



Walking Holidays in Britain's most Beautiful Landscapes

t: 017687 72335

e: info@mickledore.co.uk

w: www.mickledore.co.uk



## South West Coast Path: North Devon

Our North Devon holiday, the first leg of the 630 mile South West Coast Path, actually begins life just over the border in Somerset, in the town of Minehead. From here you'll follow the coastal path for almost 90 miles to the village of Westward Ho! enjoying overnight stays in popular locations such as Lynmouth, Ilfracombe and Woolacombe.

There is diverse scenery all along this section of the South West Coast Path. The first stretch takes you over some of the highest cliffs in England where the expanse of Exmoor meets the sea. There are extensive views inland and north across the Bristol Channel with the coast of Wales as the backdrop. You will pass through coastal woodland and see vast sandy beaches popular with surfers. In contrast is the large estuary of the Taw and Torridge rivers, flanked by sand dunes and marshland, where the path follows the former railway and later the estuary.

On your journey you'll enjoy the sight of numerous cliff top flowers, particularly the abundance of bluebells and primroses in springtime. The Exmoor coast is home to a variety of wildlife and many rare species of flora and fauna. Expect to see red deer, stag beetles, blackneck moths and the whitebeam trees which are unique to Exmoor.

There are Sites of Special Scientific Interest with their delightful heathland and grasses, nature reserves too with sand dunes housing rare snails and lizards as well designated areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty where you might be able to spot grey seals, gannets and in the summertime dolphins, sunfish and even basking sharks.

This is an area valued for its birdlife and it also incorporates the Tarka Trail, a series of footpaths following the route taken by Tarka the Otter in the book by Henry Williamson.



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## Summary

### Why do this walk?

- Walk along one of Britain's most dramatic and longest coastlines.
- Unspoilt countryside with abundant wildlife.
- The 'Great Hangman' is the highest point on the South West Coastal path.
- See purple tinted moors and Exmoor ponies

Length	8 - 10 nights
Full Route Length	88 miles / 142 km

### Essential Info

#### Grade



#### Moderate

**Grade:** This is not a technically difficult walk and should be easy to tackle for most reasonably fit people.

**Terrain:** The paths are good, and there are no major route finding challenges.

**What's it like underfoot?** Generally good paths and tracks, although a few sections can get muddy after heavy rain

**How much up & down?** More than you'd

think! Although you never reach more than 400m above sea level (and most of the time not more than 200m) there are many short steep sections. Most days involve ascents of 200-400m metres, although no section is very steep for very long.

**Signposting:** Good – the path is well waymarked.

**Navigation:** Pretty straightforward – good signposting, and generally well defined tracks.

**Weather:** You may be lucky enough to encounter warm, dry weather over the whole route and enjoy dry paths and tremendous views, but you must be prepared because the weather can change quickly. Good clothing and waterproofs are essential, but don't forget your sunhat, sunblock and shorts!

## Route

### Minehead to Porlock Weir

The South West Coast Path begins in Minehead, actually in Somerset rather than Devon. To mark the start of the full 630 miles there is a wonderful sculpture of two hands opening a map of the route. Have your photo taken to mark the start of your adventure! Minehead is a lively town with lots of museums and good public transport links. The trail eases you

in as you leave the town behind you and follow the path through woodland, along steep cliff tops through beautiful wooded combs with bracken and gorse. After a few miles you emerge from the woodland at North Hill where you have two options of the route to choose from. The low route is a gentle walk through farmlands passing by field of livestock. The more rugged alternative route offers a wilder, longer and more remote experience with better sea views where you might be able to spot some of the local wildlife. On a clear day this section has fantastic views across the Bristol Channel to the Welsh Coast and tiny islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm. The two paths meet up at Bossington from where you follow a flat track to the village of Porlock Weir which is home to a thousand year old port and several thatched cottages.

### Porlock Weir to Lymeouth

From Porlock Weir you leave the harbour and houses at Millers and Anchor, climbing the steep slopes passing thatched houses. One essential stop on the South West Coast Path is at Culbone Church of St Beuno which is apparently the smallest parish church in England at only 35ft long with enough room to fit 30 people. From this church you have two options of the trail to choose from.

