity, with the higher summit section passing through heather moorland. There is a trig point and picnic bench at the summit of Knock Saul, and also a low stone cairn, probably of ancient origin. There is also an old boundary stone, probably associated with the parishes of Leslie, Tullynessle and Forbes that meet on the hill. The views from Knock Saul are wonderful, taking in the patchwork of Aberdeenshire farmland and forests below you, then on to extensive vistas of more distant hilltops. The impressive panorama includes: the Bennachie and Menaway Hills in the east; the Howe of Alford to the south; Foudland and Tillymorgan to the north; the Tap o' Noth and Ben Rinnes in the north-west; and the Deeside, Correen and Donside hills, leading the eye to the faraway Cairngorms to the south-west. After the descent from the summit area, the route makes a partial loop at mid-level around the hill to take in some particularly fine views of the Howe of Alford. At the beginning or end of the walk, we suggest that you drive to a magnificent nearby viewpoint on the north side of the Suie Road, looking down to the countryside between Clatt and Rhynie, with the hugely impressive Tap o'Noth hill dominating. There are benches there to relax, perhaps have a picnic, and absorb the view! The Suie Road was incorporated into the 18thC Military Road from Fochabers to Fettercairn but has been an important passage from north to south since mediaeval times, and probably before that.



Waypoints

(1) Start walk at forest road access-Suie Road

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The walk starts at a wide forestry access road-end on the Suie Road between Tullynessle and Clatt. It is on the southern side of the Suie Hill, and is approximately 2 miles from Tullynessle church, on your right, and 2.8 miles from the centre of Clatt, on your left. It is a popular spot for dog walkers, and there is space for a few cars (and across the road). To start, walk around the vehicle gate and follow the forestry road as it soon gently climbs up the shoulder of Suie Hill. The first area encountered was cleared of trees a few years ago and there are very good views down the glen to Tullynessle and beyond.



(2) Divert right and downhill

In 1.59 km, in an area surrounded by mature conifers, divert right and downhill for a short distance on a field access road to gain a fine view of the Howe of Alford, stretched out below you. (1.59 km)



(3) Howe of Alford viewpoint

In 50 m, or so, you will have arrived at the field gate where there is a great view of the Howe (or Vale) of Alford. When you are ready, retrace your steps back to the forest road, turn right and carry on taking that road through the trees. (1.64 km)



(4) Left at forest roads junction

In 960 m, very soon after passing a forest road going left and uphill, then almost immediately passing a forest road going right and downhill, at a wide forest roads junction (looking downhill ahead of you), go left. (2.6 km)

Note: In avoiding the narrow and steep paths to and from the summit of Knock Saul, off-road mobility scooter users should carry straight on here for about 360 m. At the next t-junction, turn left and follow this forest road that goes around Knock Saul hill. In about 2.6 km, at a junction, take the forest road going right and gently uphill. In a further 320 m this forest road re-joins the route at a point about 380 m after Waypoint 7. Turn left and carry on taking the main route from there.*



***Note: if you miss this junction, the forest road will carry on taking taking you around Knock Saul, passing Knockhill Cottage after leaving the woodland. Carry on gently uphill from there to re-join the route at the tarred access road described in Waypoint 8.*

(5) Right at y-junction-then right onto footpath

In 370 m, at a y-junction, take the forest road going right and downhill for a very short distance. In about 20 m, or so, at a Gordon Way post, go right, off the forest road, onto a narrow path which ascends (steeply at first through the trees). The path then levels out before meeting another forest road in about 90 m. Cross the forest road and continue, at another Gordon Way post, walking fairly steeply uphill once again towards the summit of Knock Saul. (2.97 km)



(6) Summit of Knock Saul

In 670 m, you will have arrived at the summit of Knock Saul where there is a trig point and picnic bench, and also a low stone cairn, probably of ancient origin. The views from Knock Saul are wonderful, taking in the patchwork of Aberdeenshire farmland and forests below you, then on to extensive vistas of more distant hilltops. The impressive panorama includes: the Bennachie and Menaway Hills in the east; the Howe of Alford to the south; Foudland and Tillymorgan to the north; the Tap o' Noth and Ben Rinnes in the north-west; and the Deeside, Correen and Donside hills, leading the eye to the faraway Cairngorms to the south-west. When you are ready to move, carry on taking the summit path as it now descends on the eastern side of the hill, at first through heather, and then through conifer woodland. (3.64 km)



