



Factsheet - Real World Riding

Big Mountain Day:

The Cobbler

A 'Proper' mountain even though it falls just short of a Munro with a tiny summit and amazing vistas

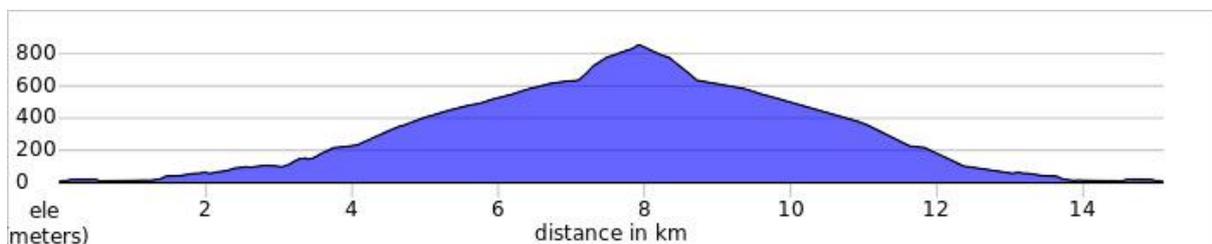


One of the Southern Highlands' most iconic summits, the Cobbler (Or Ben Arthur to be completely correct) rises to just over 900m above the head of Loch Long at Arrochar.

This 'up and down' route gets us to the summit to surprise some of the hillwalkers there, and then brings us back down on some lovely flowing trail.

Distance: 15km

Height Climbed: 840m



Description:

Starting from the head of Loch Long we gather at the exit to the final car park in Arrochar for a short ride into Succoth. This gives us the most forgiving warm-up to ride up and into the forest at the base of the Cobbler and Ben Narnain.

Once up onto the mountainside we'll use forestry tracks to head toward the main walkers path up the mountain, and here the steep zig-zags will begin. Mostly rideable, we may push for a while as it's pretty unremitting until we break out of the trees at the lip of the Corrie at the base of the Cobbler to the view in the photo above.

While walkers may be with us heading between the Narnain boulders many will be heading straight into the Corrie to our left or on to Ben Narnain, so our ride up the valley will get quieter as we go until we hit the path heading straight up the side of the mountain. We'll push straight up this pitched path until it suddenly eases off and traverses behind the main peak. Mostly peddle-able we'll follow this up (sometimes steeply) over steadily more and more mountainous paths until we eventually pass the crowds and finish the push up on to the main summit.

There are amazing views here and some may be tempted to 'thred the needle' onto the actual summit through a hole in the summit itself, but most will be happy to have reached this point.

The descent starts steeply, heavy on the brakes on gravelly paths, but soon reaches the bealach between the two main summits and we can relax a little as we traverse back out toward the main descent. This can be ridden straight down, but we'll be using a zig-zagging traverse route through the grass beside the pitched path to enable us to retain control as we descend toward the main bealach and the main path.

From here we enjoy the exquisite trail winding its way back down the valley with the distinctive summit behind us, and follow the swift zig-zags back to the valley floor at speed (where practicable – this is a shared path).

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 black at the trail centre – and who want to give mountains a go.

Any cross country bike in good condition with working brakes and aggressive tyres will be suitable for this ride and the off-piste sections of steep hillside, 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:

Returning by the outward route toward Succoth allows us to switch the walkers path for some excellent singletrack for the last section of descent at the end of the ride.

This route:

Start at the Loch Long Arrochar Car Park at 08:30am (to try to miss the worst of the crowds)