

Pen Y Fan – Route Description

Starting Point: The start point is the car park on the A470 about 1 mile after the junction with the A4059 (signposted Hirwaun). This is on your right if you are coming from the Cardiff direction, and on your left from Abergavenny.

As you enter the car park go to the right and find a place to park.

Providing you arrive early morning there should be plenty of car park spaces but it does get busy later in the day. There are toilet facilities here and usually a catering van providing teas, burgers and snacks. The catering van may not be open for business if you are starting your climb around 05.30 but may be open by the time you return.

A few yards after the toilet block, take the path between the conifers, pass through the gate and cross the stream, Nant Blaen Taff Fawr (this is the source of the River Taff which eventually winds its way down to Cardiff before flowing out into the Bristol Channel). Continue upwards along the very well defined path which ascends fairly steeply for about a mile, before reaching the Pass of Bwlch Duwynt with the flat “table top” summit of Corn Ddu looming ahead. The similar “table top” summit of Pen Y Fan lies beyond.

Normally it’s an easy scramble up to the summit of Corn Ddu but as you are attempting the PCRC - Welsh 3 Peaks Challenge, you can save time by going straight ahead and bypassing Corn Ddu to take the short ascent up to Pen Y Fan.

From the top of Pen Y Fan there are exhilarating views in all directions and on a clear day it’s possible to look westwards to the Bristol Channel and England beyond or even get a glimpse of Cadair Idris to the North (some 60 miles away).

Enjoy the views but then retrace your steps to descend the mountain using the same path used for the ascent. The path is well maintained and the way down fairly easy, but take care on the descent as a fall or slip here could well ruin the rest of the Challenge for you. On reaching your start point it’s onwards to Cadair Idris.