

Cadair Idris - Route Description

1. From the car park head up the tree lined track that crosses the stream (Afon Fawnog). The track then bends left and passes the old National Trust building – now a team room - at Dol-y-cae.
2. Shortly after the building the path crosses the Nant Cadair then turns right and heads north on its steep and rocky ascent through the woodland (some man made steps here).
3. The path continues through the beautiful woodland for half a kilometre. In the earlier stages there are views to the right of the cascading falls of the Nant Cadair which tumble down through the woodland.
4. The path eventually comes out above the woodland and reaches the open valley. The path splits where another path heads off to the right and down over a wooden bridge crossing the Nant Cadair.
5. Continue along the main path heading north then north west in to the Nant Cadair valley. The path bends left and heads west through the Nant Cadair valley and eventually to the shores of a glacial lake (Llyn Cau) in Cwm Cau.
6. Lookout out for the huge boulders on your right by the path just before Llyn Cau comes in to view. These huge boulders are known as Moraine, they are huge debris left behind by the retreating glacier that once shaped this stunning landscape in the last ice age.
7. From Llyn Cau a very steep path heads south up on to the rim of the cwm. The path is steep but is only like this for a short while.
8. Once the rim is reached follow the path and head west along the back and then the crest of the rim ridge. The path will turn right and head north to reach the small summit at the top of the Craig Cwm Amarch ridge which heads south west from the summit.
9. From the summit of Craig Cwm Amarch head north towards the col at Craig Cau. The views over the ridge down to Llyn Cau on your right as you cross the top of Craig Cau are incredible but at the same time could be dangerous so take great care, particularly in bad visibility.
10. From the col at Craig Cau ascend north for two hundred metres then ascend north east over the rocky boulder field for four hundred metres and you will reach Penygadair the highest summit of Cadair Idris.

11. The Penygadair summit is 893 metres above sea level. The highest point is marked by a white OS trig pillar on top of a rocky knoll. On a good day the views stretch far and wide. West to the Barmouth estuary. East to the Cambrian Mountains. South to the Brecon Beacons. North to the Rhinogs and the main Snowdonia massifs.
12. Just below the rocky summit knoll there is a solid stone built hut. This famous hut is a great shelter from the elements and a huge relief on a bad weather day. The hut is a modern version of a 19th century hut that was made famous by an old lady who would climb early in the morning to the summit and provided tea to all those who visited.
13. About 850 metres to the east from the summit of Cadair Idris (Penygadair) take the descending path that forks right. Initially the path is a little vague but eventually becomes more distinct and joins the Mynydd Moel south-east ridge path (see 14 below).
14. Alternatively head east off the summit along a wide grassy ridge and continue on towards the summit of Mynydd Moel (this is the safer option in poor visibility) and then turn right at a ladder stile, follow the path down and to the south alongside a fence. Follow the ridge down taking care not to miss the right turn at a ladder stile.
15. Both descent options require care to find the right path but will join together to follow a path that eventually reaches the wooden bridge over the Nant Cadair that you saw earlier above the woodland soon after starting your ascent. To get down to this bridge may take a while on a long and unsteady path.
16. Cross the wooden footbridge and turn left. Trace your footsteps back down the steep woodland path to Dol-y-cae and follow the track back to the car park ready to continue your journey to Llanberis and Snowdon.