

# 7 Night Exmoor Christmas & New Year Guided Walking Holiday

**Tour Style:** Guided walking

**Destinations:** Exmoor, United Kingdom & England

**Trip code:** SLXFW-7

1, 2 & 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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Spend the festive season in Somerset and head out on winter walks that take you through Exmoor National Park. And when you're not busy enjoying wintry scenery along the South West Coast Path, cosy up in Holnicote House – a beacon of Somerset hospitality near the impossibly pretty village of Selworthy. We pull out all the stops at this time of year and our houses welcome you with a sprinkling of festive cheer, seasonal food, and plenty of yuletide treats. So wrap up warm and step into Christmas with HF Holidays.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our 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 up to three guided walks (on walking days)
- 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

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Getting into the festive spirit with a guided walking holiday
- A choice of winter walks with our experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Discovering the stunning landscapes of Exmoor on foot
- Staying in our country house in rural Selworthy
- Enjoying festive fare and leaving all the organising to us
- A celebration dinner with all the trimmings on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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Walk levels are 1, 2 and 3.

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Christmas Arrival Day

You're welcome to check in from 4pm onwards.

Enjoy a complimentary Afternoon Tea on arrival.

### Day 2: Porlock & Lucott Farm

#### Option 1 - Exploring Porlock Vale

Distance: 6½ miles (10.5km)

Ascent: 900 feet (260m)

In **summary**: This is a relaxed circular walk across fields and minor roads to visit Porlock and then back along the coast and passing near the charming villages of Bossington and Allerford.

**Highlight**: The village of Porlock is a great place to visit with it's church, museum, shops and cafes.

#### Option 2 - Hawkcombe & Porlock

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 1050 feet (320m)

In **summary**: The walk heads through Hawkcombe Wood nature reserve, before reaching the village of Porlock and then heading out to the spectacular Hurlstone Point, before heading inland and back to the house.

**Highlight**: Hurlstone point offers great coastal views.

#### Option 3 - Hills And Wooded Valleys

Distance: 9½ miles (15km)

**Total ascent**: 1,300 feet (400m)

**In summary:** Follow a meandering route from Porlock Hill to Holnicote House. We'll take in the beautiful wooded valleys of Shillett Combe and Horner Water, as well the heather-clad moorland above.

**Highlight:** Walk across a carpet of purple heather on the moors in summertime, then descend into the lush green wooded valleys.

## Day 3: Holnicote & Selworthy Beacon

### Option 1 - Selworthy

**Distance:** 6 miles (10km)

**Ascent:** 1550 feet (460m)

**In summary:** Walk to the charming villages of Allerford and Bossington, before continuing to the coast at Hurlstone Point. Our return route traverses the wooded slopes to Selworthy village, with time to explore.

**Highlight:** Wander through the once extensive Holnicote Estate to the 'model village' of Selworthy, with its collection of 'chocolate box' thatched cottages.

### Option 2 - Selworthy Beacon Circuit

**Distance:** 8 miles (13km)

**Ascent:** 1,550 feet (480m)

**In summary:** Our circuit from Holnicote House ascends through the woods to the top of Selworthy Beacon. Having followed the hill-top path we'll return through the fields to Selworthy village.

**Highlight:** Discover St Agnes Fountain, a small spring dating from 1820, hidden in the beautiful wooded slopes of Selworthy Beacon.

### Option 3 - Bossington Hill, Coast Path & Selworthy Beacon

**Distance:** 9 miles (15km)

**Ascent:** 1,650 feet (500m)

**In summary:** A circular walk exploring the countryside and villages around Holnicote House. Our route takes us to the coast via the village of Bossington, returning along the wooded slopes to charming Selworthy village.

**Highlight:** Selworthy village was rebuilt in 1828 by the Acland family to house the elderly workers of the Holnicote estate. The tea room is a delightful spot to relax in towards the end of the walk.

## Day 4: Historic Dunster

### Option 1 - Dunster & Deer Park

**Distance:** 5 miles (7.5 km)

**Ascent:** 950 feet (300 m)

**In summary:** Today's walk gives us the whole day to explore historic Dunster and the beautiful countryside surrounding it. We enjoy a circular route taking us through Dunster's deer park and on a circuit passing below Bats Castle and Withycombe Gate, returning to Dunster with plenty of time to discover the history and charm of this medieval wool town. Options include visiting Dunster's impressive castle, the Yarn Market, St Peter's Church, the Doll Museum and a working water mill. Alternatively, stretch your legs further with a woodland

walk before treating yourself to a visit to one of the many tea shops.

**Highlight:** Stroll through the deer park spotting fallow and roe deer, along with Exmoor ponies.

### Option 2 - Selworthy To Dunster

**Distance:** 7 miles (11km)

**Ascent:** 1200 feet (360m)

**In summary:** Heading straight out from Holnicote House, we follow the track and road to Headon Cross where we will see the pretty colours of the hamlet of Tivington Heights. We then head up through a mixed broadleaf wood onto the ridge line of Wootton Common before descending Grabbist Hill to the medieval village of Dunster.

