

Walking in Devonshire: 5 Day Trips around England

Some time ago we went for a five-day walk through the county of Devonshire, in England. Three stages of the [South West Coast Path](#) and two days along the East Devon Way. That's five wonderful walking days along the coast and through the hills of the farmland. Or as the English would say, *"It's one of the best ideas since sliced bread."*



Devonshire

The county of Devonshire in the south-west of England likes to show off its nickname "the English Riviera". If only because of the palm trees on the south coast. The climate is milder than in the rest of England, they say, but the rain can fall just as hard as elsewhere on the island. It is the palm trees to see.

However, this does not alter the fact that you can make fantastic walks. A combination of walking along the coast and through the hills inland is easy to put together. There are hiking trails in abundance here. Now all you have to do is buy a good map and prepare well at home, and you are assured of a great walking week! Both nature and encounters with the county's inhabitants – and their quirks – will stay with you. At least we do.

Getting there

To get to Devonshire, we first made a flight with a real propeller Bombardier from aviation company Flybe – also called Maybe – from Schiphol to the capital of the county: Exeter. From here we then took a bus to the center of this university and episcopal city. With the possibility to explore the city further. Highly recommended!



Our starting point Exmouth can be reached from Exeter both by bus and by train. We opted for a taxi. A taciturn taxi driver smelling of Guinness, in the half-dusk on the left scurrying along rather *narrow roads*, looked more and more Hitchcockian. The words *narrow roads*, brought in by us to start a conversation, were repeated, roaring. And repeated. And repeated. All the way to Exmouth. Yes, *narrow roads*... and hedges... and no sight... *narrow roads, indeed!* Narrow roads...

Once we arrived in Exmouth, the reserved B&B was closed. On a sign: "*closed for a family funeral*". "Key for number 23". The fishing boats were resting at low tide in the mud of the silted-up small harbor. Fortunately, there were good beds in room 23. When I woke up, it was high water.



Coastal track

Along the English coast

Three stages on the South West Coast Path, one of the English National Trails. The entire route is 630 miles long (over 1,000 kilometres), 52 days of walking, along the coast of the peninsula in south-west England. If you ever have weeks left, walk the entire path. Our three stages in East Devon, between Exmouth and Lyme Regis, are largely at altitude, over the red and white cliffs with beautiful views of the Channel. Shortly after your departure from Exmouth, the so-called Jurassic Coast starts at Orcombe Point. Because of its unique landscapes and many fossils, this area has been on the World Heritage List since 2001. You will not easily dig up a dinosaur from the eroded cliffs, but the chance of an ammonite or "poor gold" (iron pyrite) is high.

The third stage to Lyme Regis goes through the National Nature Reserve Downland Cliffs, or: forest and scrub, including the blackberry and gorse. Here it can get quite wet in the rain, as this photo of our walking shoes after this piece of forest shows nicely! At high tide, crossing the River Otter can also cause problems and detours are the motto. In that case, count on an extra hour.



The arrival at Beer is particularly beautiful. A colourful postcard where you promptly walk into the rich architecture of Victorian times. *"Nice to meet you. Where you from? How nice of you to visit our country. Do you like our country?"* According to a Miss Marple lookalike walking her Cocker Spaniel on the hiking trail. And of course, as tourists, we love the value that people here attach to preserving and preserving the cultural heritage as much as possible! The *lovely's* and the *thank you's* are not off the air... On the bedside table of our B&B, the roll of toilet paper was encased in a self-crocheted case. *Lovely!*

Through the hills of East Devon

The East Devon Way is a marked 64-kilometre walking route through the heart of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a conservation area on England's south coast. The marking is the foxglove. The route starts in Lyme Regis (Dorset) and the end point is in Exmouth. The addition Regis means royal. The film *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, with Meryl Streep, from 1981, was partly shot in the port of the town.



We walked two stages of this route. From Lyme Regis to Sidbury, about 32 kilometers in total. Along the way we passed a wide variety of landscapes: heathland, forests and valleys, farmland and also some beautiful kilometers along the Coly river.

The (medieval) villages along the way breathed the atmosphere of *good old England in almost everything*. For which I cannot give a clear explanation at the moment. Are they rolling hills, the country roads through them, the beautiful country houses, the old water mills, the streams or the tuttness of the crocheted cover for the toilet paper roll? Or is it the lovingly maintained railway line with Victorian wagons where whole families enjoy 11 kilometres of steam trains on Sunday afternoons? With a cream tea – freshly baked scones, jam, clotted cream and of course a pot of tea – afterwards? When you see the interest in this, it is no longer surprising that a first HSL, between London and Manchester, does not want to float.

General route tips

- Maps 115 and 116 of Ordnance Survey are excellent for both hikes.
- The regulations regarding wild camping vary considerably per region in England. Permission from the owner of the land is always desirable. Or contact a regional tourist organization about the (im)possibilities.

- The right of way (the right that anyone can legally use certain paths on foot and sometimes by other means of transport) is widely used in England. The result: there are paths almost everywhere, including through meadows and nature reserves.
- Difficulty: except for a few small climbs, the route is not difficult.
- In case of fear of heights, we advise against a look at the sea as close as possible to the abyss on the cliffs. The signs with "*Danger*" are there for a reason.
- And as always: the B&B system works fine! (although it's also getting more expensive...)