



## Bournemouth to Lymington Town walk

This delightful 20-mile walk, from Bournemouth to Lymington Town, is easy to follow and, as it includes an overnight stay, it's the perfect excuse for a weekend getaway.

This walk takes you from Bournemouth to Lymington Town along the Bournemouth Coast Path and the Solent Way. It combines easy promenade walking and cliff-top trails with wonderful views over Christchurch Harbour, the Needles and the Isle of Wight. The trail finishes with a tranquil stroll through Keyhaven Nature Reserve, arriving at Lymington's bustling yacht marina and cobbled Quay Street.

Leaving Bournemouth Pier, walk east, keeping the sea on your right, or leave Bournemouth station by exit 3, and turn left to reach the main road. Then turn right to enter the underpass and follow the signs to the Pier. At the Lansdowne roundabout, turn right on to Old Christchurch Road, then left at the next roundabout and descend through the pedestrian shopping precinct, arriving and entering The Square with the gardens on your left, then follow the signs to the Pier.

You now have a choice. On your left, you can take the lower tarmac promenade by the sea (part of the E9 European Coastal Path, a 3,125-mile trail from Portugal to Russia) to Southbourne (four miles) or take the cliff-top route closer to the road, which runs uphill behind the Imax cinema on Undercliffe Drive. If you like, use the zig-zag paths to alternate between the beach and cliff-top route.

The cliff-top route passes the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum. Continue along East Overcliff Drive, where it veers left after the Cottonwood Hotel, and keep straight on a path to Boscombe Pier. Continue up Sea Road, then uphill to The Marina. Around the bend is San Remo Towers. Turn right into Boscombe Cliff Gardens, leaving them to take the right-hand path past Café Riva.

Follow the zig-zag path down to the beach and continue to Point House Café, Southbourne, which has now closed. Climb the steps to the road then right into Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve, following the main track through dunes to the headland. You'll hear lots of skylarks as you take in views over to the Needles, north to Christchurch and north-east to Mudeford, where we are heading to catch the ferry.

Pass the coastguard lookout and, keeping to the cliff-top path, you will descend to the ferry. Take the ferry across to the Haven House Inn Café, a great place for lunch.

Continue through the car park and past the caravan park on your left, to Avon Beach, turning left at its café hut and taking the path above the beach, descending behind more huts and continuing eastwards to Steamer Point Nature Reserve and the woodlands.

At the next fork, follow the Highcliffe Coast Path sign and Highcliffe Castle will appear. Follow the "zig zag to coastal path" sign, turning left before the beach on to an undulating track. Veer uphill by groyne H7 and descend to a tarmac track. Ahead is Hoburne Naish Holiday Park, with no public access, so follow the tarmac track inland uphill to fencing and continue over a bridge, then left up steps, right along Mill Lane, then right downhill at the two-way signpost and continue to the waterfall.

Ahead is the A337. Turn right over the pedestrian footbridge, pass the entrance to the holiday park and, after the second bend, turn right before a lodge house to Chewton Glen on a signed footpath and cycleway. Follow this through a housing estate, meeting the fence of the holiday park where you bear left emerging on the cliff-top and on to the parade of shops at Barton-on-Sea and Pebble Beach, a hotel-cum-restaurant, where there are excellent views on a clear day. Barton-on-Sea is the perfect place to spend the night.

On day two, continue along the narrowing cliff path, which passes Barton-on-Sea Golf Club. The landscape here is undulating, isolated and beautiful. Arrive at the Needles Eye Café, before embarking on the final stage of the walk towards Lymington.

Walk to the shingle spit and continue to the second bridge where you go left over it, then right, following the Solent Way sign along an elevated track through the Keyhaven salt marshes. At the next Solent Way sign, go left and continue to a minor road and the Gun Inn where you turn right, cross a

bridge, and right again following the Solent Way Lymington sign. Follow this main track until you get to Lymington Marina.

Arrive at the Marina car park. Walk to The Haven Bar & Bistro building. Follow the Solent Way sign to its left, passing the outdoor swimming pool, right at the Royal Lymington Yacht Club, onto Bath Road, Quay Road and Quay Street from where it's a short, signed walk to Lymington Town station.

Enjoy promenade walking and clifftop trails with wonderful views over Christchurch Harbour, the Needles and the Isle of Wight.