The southern trail from here heads up the hill, out of the trees, into farmland and



from there onto a quiet road. The northern trail is through ancient woods and is known to be rugged but it is rich in history and a wonderful alternative to the southern trail.

Once back on the main route you then follow the coastline under the woodland canopy climbing the slopes onto the clifftops. Here you will cross the Somerset-Devon border. The path then deviates off the main track to allow you to visit the 19th Century stone cross known as Sister's Fountain.

From here the trail becomes more exposed which is a pleasant change from walking through the woodlands. From Coddow Combe you then reach Foreland Point which is the most northerly point in Devon with beautiful view of Lynmouth in the near distance.

#### Lynmouth to Combe Martin

From here your walk connects with another trail called the Tarka trail which is named after Henry Williamson's book 'Tarka the Otter'. There are several locations along this part of the trail that Williamson based his book on and it is interesting to spot these whilst on your walk.

You will start the day along an easy tarmac path then a grassy path skirting Hollerday Hill. There are stunning views out to sea and along the shoreline to the

spectacular rock formations of Valley of Rocks with the appropriately named Castle Rock ahead of you. From here there's a short but pleasant road walk with Lee Abbey on your right which was built in 1850. You then continue up a steep and wooded road route, or you can choose a more off-piste Woody Bay alternative route around Crock Point. On this section you can enjoy the many cliff top flowers, especially the abundance of bluebells and primroses in the springtime. The Exmoor coasts provides a wide and interesting habitat for many rare species of flora and fauna, which include red deer, stag beetles, blackneck moth and the whitebeam trees which are unique to Exmoor. Soon you will reach the highest point on the South West Coast path at Great Hangman standing at 1043 feet and rewarding you with breath-taking views here of Exmoor, the Welsh coast and Lundy. Please note this is a challenging walk, particularly the steep climb up Great Hangman from Sherrycombe as you are exposed to the elements. It is only a short distance from here to Combe Martin where you can rest your feet after your challenging days walk.

#### Combe Martin to Woolacombe

With stunning coastal views, this section from Combe Martin is well known for its wild and spectacular views. There are some easy cliff paths but also a few

strenuous ascents between Lee Bay and Morte Point. Morte Point is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its heathland and grasses. You might be able to spot grey seals, gannets and in the summertime dolphins, sunfish and even basking sharks. After Morte Point the vast sandy bay of Woolacombe will come into view.

#### Woolacombe to Braunton

From Woolacombe the trail is a lot flatter which allows you to take in the view a bit more and you'll notice the change in scenery. From Baggy Point you can spot lots of seabirds and even the odd rock climber. The views change from the cliff tops and woodland paths to a much flatter and easier path closer to the shoreline. The route then passes through the village of Croyde and Saunton which are both known as a haven for surfers. You will also pass through Saunton Sands which is an army training location and access can be limited. Although, you are well compensated as the dunes at the back of Saunton form the Braunton Burrows which is an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Braunton Burrows Nature Reserve, has the largest sand dune system in England and is home to rare snails and lizards.

#### Braunton to Instow

From Braunton the trail follows the estuary on the disused railway track and



you need to keep a close eye on the directions in your guidebook to avoid taking a wrong turn onto a paved path near a busy road. The trail continues on through the Burrows along the banks of the Taw River, where you might spot the odd heron, oystercatcher and even an egret or godwits. This section of the SWCP keeps in-line with the Tarka Trail with views of the marshes across the estuary.

#### **Instow to Westward Ho!**

The Tarka trail diverts away from you now on the last stage. The trail from Instow is mainly on paved pathways and is fairly flat walking. You are treated to views back over the river Taw as you follow the Torridge River south towards Bideford. Cross the bridge then again follow the river north sticking to the paved path which is well signposted. Soon you will reach the village of Appledore and, shortly after that, Northam Burrows Country Park which is filled with grassy plain landscapes and marshes that are a brilliant spot for birdwatching. The route then hugs the side of Pebble Ridge which is a hot spot for surfers and you can stroll along the beachfront to your final evening at Westward Ho!

