4 Night Exmoor Gentle Guided Walking Holiday



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Gentle guided walking	Exmoor	3, 4 & 5	78kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Explore Exmoor National Park's rolling countryside and coastline with ease on this gentle guided walking holiday. Choose from a selection of walks that minimise rough ground and gradients without compromising on the park's wonderful scenery and wildlife spotting opportunities. Discover a timeless landscape where buzzards fly overhead, ponies and red deer roam free across the moors, and charming towns and villages welcome you for a well-earned rest.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Walking across sweeps of wide-open moorland
- Soaking up panoramic sea views at Exmoor National Park
- Spotting wildlife such as red deer and Exmoor ponies
- Visiting the charming villages of Porlock and Dunster
- Learning about Exmoor's status as an International Dark Sky Reserve
- Staying at Holnicote House near the pretty village of Selworthy

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- En-suite accommodation in our 4-star country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walking with experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Choice of three guided walks (each walking day) from March to October, and two from November to February.
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

ITINERARY - GENTLE WALKS

Day 1 **Arrival Day**

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2 **Lynton And Valley Of Rocks**

Option 1 - A Stroll Around Lynmouth

Distance: 4½ miles (7km)

Ascent: 450 feet (140m)

Descent: 900 feet (280 m)

In summary: We start with a descent to Watersmeet House today, a Victorian fishing lodge now owned by the National Trust, where two fast flowing rivers meet in a spectacular wooded valley. Walking downstream beside the East Lyn River past deep rock pools, we'll reach Lynmouth and enjoy time to explore the town. Options include stretching your legs further with a walk out to Valley of Rocks, visiting exhibitions on the great flood of 1952, riding the funicular cliff railway up to Lynton, or relaxing with an ice cream and enjoying the scenery.

Highlight: Exploring the many tea shops and artists' studios of Lynton and Lynmouth.

Option 2 - Valley of Rocks

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 1,150 feet (340m)

Descent: 1,700 feet (520m)

In summary: A walk with two distinct sections. From high above Lynmouth at an Iron Age barrow, we descend into the wooded valley to Watersmeet, then continue along the East Lyn River to Lynmouth. We'll then take the funicular railway to explore Valley of Rocks, where goats graze among the jagged pinnacles of rock, before returning to Lynton.

Highlight: Soak up the views as you ride the Victorian cliff railway from Lynmouth to Lynton. This uses water power to lift you 500ft to the town above.

Option 3 - Around Lynton

Distance: 8½ miles (13.5km)

Ascent: 1,800 feet (540m)

Descent: 2,750 feet (840m)

In summary: From Barna Barrow we take in the sea views from Butter Hill and visit Countisbury Church before descending to Watersmeet. We'll continue along the Tarka Trail to the Victorian town of Lynton, climbing to a panoramic viewpoint above the Valley of Rocks. Finally we descend to Lynmouth via the cliff railway.

Highlight: Valley of Rocks is a local beauty spot with its own herd of wild goats who roam the precipitous hillsides.

Day 3 **The Quantocks**

Option 1 - Hilltop to Nether Stowey

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 500 feet (160m)

Descent: 1350 feet (420m)

In summary: From high on the Quantock Hills we're treated to fantastic views and glorious scenery as we follow moorland paths walked by Iron Age peoples and Roman soldiers. Descending past Walford's Gibbet through woodland, we arrive at the village of Nether Stowey, home of the poet Coleridge, with the chance to visit Coleridge Cottage itself.

Highlight: Enjoy the wonderful moorland scenery that inspired poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

Option 2 - Quantock Foothills

Distance: 6½ miles (10.5km)

Ascent: 1,250 feet (400m)

Descent: 1,150 feet (350m)

In summary: From the village of Kilve we walk up into the Quantock Hills, with views of Hinkley Point Power Station and over the Bristol Channel to Wales. Descending past Walford's Gibbet, we finish our day at Nether Stowey, with its charming buildings and literary connections.

Highlight: The Quantock Hills are home to a herd of wild red deer, as well as an abundance of other wildlife.

Option 3 - Ridge and Combe

Distance: 8½ miles (14km)

Ascent: 1,050 feet (320m)

Descent: 1,250 feet (380m)

In summary: From the Bristol Channel at West Quantoxhead with its pretty church, our walk takes us up onto the Quantock Hills, picking up the Macmillan Way West as we head over the ridge. We then descend through wooded combes and rocky streams to reach Nether Stowey and its ancient Castle Mound.

Highlight: The variety of scenery encompassed in Britain's first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, from the high windswept moorland plateau to deep wooded combes, or valleys.

Day 4 **Watchet And It's Ancient Harbour**

Option 1 - The Mineral Line to Watchet

Distance: 4 miles (6km)

Ascent: 350 feet (100m)

In summary: From Bilbrook we follow one of the longest river fords in the area to reach the quintessential village of Old Cleeve with its 17th century church of St Andrews. We then follow along the Monks Path to Washford and on to walk the Mineral Line track to reach Watchet. There'll be time to explore its harbour, originally built at the time of Alfred the Great, and take in the views across the Bristol Channel, or perhaps visit the Market House Museum to learn about the fascinating history of this once important town.