(7) Right along forest road

After descending for 470 m you will arrive at a t-junction with a forest road*. Turn right here to follow the forest road. In about 10 m, ignore the Gordon Way path going left and downhill. Stay on the hard-surfaced forest road. As you progress, superb views open up on your left side down to the Howe of Alford and beyond. Look out for the red deer farm immediately below you. (4.11 km)

**Note: at July 2022, a large tree blocks the Gordon Way path at this point. However, a rough path around the fallen tree has been created by walkers.*



(8) Left at forest roads junction-then right

In 960 m, at a wide forest roads junction, go left and downhill for approximately 65 m to arrive at a wide t-junction with an access road. Go right here, initially through trees, on a narrow, now tarred, access road a number of houses along this stretch. Soon, open views to your left are achieved again as you pass a house above you on your right, and as you head towards another house on your left side. (5.07 km)



(9) Right off tarred road up rough forest access road

In 460 m, where there is a house on your left, go right off the tarred road to walk up a forest access road. There is a delightful little pond on your right. In about 240 m, you will arrive at a junction with the forest road you took on the outward section. Turn left here to retrace your earlier steps to follow the forest road back to your start point at the Suie Road. (5.53 km)



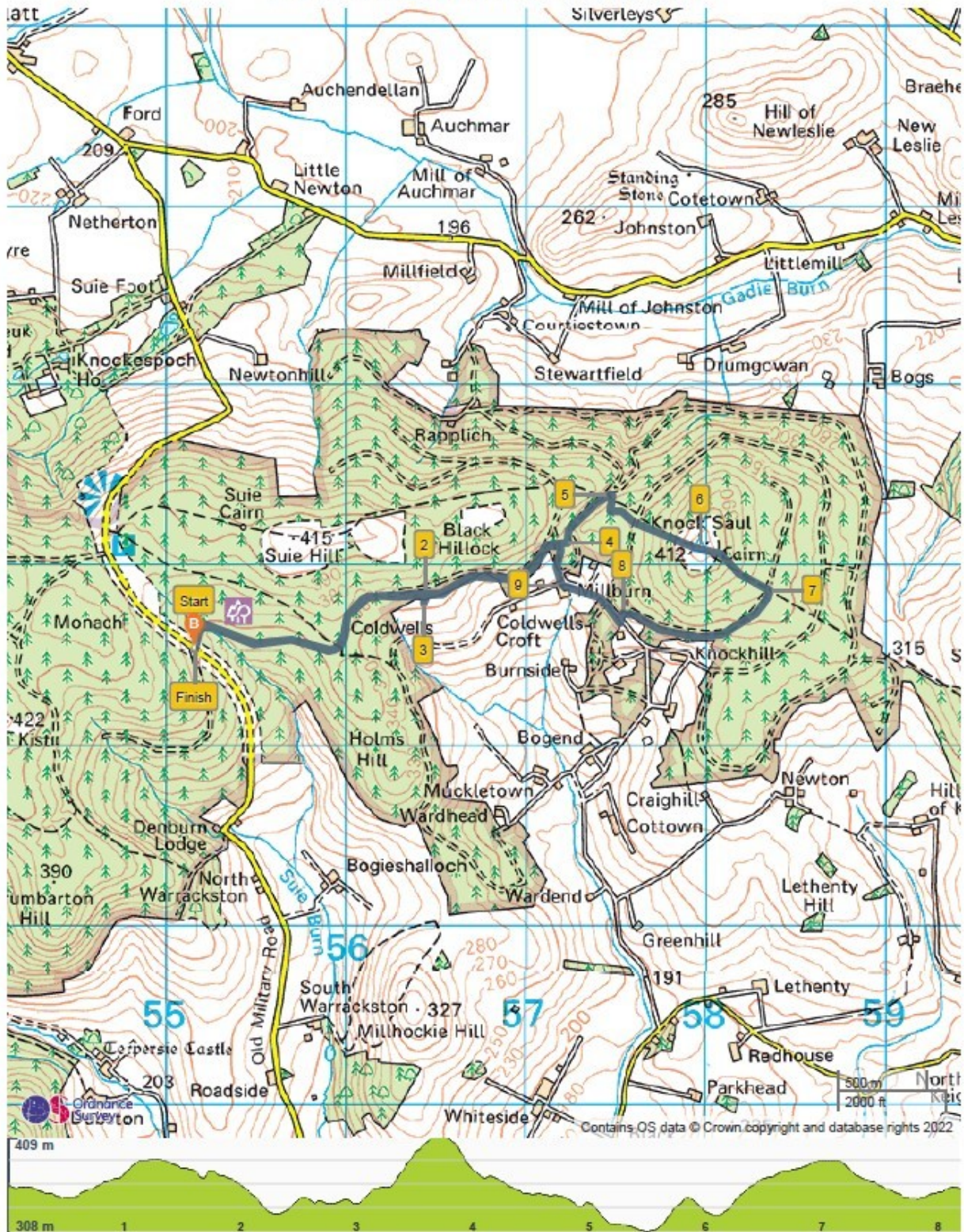
(10) Finish walk back at Suie Road

In 2.67 km, you will have arrived back at your start-point on the Suie Road. (8.2 km)

