



Selection of 6 walks

1½ - 67 miles

Beginners

3.5 miles

Nearest station: Weybridge

The Wey Navigations are canals and locks, built in 1653, to make the River Wey suitable for use by barges accessing the Thames to transport produce to London. Today, this Surrey waterway also offers a tranquil walking route from Weybridge to Guildford and on to Godalming. The 3½-mile walk is a good introduction, taking you from Weybridge to Byfleet & New Haw train stations using a detour along the canals. To start, walk north in the direction of Weybridge; the first point of interest is Weybridge Wharf, where you join the canal. This has been an important ford, footbridge and wharf since the 12th century. From here, it's a stroll past picturesque Coxes Mill and millpond towards New Haw Lock. Then it's time to leave the canal and head south, following Byfleet Road towards Byfleet & New Haw station. See OS Explorer 160 map.

1½-5½ miles

Nearest station: Witchurch

Seven miles east of Andover in Hampshire is the picturesque small town of Witchurch. The earliest mention of the town was over 1,000 years ago in documentation confirming ownership of land by the monks of Winchester. There are numerous short walks—the shortest is a 1½-mile town stroll, starting from Witchurch Silk Mill, which has been weaving silk since the 1830s and is open to the public. Other routes explore the nearby village of Freefolk with its thatched cottages, the River Test and the unspoilt local countryside. Witchurch is noted for its large number of pubs, including the historic Bell Inn on Bell Street, so finding refreshments should not be a problem. A walking guide is available from Hampshire County Council's website or contact Andover Tourist Information Centre on 01264 324320. The mill is a 10 to 15-minute walk from Witchurch train station and is well signposted.

Intermediate

3½ miles

Nearest station: Salisbury (Stonehenge)

Stonehenge is one of the world's most impressive man-made creations and, luckily for us Brits, it's easily accessible. This mysterious site has enchanted visitors for around 5,000 years. The surrounding Salisbury Plain is equally rich in intriguing archaeology, including Bronze Age burial mounds and ancient ceremonial pathways. The National Trust has created a 3½-mile circular walk from Stonehenge car park (a leaflet with detailed directions is available from the Visitor Centre), which leads you through some of the area's highlights. Points of interest include The Cursus enclosure just north of Stonehenge, which is thought to be older than the circle itself. Stretching 1¼ miles from east to west, its low earthworks form a massive, thin oblong. The name "cursus" is Latin for "raceway"—a name given to it by 18th-century antiquarian William Stukeley, who thought it was a Roman chariot track. Also part of the walk are Cursus Barrows, which are mounds probably built to house the remains of the most important people in Bronze Age society, and The Avenue, an ancient ceremonial pathway stretching two miles from Stonehenge to the River Avon. For further information, refer to OS Explorer 130 map. Catch the Stonehenge Tours bus (01722 336855; from South Western Road), which travels the nine miles to Stonehenge, departing on the hour from 10am to 2pm and returning 11.40am and then hourly until 5.40pm. Buy a combined South West Trains ticket to Stonehenge, which includes your bus travel from the train station to/from, the site and admission to Stonehenge.

6 miles

Nearest station: Brockenhurst

A ramble through the idyllic New Forest is guaranteed to make getting fit a pleasure, not a chore. With a spring in your step, you'll comfortably complete this six-mile circular walk, which starts from Brockenhurst train station, in three hours. The walk follows footpaths, bridleways and the Lymington river. A short distance from the train station is St Nicholas' Church, which was mentioned in the Domesday Book and has interesting architectural features, including Saxon herringbone masonry. Afterwards, there are plenty of places to find refreshments in Brockenhurst including the 13th-century Rose and Crown pub on Lyndhurst Road serving a good range of pub food, including a children's menu. Then it's a 10-minute walk to Brockenhurst station. Walk details are available from Lyndhurst Tourist Information Centre (023 8028 2269 or online from the e-shop at thenewforest.co.uk). Or refer to OS Explorer OL22 New Forest map.

Advanced

67 miles

Nearest station: Southampton/Portsmouth/Lymington and Isle of Wight

The 67-mile Isle of Wight Coastal Path is a fantastic long-distance walk with well-maintained paths allowing you to do a lap of the island and enjoy the beautiful views. Highlights include passing The Needles and crossing Tennyson Down towards Freshwater Bay. Walkers typically complete it in six days, doing about 10 to 15 miles a day. The route can be walked independently or as part of a holiday company, which will provide transport from a hotel to and from your walk plus a guide and lunch. The island can be reached by ferry by taking a South West Trains service to Portsmouth, Southampton or Lymington. The local tourist board has a guide to the route on its website (islandbreaks.co.uk) and trip organisers, such as Step by Step Walking Holidays (step-by-step.co.uk), offer guided and unescorted tours. The island also hosts the UK's largest walking festival in May.

20 miles

Nearest station: Various stations along the River Thames

From its source in deepest Gloucestershire, the Thames Path follows the River Thames through unspoilt rural landscapes, pretty villages, historic towns, royal residences and the heart of London for almost 200 miles. A recommended 20-mile section of the trail runs from Kingston upon Thames to Westminster. The full distance can just about be tackled in a day, but it's probably preferable to walk at your chosen pace and linger at points of interest or a riverside pub or two and end at one of the other numerous train stations along the route, including Twickenham, Richmond, Isleworth, Chiswick and Putney. This iconic stretch of the River Thames includes Teddington Lock—the start of the tidal Thames—and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and follows the route of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race between Putney and Chiswick bridges before reaching Big Ben at Westminster. From here, it's a short walk over Westminster Bridge to Waterloo station. For more details, see the National Trail Guides *The Thames Path* by David Sharp, £12.99 (from nationaltrail.co.uk, £14 including postage).