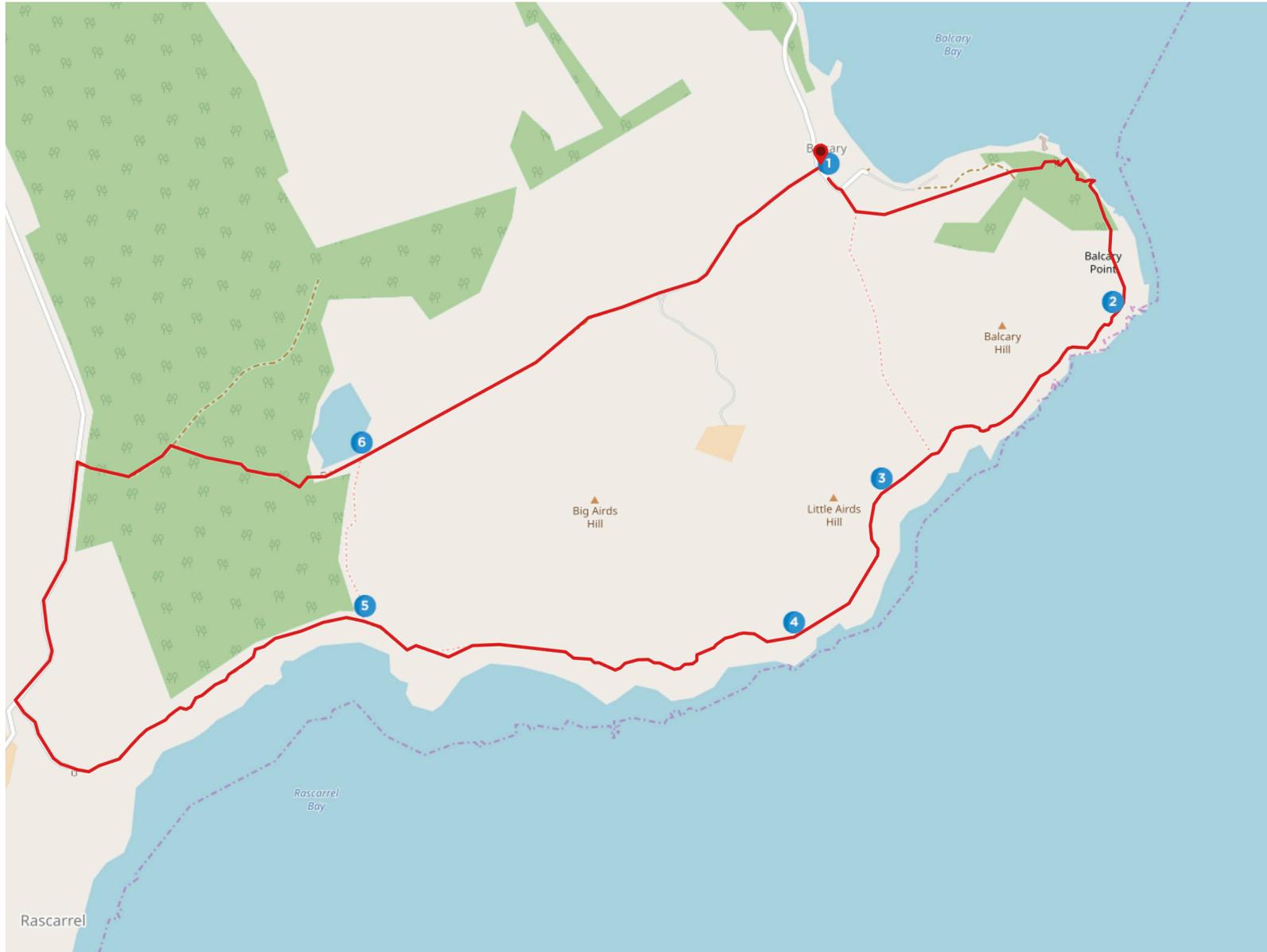


Balcary to Rascarrel Coastal Walk

Distance: 5 miles/8 km Map: OS Explorer 312/313 – Dumfries & Galloway Core Path 186



- Leave gates as you find them
- Walk to the edges of crop fields, not across the middle
- Keep dogs on leads, especially if there is livestock in the field
- Cows with calves can be aggressive
- There is a large tidal range in the Solway Firth. Be careful if venturing into the tidal zone.

