



## Factsheet - Real World Riding

### Big Mountain Day:

### Ben Lomond

A great season starter or first Munro with plenty of riding and seemingly endless banter



Scotland's most Southerly and arguably accessible Munro provides us with proper mountain atmosphere while being on a well-maintained trail.

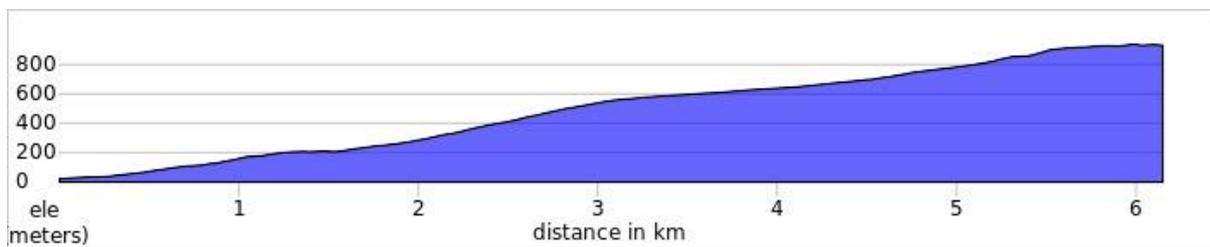
A spinoff is that we are unlikely to be alone on the mountain, but this is okay as the walkers on this path are well known as the most friendly hereabouts.

Enjoy a full mountain experience with good company and a high quality of banter - you might even get genuine applause on the day.

Make no mistake though: this one of Scotland's highest mountains and it doesn't give up the riding easily with a long hike-a-bike to the top we can be beset by pretty much any weather (and all weathers! - at any time of the year). It's well worth all the hard work though.

**Distance: 12.5km**

**Height Climbed: 905m**



#### Description:

Starting at the Rowardennan Car Park on Loch Lomondside is a great way to begin the day, and it's business will be an indicator of the numbers of other hillgoers out today. The trail has had substantial work done on it in the last few years – so you can expect to ride significant elements of the ride straight up through the undulating woodland onto the foot of the mountain.

We'll cross several forestry tracks on the way up but will soon be on the only trail around as it makes its way up past the old crag (once a right of passage for hillwalkers) and on to the burn crossing. Here we make a tight turn, still mostly riding as we rise to the gate and the open hillside. The climb from here steepens in parts but as you can see from the profile, slowly and steadily gains height with as much riding as possible, but considerable hike-a-bike too as we ascend.

Pushing up we'll take a look at the steeper and twistier passages we'll be negotiating on the descent (one of the advantages of an out and back route), and make no mistake – this will continue for a considerable time (can be up to 3 hours) until we reach a level track near the summit, thread our way through the boulders and climb the last section to the summit cairn.

The views are amazing from here on a good day and we'll linger as long as we can so that riders can take it all in and maybe plan the next big mountain trip while we're here – there are so many of them to be seen from this vantage point.

The ride down starts with a slightly intimidating descent from the summit, and short track to the boulder carry-through again. Once on the other side we can begin to pick up speed skipping through the rougher patches until the path takes a dive toward the valley, where we'll have to concentrate a bit more to negotiate.

This is one of several bits where we may decide to take a cross-country line missing out some of the rocky stepped corners, but all can be attempted as long as the speed is low.

Eventually we'll reach the 'plateau' section where we can speed up considerably and put our drainage channel hopping into practice – this can be where the flow is killed, tyres punctured and tempers lost, but also where the biggest whoops can come from too – so time to dial in those wheel lifts!

Eventually one more section of obvious XC and we'll end up at the gate again, and eventually make the final descent on newly sculpted trails through the boulders down to the car park for a final whoop.

### **You and Your Bike:**

This is suitable for graduates of a Race It! Day or half day or who ride red trails well and maybe some bits of black at the trail centre – and who want to give mountains a go.

Any cross country bike in good condition with working brakes and mildly aggressive tyres will be suitable for this ride, although a full-suspension bike will make it easier, and a good solid rear tyre will be useful for fending off snakebites.

You should have plenty of material left on your brakes as you will be using them a lot on the descent.

You should be hill-fit capable of sustained hillclimbing and maintaining your strength for a 6 hour day on the hill. You should be capable of pushing or possibly carrying your bike, but willing to try to pedal up everything at a slow but steady pace.

You should carry:

- Spare tubes (even if you run tubeless you should take 1)
- Pump or CO2
- Plenty of food and drink
- A spare warm layer
- Hat and Gloves
- Waterproof jacket (as a windproof as well as waterproof)
- A helmet under 5 years old and in good condition – full or open face is fine – and kneepads
- Gloves

Also Ideally:

- A spare mech hanger for your bike
- Protective Glasses or goggles (for the wind)
- 1 set of spare brake pads

**Variations:**

We'll not be riding down the Ptarmigan ridge on this ride, but feel free to have a squint at the top of the descent – if this looks okay for you you can consider the rest, for another time.

**This route:**

Start at the Rowardennan Car Park at 09:30am