

PYG Track, Snowdon



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Distance: 7 miles (11km) (there and back)

Ascent: 2372 feet (723 metres)

Time: About 6 hours (there and back)

Grade: Mountain Walk

Start / Finish: Pen y Pass Car Park, off the A4086 (SH 647 557)

Relevant Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL 17 (Snowdon & Conwy Valley)

Parking

Pay and display car park – make sure that you have enough loose change. The car park fills up quickly early in the morning in the summer and on weekends – but you can park in Nant Peris car park which is about 3 miles down the Pass, and catch the bus back up to Pen y Pass. In the high season you may descend by another of the Snowdon paths and catch the Sherpa bus back to your vehicle.

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Nobody knows for sure why this path is called the Pyg Track. It's possible that it was named after the pass it leads through, Bwlch y Moch (translated Pigs' Pass) as the path is sometimes spelled 'Pig Track'. Or, maybe because it was used to carry 'pyg' (black tar) to the copper mines on Snowdon.

Another possible explanation is that the path was named after the nearby Pen y Gwryd Hotel, popular amongst the early mountain walkers. The team who conquered Everest in 1953 stayed at this hotel while training on Snowdon. When the team returned from the Himalaya a reunion was held at the hotel, accompanied by Edmund Hillary himself.

This is the most rugged and challenging of the six paths up Snowdon, which leads along the foothills of Crib Goch. The route up Crib Goch and along the ridge is extremely dangerous and should not be attempted by novice walkers.

Crib Goch and Crib y Ddysgl

Crib Goch is a 500 metre knife edge ridge, with no escape route. Even in ideal weather conditions, Crib Goch is a difficult undertaking. In wet weather, wind, snow, mist or ice, Crib Goch is a serious mountaineering route.

Facilities

Toilets and café open during the day. SNPA Wardens are based on site and they are usually around to give advice to walkers in the mornings. The weather forecast is usually displayed in the notice board outside the building.

The Route

1. The path starts in the far end corner of Pen y Pass car park, to the right of the car park entrance. Pass the helicopter landing site on your right, and go through a narrow gap in a stone wall. (The prominent path that starts opposite the car park entrance is the Miners' Track).

2. The first section of the Pyg Track climbs quite steeply over rough and rocky terrain. Tread carefully to avoid an ankle injury, especially on your way down.

3. After about an hour's walking you will reach Bwlch y Moch.

4. As you reach Bwlch y Moch, Llyn Llydaw will come into sight below, and the slopes of Lliwedd rising above the far side of the lake. The path forks here, with the path on the right leading up Crib Goch. For Snowdon, bear left and over the two adjacent stiles.

5. From Bwlch y Moch the path climbs gradually to the intersection of the Pyg Track and the Miners' Track above Llyn Glaslyn, which is marked by a standing stone.

6. There is a standing stone to mark the spot where the Pyg Track and the Miners' Track meet – remember about it on your way down. From this point the path climbs steeply until you reach Bwlch Glas.

7. In a little while, the path will zigzag up to Bwlch Glas.

8. At Bwlch Glas, you will be joining the Llanberis Path and the Snowdon Ranger Path. This junction is marked with a standing stone (remember about it on your way down).

9. Follow the path to the left from the standing stone. You are now on the final leg of your walk up Snowdon. Walking at a leisurely pace, you can expect to be on the summit in around a quarter of an hour.

Remember!

Though you are in the Snowdonia National Park, please remember that the path crosses the privately owned farm and grazing lands of Gwastadannas, where dogs are not welcomed unless under close control or on a lead.

On your way to the summit you will see evidence of essential footpath restoration work carried out by the National Park Authority. Please keep to the footpath to prevent further erosion.



Snowdonia National Park Authority, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL486LF
Telephone 01766 770274 parc@eryri-npa.gov.uk www.eryri-npa.gov.uk

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