#### **Additional Days**

We can arrange extra nights at any of the overnight stops, allowing for rest days, or giving you more time to explore the locality. We recommend Lynmouth/Lynton, Ilfracombe and Westward Ho!

#### **Lynmouth**

Spend a day off the trail in the picturesque twin villages of Lynton and Lynmouth, dubbed "England's Little Switzerland" ever since Robert Southey remarked upon their distinctly Alpine appearance. Ride the Cliff Railway funicular which connects Lynmouth at the foot of the cliffs to Lynton, perched 500 feet above. Visit Watersmeet and indulge in a cream tea (and argue about where the jam goes) in the tea garden before exploring the ancient woodlands in and around one of the country's deepest river gorges. There are plenty of historic houses and gardens nearby, or just spend a day experiencing the local arts and crafts and a spot of shopping.

#### **Ilfracombe**

With a growing reputation as North Devon's culinary and cultural hub, Ilfracombe is built around a small working harbour and offers fresh seafood brought in daily and a thriving local arts and crafts scene. Don't miss the divisive 'Verity' – Damien Hirst's 20 metre bronze statue

representing truth and justice – or the Tunnels Beaches, reached through tunnels hand carved in the 1820s, which helped turn the village into a popular seaside hotspot. Take a ferry to Lundy Island, fantastically diverse for an island only three miles long and half a mile wide. Or if you prefer to keep your feet on dry land try an evening stroll to Capstone Hill for panoramic views across the town and watch the sun set into the Atlantic.

#### **Getting There and Away**

General Travel information for the South West Coastal Path area will be in your holiday pack including train and bus timetables where available.

Detailed instructions on getting to your first night's accommodation by car, or on foot from the nearest train or bus station, will also be included in the holiday pack on individual accommodation maps.

To view train times please visit [trainline.com](http://trainline.com) where you can also purchase tickets in advance. For information on bus timetables please visit [traveline.info](http://traveline.info)

If you require secure car parking whilst walking this route, please contact us for information.



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## Getting There:

**By Air:** If travelling from overseas the main airport to fly to is London Heathrow. From London Heathrow you can travel by train from London Paddington Station to Taunton station, you then take the bus (No. 28) from Taunton to Minehead (journey time approx. 4 hours).

Alternatively you may wish to travel via Bristol Airport. From Bristol Airport you take the bus to Temple Meads train station, the train to Taunton, and bus (No. 28) onward to Minehead (journey time approx. 3 hours)

**By Public Transport:** The nearest mainline railway station to Minehead is at Taunton. You can travel to Taunton from London Paddington by train and then from Taunton to Minehead by bus (No. 28) (journey time approx. 4 hours). **By Road:** Minehead is located just off the A39. Leave the M5 motorway at Junction 23 and follow the A38/A39 towards Bridgewater/Minehead. Stay on the A39 for approx. 25 miles. The town centre and seafront are signed from the A39.

## Returning from Appledore:

**By Public Transport:** The nearest railway station to Appledore is Barnstaple. Stagecoach South West bus service 21 runs between Appledore and Barnstaple Railway Station half hourly (hourly on

Sundays), journey time approx. 50 minutes.

**By Road:** From Appledore, follow the A386 towards the A39. When the road meets the A39 follow signs for Barnstaple, after approx. 9 miles the A39 meets the A361 at a roundabout. Follow the A361 for approx. 35 miles passing Barnstaple and Tiverton to join the M5 at junction 27.

## How our holidays work

We specialise in self-guided walks because we think it's the best way to really experience local landscapes, cultures and history. You walk under your own steam, at your own pace, safe in the knowledge that we have organised everything, and help is only a phone call away. We book all your accommodation, move your luggage between overnight stops, provide you with maps and guidebooks and all the details you need for a successful holiday. You just turn up and walk!

## Inbuilt Flexibility

Our holidays are designed to be flexible and can therefore be tailored to suit your requirements. If you're looking for something different, or extra, from the holidays described here, give us a ring and we'll do our best to please. You can start on any day you like and we can arrange extra nights at any of the overnight stops

allowing for rest days, or giving you more time to explore the locality. You can book part of a walk if you don't have the time to complete the entire distance.