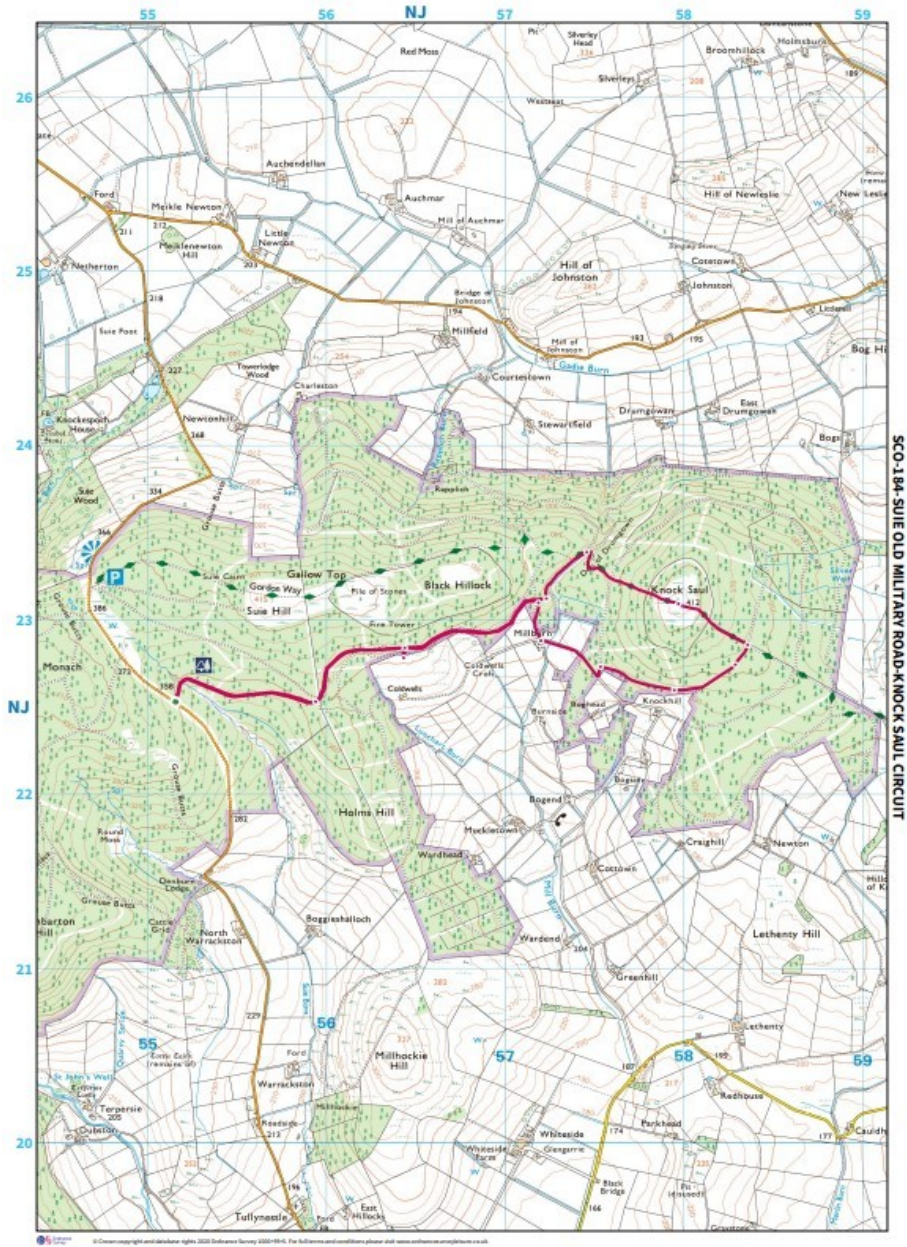


Route Map (with waypoints)

184-Suie Old Military Road-Knock Saul Circuit



Route Map



Links:

[Photos from walk](#)

[Download Route Guide](#) (PDF with illustrated Waypoints)

[Download GPX file](#) (GPS Exchange Format)

[Access Walk on OutdoorActive](#)

[Access Walk on OSMaps](#)

[Access Walk on Alltrails](#)

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