

Forest of Dean & Wye Valley Guided Walking

Tour Style: Guided walking

Destinations: Gloucestershire, United Kingdom & England

Trip code: ZYBTB

2 & 4



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Considered one of the most unspoilt river valleys in Britain, the postcard-pretty Wye Valley is home to ancient woodlands, meandering rivers, limestone gorges, and a vast array of wildlife including otters, kingfishers, and peregrine. You'll also be charmed by world-class sculptures, art installations, and much more in the Forest of Dean – a place of timeless beauty nestled in Gloucestershire's westerly corner, close to England's border with Wales.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- The choice of two walks a day – one easier, one harder
- Soaking up views of Tintern Abbey and the River Wye from the Devil's Pulpit
- Exploring the heart of an ancient medieval forest
- Spotting peregrine falcons and plenty of other wildlife
- Savouring picturesque views of the Wye Valley from Symonds Yat Rock
- Discovering the Seven Sisters Rocks and visiting King Arthur's Caves

TRIP SUITABILITY

Your fitness

Having a solid base of fitness before your holiday will ensure you've the best chance of completing the holiday and enjoying it to boot. Here's a few simple tips to help you get fit and ready for your challenge:

- Get out walking - whether the weather, get out there, and start building your fitness months before your holiday
- Build your distance gradually and get a number of 6-8hr hill days in
- Ideally, try and do two consecutive days training if possible
- Take the stairs every time
- Train on different terrain
- Train with your day pack and your walking boots too, to ensure they're well worn in before your holiday
- Other sports help improve your walking fitness too. The best ones are jogging, cycling, swimming, which will build your stamina, and yoga which will help strengthen your core and improve balance
- Time training will help ensure you enjoy your holiday to the max.





ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival

You're welcome to check in at The Speech House Hotel from 2pm onwards. An unmissable historic building set in the centre of the forest, it will be our base for the next few days. Your HF Holidays Leaders will be on hand from 6:30pm, when we'll gather to give you a warm welcome and explain the plan of action before dinner.

Day 2: Tintern And The Devil's Pulpit

Explore the area around Tintern Abbey, one of the great monastic ruins in Wales, and discover Offa's Dyke.

Option 1 - Tintern And The Devil's Pulpit

Distance: 5.5 miles (9km)

Total ascent: 1,050 feet (320m)

In summary: Starting at Tintern we follow the western bank of the River Wye, before crossing over to Brockweir. We head uphill to join the Offa's Dyke footpath which takes us to our highlight of the walk, the Devil's Pulpit. Here we're rewarded with stunning views of Tintern Abbey and the beautiful Wye Valley below. We descend very steeply through woodland, on rocky paths back to the village, where there is plenty of time to visit the abbey, considered to be one of the greatest ruins in Wales.

Highlight: Discover the local myth of the Devil's Pulpit, a superb rocky viewpoint that overlooks the village of Tintern and its famous Abbey.

Option 2 - Tintern, Brockweir And The Devil's Pulpit

Distance: 8.5 miles (13.5km)

Total ascent: 1,650 feet (500m)

In summary: We'll first head north from Tintern to explore the village of Brockweir before following the Offa's Dyke footpath south to reach the Devil's Pulpit. Here we're rewarded with stunning views of Tintern Abbey and the beautiful Wye Valley below. We'll continue our journey alongside the great earthwork boundary dyke built by King Offa. We'll descend through woodland and return along the eastern bank of the River Wye.

Highlight: Spectacular views from the Devil's Pulpit and a chance to walk beside the great earthwork boundary dyke, built by King Offa.

Day 3: The Forest Of Dean

Walk in ancient woodland, see world class sculpture, and uncover history in the Forest of Dean.

Option 1 - Sculpture Trail

Distance: 5.5 miles (9km)

Total ascent: 550 feet (180m)

In summary: We'll set off on an inspiring walk around the forest, discovering sculptures and art installations along the way. The Forest of Dean Sculpture Trust is a registered charity, providing a home for works by some of the world's leading artists for over 40 years.

Highlight: Explore the unique collection of world-class, contemporary sculpture in the heart of the forest.

Option 2 - New Fancy And Nagshead

Distance: 11 miles (17.5km)

Total ascent: 1,300 feet (400m)

In summary: We'll discover the very best of this ancient forest and explore how it has changed through the centuries. Our walk takes in favourite sites such as Cannop Ponds - an excellent place to spot waterbirds - and Nagshead Nature Reserve for more wildlife-spotting opportunities. As we wind our way through the forest paths, we'll also uncover the hidden remains of industry.

Highlight: See the very best of this wild and ancient forest.

Day 4: Symonds Yat

Explore the River Wye and soak up the views from Symonds Yat Rock.