## How to Book

Once you have decided which holiday you wish to book, please fill in the form at the back of this brochure which can then be emailed or posted. We will get in touch with you once we have received your booking to confirm your holiday details. Alternatively, you can either book online using our website at [mickledore.co.uk](http://mickledore.co.uk) or telephone us during office hours.

## Accommodation

Good accommodation and friendly hosts are an essential part of any holiday. We understand this and go out of our way to find the best. We put a great deal of effort into hand picking our accommodation and matching it to individual customer requirements. As well as visiting the accommodation ourselves, we ask all our customers to complete a short evaluation on each night's accommodation, which then gives us an insight in to the day-to-day operation, and lets us spot any potential issues before they become a problem.



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We use a variety of accommodation, including small country house hotels, guest houses in market towns, bed and breakfasts in farm houses, country cottages and Victorian town houses. In selecting the accommodation we look for helpful, friendly hosts with good quality, characterful accommodation close to the trail. For example, over the course of your trip you might stay in a village inn, a bed and breakfast in a converted barn, a Victorian guest house, on a working farm, and in a Georgian hotel. Occasionally we may use a chain hotel.

We always try to arrange en suite accommodation, i.e. rooms with their own bathrooms, for each night of your stay. However, in some of the more remote locations accommodation is limited and occasionally we may have to book rooms with shared bathrooms for one or two nights of your holiday, (especially if the booking is made at short notice), but we will always let you know if this is likely to be the case.

### Single Rooms

We are happy to book single rooms on this walk but cannot normally book more than two for any one group. Single room bookings include a supplement.

## What We Provide

### All Holidays

**Accommodation** Overnight Bed and Breakfast accommodation in selected hotels, farmhouses, village inns, guest houses and family B&Bs, including a full English or Continental breakfast.

**Guidebook** A guidebook with route information, maps, photos and background information.

**Information of Services Along the Route** A comprehensive service Info sheet, including services such as cash points, banks, post offices, village shops, inns, cafés and taxis.

**Maps** One waterproof 1:40000 Harvey map covering the whole route.

**Personal Itinerary** A personal itinerary setting out each overnight stop, including large scale maps of each accommodation, to ensure you find it easily.

**Emergency Telephone Support** If you get in to difficulties during your holiday, we are always available to help, even out of office hours.

### Options

**Luggage Transport** We will transfer your luggage between each overnight stop – leave your luggage at the accommodation when you set off in the morning, it will be moved on to your next B&B. You only need to carry a small day sack with the clothes and provisions you require during the day's walk. We ask you to limit your luggage to one bag per person, up to 18kg.

**Packed Lunches** Packed lunches are not available for SWCP routes. We will provide you with a guide to local places to pick up lunch before you set off or on the route, your hosts will also be happy to advise you.

**Off Road Parking** If you are travelling by car we can usually arrange off road parking for the duration of your trip. (There may be a small charge for this).

**Arrangement of return transport** We can also arrange your transfer back to your car, (or advise you when public transport is a better option.)



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## What's not included

**Evening Meals** Your evening meal isn't included in the package, but we include full details and recommendations for each evening meal in your itinerary. You will normally be within walking distance of a pub and/or restaurant, or where there is good food available at the accommodation, we'll book that for you. Allow about £30.00 per night.

**Transport to the start & away from the finish or Taxi or bus transport if you need to miss a stage** (but we'll help you organise it if you need help)

**Travel Insurance** Even if you are based in the UK travel insurance is worth having.

## Prices

Detailed prices for all our holidays are available on the website [mickledore.co.uk](http://mickledore.co.uk).

## About Mickledore

Mickledore Travel is based in Keswick at the heart of the English Lake District. We are one of the leading specialists in self-guided walking and cycling holidays in the UK, and provide a friendly, professional and flexible service.

We are walkers and cyclists ourselves, so it really matters to us that you have a good holiday. We are still a small business,

with a lot of local knowledge, and personal enthusiasm for the outdoors. If you've got any queries, we're always happy to help, so don't hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us an email, or call in and see us if you're in Keswick.

We specialise in UK holidays, and by concentrating on what we consider the best routes, we get to know the trails, accommodation, and local area intimately.

