

# 7-Night Exmoor Gentle Guided Walking Holiday

**Tour Style:** Gentle Walks

**Destinations:** Exmoor & England

**Trip code:** SLBEW-7

**Trip Walking Grade:** 1



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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The sweeping hills, wooded combes and glorious seascapes of the Exmoor National Park reward every footstep with an astonishing range of landscapes and moods to enjoy. Vibrant yellow gorse, purple heather, wild ponies and Red Deer add great variety.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- High quality en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Full board from dinner upon arrival to breakfast on departure day
- 5 days guided walking; 1 free day
- Use of our comprehensive Discovery Point
- Choice of up to three guided walks each walking day
- The services of HF Holidays Walking Leaders

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## HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

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- Discover the sweeping hills, wooded combes and glorious seascapes of the Exmoor National Park reward every footstep with an astonishing range of landscapes and moods to enjoy
- Look out for the vibrant yellow gorse, purple heather, wild ponies and Red Deer add great variety
- Let your leader bring classic routes and offbeat areas to life as you explore Exmoor
- On an evening enjoy the character and charm of Holnicote House where you can relax and re-live the days adventures

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## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

You're welcome to check in from 4pm onwards and you will find complimentary scones and preserves in your room on arrival.

### Day 2: Holnicote And Selworthy Beacon

#### Option 1 - Two Villages Walk

Distance: 4 miles (6.5km)

Ascent: 600 feet (180m)

**In Summary** A circular walk taking in the pretty picture postcard villages of Allerford and Bossington before returning to the house.

**Highlight:** The far reaching view from the side of Selworthy Beacon over the top of the aforementioned pretty villages, and along the coast of Porlock Bay is truly breathtaking.

#### Option 2 - Bossington & Selworthy

Distance: 6½ miles (11km)

Ascent: 1,000 feet (300m)

**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.

#### Option 3 - Selworthy Beacon

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Ascent: 1,350 feet (420m)

**In Summary** Ascend through the woods to the Iron Age hillfort and the glorious viewpoint of Selworthy Beacon.

After a hilltop walk we'll descend through the fields to Selworthy village.

**Highlight:** Its a steep climb to the top of Selworthy Beacon, but your efforts will be rewarded with a great view north over the Bristol Channel and south towards the hills of Exmoor.

## Day 3: Valley And Hills To Dunster Castle

### Option 1 - Carhampton To Dunster

Distance: 4 miles (6.5km)

Ascent: 160 feet (40m)

**In Summary** A leisurely stroll out to the coast and along to Dunster Beaches Nature Reserve and back in to Dunster via the station of the local steam heritage line.

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

### Option 2 - Headon Cross To Dunster

Distance: 5 miles (7.5km)

Ascent: 700 feet (220m)

**In Summary** A steady climb through the woods up onto the ridgeback of Wootton Common before a steady descent all the way down into Dunster.

**Highlight:** The fantastic and easily obtained view from the top of the ridge on Wootton Common.

### Option 3 - Over The Hills To Dunster

Distance: 9 miles (15km)

Ascent: 1,600 feet (500m)

**In Summary** Walk from Holnicote House to historic Dunster. Our route takes us through the woods to the viewpoint at Webber's Post, then enjoy the fine views as we follow the ridge over Wootton Common.

**Highlight:** Dunster Castle was the home of the Luttrell family for over 600 years, and is now managed by the National Trust.

## Day 4: Lynton And The Valley Of Rocks

### Option 1 - Lynton And Lynmouth

Distance: 4 miles (6km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

**In Summary** A shorter version of option 2, this walk starts at Watersmeet and includes an optional extension to

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explore the Valley of Rocks.

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

### **Option 2 - Valley Of Rocks**

**Distance:** 7 miles (11.5km)

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

**In Summary** A walk with two distinct sections. We'll first descend from Countisbury into the wooded valley at Watersmeet, then along the East Lyn River to Lynmouth. We'll then take the cliff railway to explore Lynton and the Valley of Rocks.