Highlight: Follow in the footsteps of the monks who once made their way to Cleeve Abbey.

Option 2 - Carhampton to Watchet

Distance: 6 miles (10km)

Ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: Leaving Carhampton, we follow fields to the Bristol Channel coast and walk beside the West Somerset Railway line to the pretty station of Blue Anchor. We then turn inland to the 13th century village of Old Cleeve, finishing at Watchet with its harbour and heritage railway station, via the Mineral Line track which formerly carried iron ore to the harbour.

Highlight: The wander along the sands and shingles of Blue Anchor Bay.

Option 3 - Dunster to Watchet

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 650 feet (200m)

In summary: From the parkland at Dunster Castle, we circumnavigate the gardens and water mill to enter the Deer Park, where red deer and Exmoor ponies can be seen, and on to Carhampton with its church dating back to the Middle Ages. We continue to Blue Anchor Bay with its heritage railway station to reach 13th century Binham Grange. After visiting Old Cleeve church we take the lanes to Washford and follow the old Industrial Revolution railway line to Watchet harbour, with shops, cafes and East Quay arts centre.

Highlight: Glorious coastal scenery and historic railways

Day 5 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 3

Slightly longer walks, mostly on well-trodden paths, with some gentle gradients plus stiles and steps possible. Typically, 5-6 miles (8-10km) with around 650ft (200m) of ascent.



Gentle walking grade 4

The most active Gentle grade, with longer walks, some ascent, and possible steps, stiles, or off-path uneven ground. Typically, 6-7 miles (10-12km) with around 1,000ft (300m) of ascent.



Moderate walking grade 5

Some walking experience needed. Full day walks which may include some short but steep ascents and descents throughout the day, and varied terrain. Regular stops. Typically, 8-9 miles (13-15km) with around 1,300ft (400m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Holnicote House

There's plenty to look forward to at this beacon of Somerset hospitality near the impossibly pretty village of Selworthy. The location couldn't be more perfect; within rolling-out-of-bed distance from Exmoor National Park and an easy drive from Dunster Castle, Coleridge Cottage, the twin villages of Lynton and Lynmouth, and the sandy delights at Porlock and Minehead. The walking opportunities here are standout, too, not least for the trails around the Quantock Hills, Dunkery Beacon, Bossington, and a section of the England Coast Path that takes you on a glorious journey along the county's coastline.

About

· 32 well-appointed guest rooms · Exclusive occupancy: 43 guests minimum · Check in from 4:00pm · For members check in from 2:00pm · Free Wi-Fi · Free on-site parking · Boot room and drying room · Travel cot & high chair · Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks · Books and games to borrow · Licensed bar · Two lounges · Garden with croquet lawn · Well-behaved dogs welcome on self-guided holidays · Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point

Then & now

Mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, there have been at least four successive houses of varying sizes built at the manor of Holnicote over a 500-year period. Until the 20th century, it was owned by the Acland family who saw it though a few fires, rebuilds, and restorations during their almost 200-year occupancy. They built the present Holnicote House in 1861 and it remained in the family thereafter (minus its thatched roof that was destroyed by yet another fire in 1941 and replaced with tiles from another estate building). In 1944, Sir Richard Acland, 15th Baronet, and his wife, Lady Ann, donated the entire Holnicote Estate (along with Killerton, their Devon ancestral home) to the National Trust in a bid to keep them 'safe and unspoiled for all time'. The combined value of both estates was estimated at £250,000, making this the largest single acquisition in the organisation's history.

Used as a nursery and nursery nurse training school during the 1940s, Holnicote House has been part of our HF Holidays line-up since 1952. Set right at the heart of the Holnicote Estate – a 12,500-acre landscape of heather-covered moorland, ancient woodland, and rocky coastline – it comes with 150 miles of footpaths and bridleways and plenty of sublime grounds which offer free rein to wander. You'll find 32 well-appointed guest rooms in three categories (Classic, Premium, and Superior), two comfortable lounges, peaceful gardens, a croquet lawn, books and games to borrow during your stay, plus a handy boot and drying room. There's also a Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and easy-to-follow information for self-guided walks. Equally worthy of your attention is the licensed bar and the dining room for a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

FOOD & DRINK

Dining

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

ROOMS

Your room at Holnicote House

Designed with your comfort in mind, Holnicote House has 32 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: The rooms in the main building or the thatched grounds, especially Rooms 1 and 4. The first floor rooms have fabulous views across Crawter Hill and Dunkery Hill.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

ACCESSIBILITY

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865 or view the accessibility information online for Holnicote House

ABOUT YOUR STAY

A warm welcome
We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided waking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Helping you enjoy the Great Outdoors - A natural focus on walks

Walks talks and Discovery Points
Our founder, country pastor turned social innovator, Thomas Arthur Leonard, was passionate about encouraging people to explore the countryside. His legacy continues in HF's continued focus on walking. Many guests choose to travel with us on guided or self-guided walking holidays, and as such, evenings at our houses are often busy with walk leaders hosting various briefings and talks. On guided walking holiday arrival days, there are walking information briefings before dinner, and for the duration of any guided walking holiday there will be a Walks Talk before (or on occasion after dinner), to go through the following day's walk options. Self-guided walking guests, and those on special interest holidays (where there is free time to explore independently), are of course welcome to also join in these Walks Talks - please talk to the team locally if you have any queries. Our Discovery Points are filled with handy maps and route notes, designed to ensure everyone, not just those booked on a guided walking holiday, can enjoy the beautiful countryside settings that our HF houses enjoy.