Option 1 - Symonds Yat

Distance: 7 miles (11.5km)

Total ascent: 1,550ft (480m)

In summary: Enjoy breathtaking views from Symonds Yat Rock, then descend to the riverside where we'll follow a delightful stretch of the Wye Valley walk. Then ascending through ancient broadleaved woodland, rich in interesting flora and fauna, we'll circuit back to the viewpoint.

Highlight: Keep a watchful eye out for Peregrine Falcons and enjoy iconic views of the Wye Valley from Symonds Yat Rock.

Option 2 - Symonds Yat, Seven Sisters Rocks And King Arthur's Cave

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 2,350 feet (720m)

In summary: After a short stroll through woodland, we'll reach Symonds Yat Rock. Here we'll pause to take in the views before descending to the River Wye where we'll catch the historic hand-pulled ferry across to the opposite side. We'll make our way to the Seven Sisters Rocks then visit the legendary King Arthur's Cave. From here we re-join the riverside and cross back over using Biblins suspension bridge. We return through wooded hills via Staunton to complete a circular route.

Highlight: Take in the views from Symonds Yat Rock, explore the Seven Sisters Rocks, and visit the legendary King Arthur's Caves.

Day 5: Departure

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before check-out at 10:30am.

ACCOMMODATION

The Speech House Hotel

In the heart of the Forest of Dean, just 5 miles from the Wye Valley, The Speech House Hotel combines original charm with modern comfort. Independently owned and family run, this former 17th-century hunting lodge has 35 stylishly decorated en-suite rooms across the main house and the courtyard. Due to the hotel's rural location, the quality of mobile phone reception can vary. However, the hotel is well-equipped with free Wi-Fi throughout. Free onsite private parking is also available with two electric car charging points. To top it all, the AA Rosette-winning restaurant serves delicious meals using quality local produce wherever possible. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

Food & Drink

Your stay is full-board. This includes daily breakfasts, packed lunch options, and evening meals.

Packed Lunches

Packed lunches provided by our partner hotels may be too much food for some and not enough for others. As a minimum, they will include a bread sandwich or roll with a choice of filling, fresh fruit, crisps, and a biscuit/flapjack or piece of cake. If you feel you might need more food during the walk, please bring a supply of snacks to supplement this.

Dietary Requirements

Our partner hotels can cater for most dietary requirements, but it is important you advise us of any allergies and dietary restrictions you have at the time of booking.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

The Speech House Hotel
Coleford
Gloucestershire GL16 7EL

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1594 822607](tel:+44(0)1594822607)

By Train

The nearest railway station is in Lydney. You may find more connections to Gloucester railway station which is situated on the main lines to Cardiff Central, Birmingham New Street and London Paddington, with connecting trains to all parts of the UK. For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or phone [+44 \(0\)3457 48 49 50](tel:+44(0)3457484950).

By Taxi

Alternatively, the 17-mile journey from Gloucester railway station takes approximately 30 minutes by taxi.

Sovereign Taxis

You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended taxi company, Sovereign Taxis. The 2024 guide price for a 4-seat taxi is around £60. 8-seat taxis are also available at a higher rate. Please pre-book your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1594 836757](tel:+44(0)1594836757)

Email: sovereigntaxis@live.co.uk

*Sovereign Taxis is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By Bus

Stagecoach run a regular bus service from Gloucester Transport Hub, located next to the train station. Catch bus 24 from Bay H, towards Cinderford, and hop off at the Cannop, Speech House stop. The journey takes 1 hour.

LOCAL AREA

During your stay at The Speech House Hotel, you may enjoy visiting the following places of interest, either in your free time or on your journey to and from your holiday.

Tintern Abbey

[Tintern Abbey](#) is a Cadw site, nestled right on the banks of the River Wye. A magnificent 13-century abbey, originally founded in 1131 by Cistercian monks it is now recognised as one of the Wales greatest ruins.

Parva Farm Vineyard

The oldest commercial vineyard in Wales, [Parva Farm](#) grows 17 different grape varieties and produces award winning white, rose, red and sparkling wines, fruit wines and mead.

Kingstone Brewery

[Kingstone Brewery](#) is an award winning 4-barrel microbrewery. They champion the traditional hand-brewed beer process, using only mineral water and natural ingredients. Visitors can drop in anytime for tastings of choose to book a tour.

Chepstow Castle

Beautifully persevered [Chepstow Castle](#) is another fascinating Cadw site. A magnificent clifftop fortress with over 600 years of history to tell.

Dean Forest Railway

Take a magical steam train ride through the forest, at [Dean Forest Railway](#).

Cycling

If you enjoy exploring on two wheels, the Forest of Dean is a fantastic place to cycle. [PedalaBikeAway](#) is a one stop shop that can provide everything you need.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleeeces make a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- First-aid kit

Safety On Your Holiday

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest while clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of

emergency.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

Document produced: 06-12-2024