**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:** 8 miles (13.5km)

**Total ascent:** 1,800 feet (560m)

**In Summary** Take the zig-zag path down from Countisbury Hill to Watersmeet. We'll continue along the hillside to the Victorian town of Lynton, climbing to a panoramic viewpoint above the Valley of Rocks.

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

## **Day 5: Free Day**

## **Day 6: Along The Rivers To Exford**

### **Option 1 - Bilbrook To The Railway**

**Distance:** 3 miles (4½km)

**Total ascent:** 50 feet (20m)

**In Summary** A walk out to the coast from Bilbrook to Blue Anchor followed by a short train ride on the heritage line to Minehead.

**Highlight:** The short trip on the wonderfully restored and maintained West Somerset Railway is a fantastic end to today's walk.

### **Option 2 - Exford And The Exe Valley**

**Distance:** 6 miles (9½km)

**Total ascent:** 900 feet (280m)

**In Summary** A circular route from Exford village green, we climb Room Hill then descend into the River Exe

valley and follow it back upstream to the village.

**Highlight:** You may well see buzzards and Exmoor ponies as you make your way across the hillside above the River Exe.

### **Option 3 - Simonsbath To Exford**

**Distance:** 9 miles (14½km)

**Total ascent:** 1,150 feet (360m)

**In Summary** From Simonsbath we head into the ancient Royal Forest of Exmoor and follow the River Barle valley to Withypool then cross Room Hill before descending into Exford.

**Highlight:** Look out for a 19th century iron and copper mine and an iron age hill fort on this walk full of historical interest.

## **Day 7: Porlock Hill To Holnicote House**

### **Option 1 - Villages And Woods**

**Distance:** 4 miles (6.5km)

**Total ascent:** 580 feet (180m)

**In Summary** A circular walk taking in the pretty villages of Luccombe and Horner before returning to the house.

**Highlight:** The wood surrounding the village of Horner is full of majestic ancient oaks home to Wood Warblers and Pied Flycatchers.

### **Option 2 - Above Porlock**

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

**Total ascent:** 500 feet (160m)

**In Summary** Take the coach to the top of Porlock Hill for this predominately downhill walk over the rolling hills to the west of Holnicote House. We finish through Horner Woods, then across the fields to the house.

**Highlight:** Look out for red deer - the descent into Halse Combe is often a good place to spot them.

### **Option 3 - Hills And Wooded Valleys**

**Distance:** 9½ miles (15km)

**Total ascent:** 1,700 feet (520m)

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

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

## **Day 8: Departure Day**

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## ACCOMMODATION

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### Holnicote House

Lying near the attractive village of Selworthy, in the heart of the Exmoor National Park, historic Holnicote House stands within a series of peaceful gardens with spreading lawns. Once the centrepiece of an extensive 12,500 acre estate, the charming and characterful house was gifted to the National Trust in 1944. Since then it has been reimagined as a walkers' retreat, with wonderful access to the countryside. As well as 32 delightful bedrooms, there are two comfortable lounges and a sociable bar. The landscaped gardens are still part of the wider Holnicote Estate and provide a wonderful area to wander. Outside the house, explore wild Exmoor, walk in the Quantocks, climb Dunkery Beacon and stroll on the Somerset Coast Path with the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, drop in Dunster Castle, ride a Victorian cliff railway and watch for wildlife including the majestic red stags.

### Matchless Country House Accommodation

#### Accommodation Info

#### Rooms

*Tea & coffee-making facilities, TV, Hairdryer, Toiletries, Wi-Fi*

Stay in one of the main building's bright, beautifully presented rooms or in the thatched cottages in the grounds, called Butlers and Guns respectively. With 32 bedrooms, Holnicote House has plenty of space and there's a range of Good, Better and Best Rooms to choose from: best rooms are on the first floor and decorated in keeping with the National Trust estate, with plenty of space and great views over the back garden, reaching out across Crawler Hill and Dunkery Hill, Somerset and Exmoor's highest point. Ask for numbers 1, 4 or 9 to feel suitably special.