The walking day
Prior to setting off on guided walks, our HF Holidays Leaders run through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure walkers have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Holnicote House
Selworthy
Minehead
Somerset TA24 8TJ

Tel: +44 (0)1643 862013

By train

The nearest station is Taunton.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

By taxi

From Taunton train station it's a 27-mile journey taking 1 hour.

For pricing, please contact Minehead Taxis directly.

Minehead Taxis
You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended company, Minehead Taxis*. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: +44 (0)1643 704123

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Holnicote House.

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

By bus

The number 28 bus runs between Taunton station and Minehead, taking around one and a half hours. At Minehead, change to the number 10 bus to the Selworthy turn (at the end of Holnicote House drive). A two-minute walk along the drive will bring you to the house.

For bus times, check Traveline.

By car

There's free car parking at Holnicote House if you decide to drive.

From Bridgwater take the A39 though the southern outskirts of Minehead towards Porlock. You'll find Holnicote House on the left about four and a half miles out of Minehead.

By air

The nearest airport is London Heathrow.

Take the train to London Paddington station where there are direct trains to Taunton. It's a relatively straightforward journey that'll should take around 2.5 hours.

Bristol Airport is also an option. From here, you can take the bus and train to Taunton.

Check National Rail for routes and train times.

LOCAL AREA

Places to visit in Exmoor

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Holnicote House.

Selworthy

Less than a mile away, this charming village delights with well-preserved thatched cottages as well as the All Saints church with its painted nave ceiling and 18th century gallery. There are several footpaths leading from the village up to Selworthy Beacon.

West Somerset Railway

As the longest heritage line in England, this true country branch line of the old Great Western Railway has 10 stations on its 20-mile scenic journey from Minehead to Bishops Lydyard. Minehead station is just a 10-minute drive away.

Dunster Castle

A medieval castle transformed into a stately home for the Luttrell family, this characterful dwelling assures fabulous views over Exmoor, Somerset, and the Bristol Channel. Not-to-be-missed interiors include a 17th century carved staircase and rare leather wall hangings.

Lynton & Lynmouth

Located on the spectacular North Devon coast, the small rural town of Lynton and coastal village of Lynmouth are the twin resorts connected by a historic cliff railway. The short walk from Lynton to the Valley of Rocks is a definite highlight.

Coleridge Cottage

A 45-minute drive away, this was the humble home of poet Samuel Coleridge and his wife Sara for three years from 1797. Acquired by the National Trust in 1909, it was here that he wrote The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Kubla Khan, and Frost at Midnight.

Hestercombe Gardens

An hour's drive away, this 50-acre landscape is home to three historic gardens spanning three centuries of design. Coplestone Warre Bampfylde laid out the Landscape Garden while Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll collaborated on the Formal Garden.

Arlington Court

Belonging to the Chichester family for 11 generations until it was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1949, this Regency house is an hour's drive away. In addition to the gardens and grounds, there's a museum in the stables with an interesting collection of over 40 carriages.

Minehead Beach

Also known as The Strand, this mile-long expanse of sand is perfect for sandcastle-building, beach games, and organised activities such as canoeing and paddleboarding. Please note there is a dog ban in force on the entire beach from 1 May to 30 September.

SAFETY ON YOUR HOLIDAY

Walking safety

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 where 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.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Weather conditions in the UK can vary throughout the day, and conditions in the mountains may be cold and windy even in summer. Use the following list as a guide when preparing for your holiday.

Essentials

- Suitable waterproof walking boots with ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof, wind-resistant jacket with a hood, taped seams and a hydrostatic head rating of at least 10,000 mm
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Spare warm clothing, such as a synthetic insulated jacket
- Comfortable walking clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Warm mid-layers, such as fleeces
- Gloves and a warm hat, even in summer
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner
- Water bottle with a capacity of at least 1 litre
- Flask for hot drinks
- Sunscreen
- UV-protective sunglasses
- Spare high-energy food
- Head torch and spare batteries for holidays between October and March
- Passport (if applicable)
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy

Recommended

- Several base layers, with long or short sleeves
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First-aid kit, including plasters, insect repellent, a midge net and a tick-removal tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bags
- Wallet or purse

- Camera
- Walking poles
- Sun hat
- Gaiters
- Mobile Phones
- Swimwear (please see accommodation information for hotel facilities)
- Membership cards for English Heritage, the National Trust or similar heritage organisations in Scotland and Wales, if you are a member. These may be useful when visiting attractions during your itinerary or on your free day.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

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.

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