



Mountain Pursuits Challenge

Connaught 2015 - The Twelve Bens

Map Sheet 37 (1:50,000)

The Twelve Bens are situated in western Galway, and form the centre of the Connemara National Park. They are famed for their rugged peaks and good walking. Nine of the Summits are over 2000 feet and we hope to complete four of the northern summits.

The key to this activity is to travel light, however safety is paramount so do not skimp on the essentials. The 2 litre bottle of coke is not necessary, the hair gel is only necessary when you get back to the car. The change of clothes for going home should be left in the car and not carried on the back. Please refer to the MPC handbook for the gear lists. These mountains are dangerous if not treated with respect. In order to ensure team safety, please have your lunch stop at one of the checkpoints and not between them. Check in on the Friday Night will open at 8pm and close at 11pm. After this, you will need to make your own way to the campsite and check-in on the Saturday Morning

This will be a standing camp suitable and ideal to log as the overnight for stage 5 of the hillwalking adventure skills. As Saturday is a day hike a day sack will be needed. It is recommended that each person's carries their own day sack with their essentials and emergency equipment rather than one large day sack that is passed around.

As we will be spending two nights in one camp site we do ask that patrols adhere to the principles of leave no trace. The key element that we would like to focus on is the disposal of waste both food and human and we would ask patrols to bring a trowel (remember at least 50m from water) and that the menu quantities are pre-planned to avoid the dumping of rice and pasta in the river (all excess will need to be bagged out).

How to get there:

From Galway take the Cliften road. After you pass through Maam Cross and Recess continue along the road passing Ben Lettery Youth Hostel. The turn off point is about 2-1/2 km further along the road. Take the right hand turn just past the church and follow the road along till it crosses the river. The carpark is just on the other side of the bridge at (L 744 513). (Note a coach will not make it up this road). Check in with the staff and prepare for a gear check.

Friday Night:

Start to Base Camp (L 759 521)

The route for Friday night takes us along the forestry track till it reaches the ford on the river at (L 775 519). On reaching the ford, keep north and follow the north-western bank of the river, continue along the riverbank towards base camp. You need to cross a number of streams along the way. The points will be marked with Flags / Flashers. The best points to cross are very close to the main river where the streams are wide and shallow. You may also be able to jump a number of the narrower streams, but remember the extra weight of your rucksack. The base camp is situated on a bend in the river with the better camping on the far bank. Check in with the staff, and find a good spot to pitch the tent. Have a brew and hit the sack.



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Saturday Hike: We intend to get the first teams away at about 9am. Get up and have breakfast and have your PL check with the staff as to the route plan and your team's departure time.

Base Camp to Stream Bend (L 774 532)

Follow the river up – stream. Be careful crossing the feeding streams, as you do not wish to get wet this early.

Stream Bend to Col (L 788 531)

Keep following the stream up hill. Take plenty of rests, as it is a gruelling trod. Your last chance to get water is just before the crest on the col.

Col to Ben Baun (L 786 539)

Ben Baun means the White Mountain. From this point Ben Baun's looks daunting. A steep grassy slopes lead up to a narrow band of rock. You will have to do a little route finding through this obstacle, it is not too difficult. Once you through it is an easy walk up a grassy ridge to reach the stony summit, marked by a trig point and cairn. This is the highest point in Co. Galway and views range across the mountains and countryside Connemara. This if the day is clear is an ideal place to do feature recognition and all members of the patrol should spend time looking at the Maum Turks, Killary Harbour and the many other geographical features in the area.

Ben Baun to Benfree (L 778 544)

Ben Free is an anglicised version of binn fhraoigh, which means the mountain of heather. A ridge of rock and scree descending from Ben Baun becomes grassy as it leads down to the coll. A short walk up hill leads to the summit of Benfree.

Benfree to Muckanaght (L 768 541)

Muckanaght means the place of lumps and ridges. A steep, grassy slope lead downs from Benfree to a peaty col. Another steep and grassy slope then leads uphill from the Col, becoming rocker towards the top of the mountain. There is a cairn on the summit.

Muckanaght to Bencullagh (L 756 537)

Bencullagh means the mountain of the old woman. A gentler slope leads down from the summit to the Col, and the up hill walk isn't too steep either. The vegetation changes from grass to heather, but the top of Bencullaght is stony.

Bencullaght to Maumonght (L 749 539)

Maumonght is marked as a spot height of 602meters. From Bencullagh you descend into a narrow col. running along this Col is a fence which rails off a steep gully running down to the valley below. After you cross the col you ascend a short distance to the spot height marked by a cairn.

Maumonght to Spot Height 454 (L 744 534)

Holding the line of the ridge descend into the coll and then to along to the spot height 454

Spot height 454 to Base Camp (L 759 521)

From the spot height descend back toward the valley floor towards the forest corner at L 754 522 and then take a bearing to Base Camp, the river may be used as a collection feature

Sunday Hike:

Base Camp to Finish

Retrace your steps from Friday Night back to the carpark
MPC Hoodies €15 and T-Shirts €10 will be on sale.