*All 'Good' rooms are ensuite and furnished to a high standard. There are also several 'Better' and 'Best' Rooms that are either larger or have a desirable view, a more luxurious mattress, larger television, enhanced toiletries and a fluffy bathrobe & slippers – upgrade your stay for just an extra £15-25 per person per night. You can choose a specific room for an extra £30 per room, subject to availability. Upgrade supplements still apply.*

#### Facilities

*Free Wi-Fi, boot room and drying room, attractive garden, outdoor swimming pool, multi-purpose activity room, lounge, library and board games to borrow*

After a day walking on Exmoor or exploring the heath and moorland, come back to the house and its specially tailored walkers' facilities. Relax by sitting in the pretty gardens or challenge a fellow guest to a game of croquet. Take a dip in the large heated outdoor pool. For something less strenuous, snag a comfy chair in one of the cosy lounges, borrow a book, join a game of cards or scour the countryside through the large telescope. Head to the bar before dinner for a drink and a chance to catch up with your companions, best enjoyed by the windows overlooking the estate.

#### Food & Drink

As at all our country houses, holidays are full board, from afternoon tea served as a welcome treat through that evening's meal to a hearty breakfast on the day of departure. Lunch is a chance to stock up on our famous picnic snacks. Food at Holnicote House is hearty and has a strong emphasis on ingredients from the area and seasonal produce. Once a week the wood panelled dining room with its giant fireplace hosts a Local Food Night, when, over a sociable evening, you might try classic Porlock oysters or Priddy Oggies, a local pasty of chicken, bacon and cheese. Mains might include Exmoor venison or Bellbrook valley trout, while you could cap it all with a Somerset apple cake, dressed with cream.

## Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865

## TRAVEL DETAILS

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Our address is: Holnicote House, Selworthy, Minehead, Somerset TA24 8TJ

Tel: [01643 862013](tel:01643862013)

### By Train:

The nearest railway station is at Taunton. For train times and route planning by train visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or phone 03457 48 49 50.

### By Taxi:

The 30-mile journey from Taunton railway station takes approximately 55 minutes. You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended taxi company, Bossington Private Hire. As a guide price, it costs £56 per 4-seat taxi in 2020. 8-seat taxis are also available at a higher rate. A shared taxi will be arranged wherever possible. Please pre-book your taxi at least 7 days in advance by contacting:

Bossington Private Hire\*

Tel: +44 (0) 7971 044871

Email: [inbossington@gmail.com](mailto:inbossington@gmail.com)

The return taxi journey can be arranged on your behalf by the Holnicote House Manager.

\*Bossington Private Hire is not owned or managed by HF Holidays

### By Bus:

The number 28 bus operates between Taunton station and Minehead. At Minehead change for the number 10 bus that will take you to the Selworthy turn (which is at the end of Holnicote House drive). A 2 minute walk along the drive will bring you to the house. Alternatively pre-book a taxi from Minehead; the 6 mile journey will cost you approx £10 for a 4-seat taxi from our recommended taxi provider. For bus times see [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

### By Car:

From Bridgewater take the A39 though the southern outskirts of Minehead towards Porlock. Holnicote House is on the left about 4½ miles out of Minehead, and about ¾ mile after the signpost to Luccombe (do not follow the signs to Selworthy). After the Selworthy Village sign look out for our sign 500 yards further on, on the left. Free car parking is available in the grounds.

## Travelling From Overseas

For most guests, travelling to London Heathrow airport is the most convenient option.

From Heathrow first take the train to London Paddington station. From here there are direct trains to Taunton. Its a relatively straightforward journey - allow 2½ hours. See [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) for train times.

Bristol Airport may also be convenient for some guests. Take the train to Taunton

From Taunton you can travel on to Selworthy by bus or taxi (see above).