- All your accommodation has been carefully selected and is regularly monitored.
- We listen to you and tailor each holiday to meet your requirements.
- We have an excellent level of customer service.
- We have 20 years' experience, and very high levels of customer satisfaction.
- Peace of mind – help is only ever a telephone call away.
- We're all outdoor enthusiasts – we know what makes a good holiday, and we want you to have one!
- 100% financial protection – in the very unlikely event of Mickledore's financial failure, you receive a full refund.

## Financial Protection

Your payments are fully protected against our financial failure. We are members of the Association of Independent Tour Operators (AITO), and the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA). We have arranged bonding through ABTA. This means that in the unlikely event of our financial failure, any monies you have paid to us will be refunded. This bonding is fully compliant with the Package Travel Regulations and provides 100% financial protection.

## AITO Quality Statement

Mickledore Travel is a member of the Association of Independent Tour Operators. The Association represents Britain's leading independent tour operators. It promotes high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating.

Mickledore Travel abides by AITO's Code of Conduct and adheres to the Quality Charter which can be viewed at [aito.com](http://aito.com). Visit the website to find out more about the Association or call 020 8744 9280.



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## North Devon Coast Path: Minehead to Westward Ho!

**Note on transfers:** Many of the accommodations on the South West Coast Path operate a two night minimum policy, therefore when booking, you need to be prepared to be transferred to and from your accommodation on several nights of your holiday.

Minehead to Westward Ho! in 7 Days Walking Code: DN8				Minehead to Westward Ho! in 8 Days Walking Code: DN9				Minehead to Westward Ho! in 9 Days Walking Code: DN10			
		M	km		M	km		M	km		
Day 1	Travel to Minehead for your first night of accommodation			Travel to Minehead for your first night of accommodation			Travel to Minehead for your first night of accommodation				
Day 2	Minehead to Porlock	7	11	Minehead to Porlock	7	11	Minehead to Porlock	7	11		
Day 3	Porlock to Lynton	14	23	Porlock to Lynmouth	14	23	Porlock to Lynton	14	23		
Day 4	Lynton to Combe Martin	14	23	Lynmouth to Combe Martin	14	23	Lynton to Combe Martin	14	23		
Day 5	Combe Martin to Woolacombe	14	23	Combe Martin to Ilfracombe	5	8	Combe Martin to Ilfracombe	5	8		
Day 6	Woolacombe to Braunton	15	24	Ilfracombe to Woolacombe	9	14	Ilfracombe to Woolacombe	9	14		
Day 7	Braunton to Instow then transfer back to Braunton	13	21	Woolacombe to Braunton	15	24	Woolacombe to Croyde	5	8		
Day 8	Transfer back to Instow, walk to Westward Ho! then transfer to Appledore	11	18	Braunton to Instow then transfer back to Braunton	13	21	Croyde to Braunton	10	16		
Day 9	Depart from Appledore after breakfast			Transfer back to Instow, walk to Westward Ho! then transfer to Appledore	11	18	Braunton to Instow then transfer back to Braunton	13	21		
Day 10				Depart from Appledore after breakfast			Transfer back to Instow, walk to Westward Ho! then transfer to Appledore	11	18		
Day 11							Depart from Appledore after breakfast				



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## Booking Form

### Contact Details

Address .....

Mobile Telephone..... Landline telephone.....

Email.....Emergency Contact no .....

### Your Holiday

Holiday Code.....Holiday Name.....

Date of First Night.....Date of Last Night.....

### Party Members

Title	First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth

Options	Rooms Required	Rest Days (give date & location)
Luggage Transport Y/N	No. Double Rooms <input type="text"/>	
Packed Lunches (Not available for this route)	No. Twin Rooms <input type="text"/>	
Off Street Parking Y/N	No. Single Occupancy Rooms <input type="text"/>	
Return Transfer required (additional charge) Y/N		

Comments (special diets, other requirements etc): .....

Upon receipt of your booking form Mickledore will send by email a confirmation with the full price and 20% deposit cost required. You can pay by card or cheque (GBP only for cheque).

How did you hear about Mickledore Travel? .....



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