

# Snowdon 500 – Route Descriptions

## About Snowdon

Snowdon is one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. Its grandeur impresses the visitor no matter which direction one looks at it. Its shape is like a starfish with six magnificent ridges radiating out, each with their own unique character and make up. The deep cwmoedd (glaciated valleys) dropping down from the ridges range from the easily accessible to those only reached by very experienced walkers and climbers.

Snowdon, the highest mountain in England and Wales at 1085 m or 3560 ft, also offers a unique bio-diversity of rare flowers and insects, wonderful volcanic rock formations, fossils and disused mine works.

For more information about the mountain and places to stay nearby visit [www.snowdon.com](http://www.snowdon.com)

## Miners Track

After registering and signing in at the start point in the car park in front of the Legacy – Royal Victoria Hotel you will be transported by our free shuttle bus to Pen Y Pass where you will receive your pre climb briefing before setting off for the summit of Mt Snowdon.

The Miners Track to Llyn Glaslyn was built during the last century to serve the Britannia Copper Mines, abandoned in 1917. The Track is well defined and obvious until you reach Llyn Glaslyn but after that the path to the summit is considerably steeper and can be a serious undertaking especially in winter. The path starts at the far end of Pen Y Pass car park.

At first the path contours gently with fine views down the Gwynant Valley on your left. The valley was carved out by a slow moving glacier during the last ice age which ended about 10,000 years ago. After a short while a sudden right turn in the path reveals the three peaks of the famous Snowdon Horseshoe, from left to right they are Y Lliwedd (2947 ft.), Yr Wyddfa or Snowdon our destination (3560 ft.) and Crib Goch (3023 ft.). You are now about 1300 feet above sea level.

You soon pass above Llyn Teyrn, a small lake on your left – the ruins you can see on the lake shore are the old miners' barracks. The path continues to climb gently until you come to Llyn Llydaw. Make sure you take the right hand path as you near the green valve house and continue on to and over the causeway that crosses the lake. Some of the most impressive views of Snowdon are to be had along this stretch of the route. The lake itself is a glacial corrie lake, gouged out of the mountain during the ice age and is 190 feet deep.

On the lake shore you can see the derelict sorting and crushing mill of the Britannia Copper Mine and shortly beyond that you encounter the first steep section of the path up to the third lake – Llyn Glaslyn. On reaching Llyn Glaslyn, the ruins you pass on the right are the former barracks where the miners lived during the week and just after the barracks you will come to a path that ascends very steeply up the slope in front of you

to join the Pyg Track. For many this part of the ascent is the most demanding and difficult part of the climb as you pick your way slowly and carefully up the rocky path.

The junction of the Pyg Track is marked by a conspicuous striated boulder – turn left here and follow the track until you reach the Zigzag. The route upwards from here is well defined and has been subject to a great deal of work by the Snowdon National Park Authority. The path has been edged with rock filled gabions to prevent the scree above from engulfing it. This part of the climb is very steep and quite strenuous so take your time. Please treat this part of the ascent with great respect and keep strictly to the path.

Continue up the Zigzag until you reach the 8ft marker stone at Bwlch Glas – this is where the Miners / Pyg Track meets the Llanberis path which will be your route down after reaching the summit. So now turn left again and follow the path up to the top – from here it is a relatively easy 15 minute climb but please do not be tempted to walk along the Snowdon Mountain railway track at any time. Not only is it forbidden but it can cause serious erosion to the track bed and can be dangerous especially in wet conditions. You must keep to the path which follows a line along the edge of the ridge well to the left of the railway track which soon reaches the summit of Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa) at 1085m or 3560 feet.

## **The Pyg Track**

After registering and signing in at the start point in the car park in front of the Legacy – Royal Victoria Hotel you will be transported by our free shuttle bus to Pen Y Pass where you will receive your pre climb briefing before setting off for the summit of Mt. Snowdon.

The Pyg Track is one of the most rugged and challenging routes up Snowdon and is rather more demanding than the Miners Track. The path starts at the western end of the Pen Y Pass car park and quickly winds steeply upwards through a boulder field with fine views of the Glyders (mountains) on your right and then the Llanberis pass below (through which you were transported by the Snowdon 500 shuttle bus before starting on the climb).

The path soon levels out a little as the towering bulk of Crib Goch comes into view and meanders gently before climbing steeply again over broken ground. The path veers to the left as Bwlch y Moch (Pig's Pass) is approached. The route up to Crib Goch and the start of the famous Snowdon Horseshoe is on the right, but you must avoid that as this way is only for very experienced climbers. As you continue onwards the route can be subject to significant erosion and the National Park Authority does a lot of repair work to prevent further damage so please keep strictly to the pathway.

Once over the pass, the path bends to the right, descends a little and then continues on climbing gently. The pyramid shape of your destination, Snowdon (Yr Wddfa) soon comes into view and the path follows a huge crescent ending in a conspicuous white quartz platform with a quite dramatic view of Snowdon

across Lyn Glaslyn below. The path now contours gently and then climbs up a smooth rock slab until another platform is reached high above Lyn Galslyn.

From here you continue to contour round in another large crescent climbing very gently until you reach the junction with the Miner's Track which comes up from your left. The junction of the Miners Track / Pyg Track is marked by a conspicuous striated boulder but your route continues ahead until you shortly reach the start of the Zigzag. The route upwards from here is well defined and has been subject to a great deal of work by the Snowdon National Park Authority. The path has been edged with rock filled gabions to prevent the scree above from engulfing it. This part of the climb is very steep and quite strenuous so take your time and treat this part of the ascent with great respect keeping strictly to the path.

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## **The Llanberis Path**

The Llanberis Path is the longest of the main routes up or down Snowdon offering a good 5 mile trek from the summit back to Llanberis and the Royal Victoria Hotel (our official start / finish point). The path was originally used as a pony and mule track to carry tourists up from Llanberis. Whilst the route down is well defined and maintained, you'll still need walking shoes or boots with good ankle support. Every year many people injure their ankles by attempting the stony path in trainers or even high heels!

From the summit you first retrace your steps down to the stone marker at Bwlch Glas at the top of the famous Zigzag but instead of going back down the Zigzag you carry on straight ahead at first gently where the path cuts across the slopes of Garnedd Ugain and then quite steeply until you reach the railway bridge (Snowdon Mountain railway) close to Clogwyn station. Here you are rewarded with a magnificent view of the Llanberis pass and the Glyderau opposite.

Continue steeply downwards and as you approach the Halfway House café at 570m (1870 ft.) you will see (looking back) the steep glacial cliffs of Clogwyn Du'r Arddu with ruins of copper mines visible as dark slits in the cliffs much loved by rock climbers. Continue downwards along the well defined path until you come to the end of the "stony" section of the path and where you meet a tarmac path. Turn right here and carry on

steeply downwards towards Llanberis below, passing through a gated farmyard before reaching the village houses (Victoria Terrace).

When you reach the junction with the main Llanberis road, the Royal Victoria Hotel and the end of your Snowdon 500 Challenge will be in front of you. Cross over the road (taking care because you will be weary and tired) and back to the start point in the car park in front of the hotel where you must sign yourself back in (so that we know you are safely off the mountain) and receive your Snowdon 500 Challenge Certificate.