## LOCAL AREA

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During your stay at Holnicote House you may enjoy visiting the following places of interest, either in your free time, or on your journey to and from Selworthy:

### Selworthy Village

Less than a mile from Holnicote House is Selworthy village. At first glance the thatched cottages seem typical of many ancient settlements in this area. However, Selworthy is not as old as it looks, having been rebuilt in 1828 by Sir Thomas Acland. Sir Thomas was a philanthropist and designed the 'model' village himself to provide housing for the aged and infirm of the estate. He used traditional designs and materials to create a deliberately old-fashioned village.

### West Somerset Railway

Travel on Britain's longest steam railway from Minehead to Bishops Lydyard. Now lovingly restored by volunteers, the line recreates a classic Great Western Railway branch line with steam trains operating daily from April to October. Minehead station is 10 minutes' drive from Selworthy, or can be reached on the number 300 bus. [www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk](http://www.west-somerset-railway.co.uk)

### Dunster Castle

An historic castle transformed into a comfortable stately home for the Luttrell family. Some highlights include the 'modern' 1950s kitchen and the snooker room. Dunster Castle sits in extensive gardens, complete with its working watermill. The adjacent town of Dunster is full of character and also well worth a visit. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunster-castle](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunster-castle)

### Lynton & Lynmouth

The quaint Victorian town of Lynton sits high on a hill, overlooking the coast and Lynmouth harbour. The two settlements are connected by the historic cliff railway. The short walk from Lynton to the Valley of Rocks is highly recommended.

### Coleridge Cottage

The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and his wife Sara lived in the village of Nether Stowey, about 45 minutes' drive from Selworthy, from 1796 to 1799. In 1909 it was acquired by the National Trust, and later restored and opened to the public. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coleridge-cottage](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coleridge-cottage)

### Hestercombe Gardens

Hestercombe Gardens, around an hour's drive away near Taunton, were constructed in three periods - a landscape garden from the 1750s, a Victorian terrace and shrubbery from the 1870s, and Edwardian gardens of 1904-1908 designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. [www.hestercombe.com](http://www.hestercombe.com)

### Arlington Court

Arlington Court, about an hour's drive away near Barnstaple is a fine Regency house set in an extensive estate. The grounds include a formal Victorian garden whilst the stables house the National Trust's carriage collection of over fifty horse-drawn vehicles. [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/arlington-court](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/arlington-court)



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## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### What To Bring

"There's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong type of clothing!" goes the adage. Come prepared for all eventualities and you'll walk in comfort as well as safety. Britain's famous for its changeable weather, so here's our advice on what to wear and bring.

#### Essentials

- Waterproof walking boots providing ankle support and good grip.
  - A waterproof jacket and over-trousers
  - Gloves and a warm hat (it can be chilly at any time of the year)
  - Rucksack
  - Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
  - A small torch (everywhere in winter, year round in mountains)
  - Sun hat and sunscreen
- Denim jeans and waterproof capes are not suitable on any walks.*

#### Recommended

- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed
- Specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- A first aid kit inc plasters– your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication
- Sit mat (insulated pad to sit on when you stop for a break)

#### You Might Also Want

- Walking poles, particularly useful for descents.
- Insect repellent
- Flask for hot drinks
- Rigid lunch box
- Gaiters
- Blister kit (eg Compeed) just in case
- Waterproof rucksack liner

### Safety On Your Holiday

On the first evening of your holiday your leaders give a short talk about safety on walks which we would like you to attend. 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.

## HOW TO BOOK

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When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific

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questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

### **PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT**

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

### **NON-MEMBER FEE**

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit [hfholidays.co.uk/membership](http://hfholidays.co.uk/membership) for details.

### **BACS PAYMENTS**

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

### **MANAGE MY BOOKINGS**

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

### **YOUR FINAL BALANCE**

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

### **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit [hfholidays.co.uk/insurance](http://hfholidays.co.uk/insurance)

### **PEACE OF MIND**

#### **ATOL:**

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website [atol.org.uk](http://atol.org.uk)

#### **MEMBER OF ABTOT:**

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other

than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

### 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.

### PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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