 - Walk

Disclaimer: This route was correct at time of writing. However, alterations can happen if development or boundary changes occur, and there is no guarantee of permanent access. These walks have been published for use by site visitors on the understanding that neither HPB Management Limited nor any other person connected with Holiday Property Bond is responsible for the safety or wellbeing of those following the routes as described. It is walkers' own responsibility to be adequately prepared and equipped for the level of walk and the weather conditions and to assess the safety and accessibility of the walk.

Balcary to Rascarrel Coastal Walk

Walk 16

Distance: 5 miles/8 km Map: OS Explorer 312/313 – Dumfries & Galloway Core Path 186

A popular walk along an impressive section of the coast with great views across the Solway Firth and inland to the Galloway Hills. Warning: The path goes along an exposed section above high cliffs. Be careful here in windy weather.

Start: At the public car park by Balcary Bay Hotel. This is down a minor road about 2 miles south of Auchencairn

Refreshments: Balcary Bay Hotel, Part-time café in Auchencairn, Café in Dundrennan

Note: It would be a great help to future walkers if you could record any inaccuracies you come across during this walk and report them to reception so that appropriate amendments can be made. Thank you for your help. *Happy walking.*

WALK

1. Start at the public car park by the Balcary Bay Hotel. This area was a centre for smuggling in the 18th century and it is rumoured that the hotel, with its underground cellars, was set up as a front for these activities. From the far end of the car park a fenced track leads past a house and garden to an open field. Follow the left side of the field up a gentle slope to reach a gate where a signposted path leads through the edge of woodland and along the side of the gardens of Balcary Tower. There are good views across

Auchencairn Bay to Hestan Island. The island has had some unusual residents over the years including a couple who used to manufacture church organs. After passing through a gate you emerge onto gorse moorland as you approach Balcary Point. The path now starts to climb along the edge of the cliffs as they increase in height.

2. There is a wooden bench by the path at a point where you can look down on the rock pinnacle of Lot's Wife. This area is very popular with nesting sea birds and in spring you may see fulmars, guillemots, razorbills and cormorants occupying the ledges at different levels on the cliffs. Continue up and over the edge of Balcary Hill and you will descend to a gate that leads through to a more open area. It is possible to cut back to the starting point from here along a signposted path. The path along the coast now climbs steeply up to a welcome seat at Little Airds Hill.

3. This is the site of an extensive Iron Age fort although little now remains of it. It originally had three ramparts and covered an area of 65m by 50m. The path now descends past a rock formation known as "Adam's Chair" to reach another viewpoint and bench. On a clear day you can see the hills of the Lake District across the Solway Firth, beyond the Robin Rigg wind farm. There are some magnificent examples of granite dry stone walling to the right of the path along this section of the walk.

4. At Airds Point you can take a rough, steep path down to the rocky shore where there is a wooden pillar

set in the rocks. It is thought that this may have been used to display a light to assist ships with navigation around the point. The path now winds its way down closer to sea level, passing some old mine workings up on the right to reach the edge of Rascarrel Bay. There may be some muddy sections along here, but they can usually be avoided by walking along the edge of the rocky beach. The shrubby hillside to the right is a good place to see stonechat with their distinctive black heads and orange-red breasts.

5. When you reach the group of huts at Lochenling, you can choose to continue along a track on the coast or to cut inland on a shorter route up to Loch Mackie. If you take the coastal route, you will soon reach some new holiday cabins and a track where the Rascarrel Burn meets the bay. Follow the track up to the right to reach a surfaced road. The road leads uphill for about half a mile to a signpost that points rightwards through a forestry plantation. Follow the forest track for a couple of hundred yards then there is another signpost pointing along a track to the right. This leads pleasantly along the edge of woodland to Loch Mackie.

6. Loch Mackie was created to provide water for the mining activities in the area. The mines around Rascarrel Bay produced barytes and copper ore. There are good views across the loch towards Scree Hill and Bengairn. Cross the dam then pass through a gate to follow a path along the edge of stone walls. This path leads across a few fields to a track that slopes downhill through farmland back to the car park.