**Highlight:** Look out for red deer on your journey across this broad ridge line, although illusive, you may hear the loud barking call of the stags especially during rutting season.

### Option 3 - Dunster Via West Luccombe And Brockwell

**Distance:** 9½ miles (15km)

**Ascent:** 1,650 feet (500m)

**In summary:** Walk from Holnicote to Dunster. Our route takes us along a sylvan track at the foot of Dunkery Hill before traversing the Wootton Common ridge and descending into picturesque Dunster.

**Highlight:** Spectacular views across Exmoor and the Somerset coast and the historic architecture of Dunster, overlooked by the hilltop castle.

## Day 5: Free Day - Exmoor

Discover more about [Holnicote House and the local area](#) for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

## Day 6: Horner & Dunkery Beacon

### Option 1 - Exploring Horner Hill

**Distance:** 5½ miles (9km)

**Ascent:** 1000 feet (300m)

**In summary:** This circuit from the house takes you through the pretty village of Horner, and then in to Horner Wood and Horner Hill, before heading back to the house.

**Highlight:** The village of Horner and Horner Hill

### Option 2 - Dunkery Beacon Circuit

**Distance:** 9 miles (14km)

**Ascent:** 1,950 feet (600m)

**In summary:** This is a circular walk visiting the highest point on Exmoor and Somerset. The walk takes us through woodland and then moorland to Dunkery Beacon and returns on a meandering path alongside the delightful river Horner.

**Highlight:** The views from the top of Dunkery Beacon are fabulous.

### Option 3 - Dunkery Beacon & Great Rowbarrow

Distance: 11 miles (17.5km)

Ascent: 2,050 feet (620m)

**In summary:** A strenuous circular walk visiting the highest point on Exmoor and Somerset. The descent takes us past the tiny Stoke Pero Church, the highest church on Exmoor, and back through Horner Woods alongside Horner Water.

**Highlight:** There are great views from the top of Dunkery Beacon making the ascent well worth the effort!

## Day 7: Along The Coast To Porlock

### Option 1 - Culbone To Porlock

**Distance:** 5 miles (8.5km)

**Ascent:** 700 feet (220m)

**In summary:** From Culbone, follow the track that bends above Silcombe Combe before arriving at Culbone Church. We leave the churchyard and follow multiple zig-zag paths and tunnels in Yearnor Wood to get to Worthy Toll House and finally arriving at Porlock.

**Highlight:** Take a walk back in time through the historic village of Culbone where the settlement once supplied wood for Porlock's shipyards before arriving at Porlock Weir to be welcomed with magnificent views.

### Option 2 - Culbone To Holnicote

**Distance:** 7½ miles (12km)

**Ascent:** 1,150 feet (360m)

**In summary:** We take the footpath down to Culbone Church before walking through the woods to get to Porlock and crossing fields to finally arrive back at Holnicote House

**Highlight:** Enjoy exploring the quaint tidal harbour at Porlock Weir

### Option 3 - Lillycombe To Holnicote

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Ascent: 1,600 feet (480m)

**In summary:** We start the walk from Lillycombe walking along Robber's Bridge to arrive at Culbone. We then continue on crossing countryside and through woodland to get to Porlock before crossing Horner Water using the Pack Horse Bridge to finally arrive at Holnicote House.

**Highlight:** Enjoy the countryside views at Culbone and the magnificent sea views at Porlock.

## Day 8: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

## 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.

### Country House Accommodation

#### Rooms

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, and comfortable mattresses.

**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, and comfortable mattresses.

**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 Crawler 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.

#### Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. 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.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

#### 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

### 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, the HF Holidays Big Pub Quiz held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays Leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

### **Walks talks**

Our HF Holidays Leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's walking delights (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

### **The walking day**

Prior to setting off on walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you 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.

## **Food & Drink**

Led by experienced chefs, we serve a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. We always aim to source the best produce available and use home-grown herbs and vegetables from our own gardens whenever possible. Additionally, we have a licensed bar with beers, soft drinks, and a superb selection of spirits. Full-board comes as standard and includes a cream tea on arrival and a hearty breakfast on departure day.

HF Holidays understands the importance of managing allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for guests with food allergies. Whilst we are always able to confidently inform guests which allergens are present in our ingredients and dishes, we are unable to guarantee absolute freedom from the 14 main allergens in our kitchens. Vegetarian and vegan menu choices are available. If you have allergies, food intolerances, or any special dietary requirements, please inform our reservation team at the time of booking.

## **Accessibility**

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Holnicote House](#)

## **TRAVEL DETAILS**

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### **Address**

Holnicote House  
Selworthy  
Minehead  
Somerset TA24 8TJ

**Tel:** [+44 \(0\)1643 862013](tel:+44(0)1643862013)

### **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](tel:+44(0)1643704123)

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 through 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

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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

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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.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### 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.

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