

Washford to Dunster

Ride & Walk



Fact File:

Highlights: Dunster Station, West Somerset Railway ride, Washford Station, racehorse stables, red deer (hopefully), views from Withycombe Hill, Gallox Bridge, Dunster Castle

Start Point: Exmoor National Park Centre, Dunster

Start Grid ref: SS 991 438

Distance: 7.4 miles in total, linear using steam railway

Height gained/lost: 358 metres. The walk is generally easy going until Culver Lane with a climb over Withycombe Hill, becoming easy again with one fairly steep descent.

High Point: 218 metres

Low Point: 8 metres

Toilets: Dunster Station, Washford Station, Dunster Castle

Eating places: Washford, Dunster

Time required, including stops: 5 to 6 hours

Public transport: West Somerset Railway (01643 704996)

Route description: This walk includes a ride on the West Somerset Steam Railway, taking you back to a more leisurely way of travel. From Washford the walk offers easy going across open fields and paths before reaching Withycombe village. From here one follows an old lane which gains height quickly on to Withycombe Hill. There is a good chance of seeing red deer on the top. The walk becomes easy again before losing height down to Dunster village and castle.

Route directions: The grid references are given should you like to follow the route on an Ordnance Survey map. They are not needed to follow the route which is described very accurately in the text.

Walk to Dunster Station

1, SS 991 438

From the National Park Centre by the main car park, follow the main road away from the High Street, downhill on the pavement to the traffic lights.

2, SS 994 440, 0.2 miles

Cross over the village road on your left to then go under the Subway under the main road. Once under follow it round to the left back up to the main road to a junction soon on the right. Follow this road, ignoring all roads off to where this road suddenly turns left.

3, SS 993 444, 0.5 miles

Turn right here, over the river bridge and straight on towards the station (for 0.3 miles). Turn right into the station car park, buy a ticket to washford (one way) **catch the train**. Call 01643 704996 for train times beforehand.

From Washford Station

4, ST 043 411

At Washford Station go down the steps to the main road and turn left past the Washford Inn to the petrol station.

5, ST 045 410, 0.1 miles

At the far end of the petrol station take the track behind it to reach a stile into a field. Follow the hedge and wire fence along on your left to the next stile. Continue ahead alongside woodland on the edge of the field to the next stile and on to the next stile ahead.

6, ST 041 405, 0.6 miles

Cross this step stile over a bank and continue ahead beside the hedge on your left. Pass through a gap into the next field continuing along by the hedge on a track.

7, ST 039 400, 0.9 miles

At the end of this field ignore the track continuing ahead, instead turning right to follow the hedged boundary of this field towards woods, but not getting to them.

8, ST 038 400, 1.0 mile

Pass through the next gap into a field and turn right to follow the top boundary of this field. Do not go through to the next field but turn left to keep within this field following its boundary on your right. Soon follow the field boundary to the right and left to reach a gate by a road.

9, ST 035 401, 1.3 miles

Turn right along the road and shortly, as the road bends by a track on the left, cross a stile hard back on the left by a gate. Now follow the hedge on your right to a bridle gate.

10, ST 034 401, 1.5 miles

Pass through and now continue ahead by a hedge on your right to reach another bridle gate in this hedge on the right. Go through this and again follow the hedge on the right to the next bridle gate. Pass through this one and continue ahead to a stile in the far corner.

11, ST 031 402, 1.7 miles

Cross and drop down into a sunken lane, turning right along it immediately over a stile. Follow the sunken lane to reach a track and turn left on to it.

12, ST 031 403, 1.8 miles

Now you have two fields ahead of you and a path on your right. Go to the field ahead/left to follow its left boundary (with it on your right). Follow it round to the left to a telegraph pole and turn right through a gate across a small field to a path ahead to reach a gate with a stile.

13, ST 028 403, 2.0 miles

Now go level ahead to a track by an old lime kiln. Follow it ahead to cross an old bridge over a stream turning hard back to the right to pass an old local quarry bearing then back left, ignoring track off to the right. Continue ahead uphill to reach a gate by a stile.

14, ST 025 403, 2.3 miles

Continue ahead over a field to a hedge ahead across you where you will find a hidden-from-view stile and cross it.

15, ST 024 403, 2.4 miles

From this stile now follow the field boundary ahead with the hedge on your left, following it round to the right up the field to a stile in the top corner.

16, ST 021 402, 2.6 miles

Ignore this stile and keeping within this field turn right along its top boundary with the hedge still on your left. Follow it round to the left to a gate.

17, ST 020 403, 2.7 miles

Go through and go to the gate ahead, ignoring wide track to left and right and gate on the right. Cross the stile by that gate ahead. Follow the track down into the valley and then leave it as it turns right, continuing ahead by the hedge on your left to a gate in the top corner. Pass through a small disused quarry to a bridle gate over to your right.

18, ST 018 405, 2.9 miles

Now follow the field boundary to your left, keeping the hedge on your left to reach a wire fence. Turn right alongside this to the far end, turning right to reach a kissing gate in the hedge.

19, ST 018 408, 2.9 miles

From here go ahead and slightly right to a bridle gate in the lower fence of this field. From this bridle gate bear left to the bottom corner of this field to cross a stile by a gate to a road.

20, ST 017 410, 3.1 miles

Turn left on to the road and then ignore the road on the left, continuing down hill to the village. Cross the

stream bridge and turn right and then left into West Street.

21, ST 014 413, 3.2 miles

Just past the Old Post Office turn left up Culver Lane, signed to Withycombe Hill. Follow this old road uphill and near the top pass through the kissing gate by a gate to continue through the gorse ahead. There is a perfect seat up here! Great views!

22, ST 006 412, 3.8 miles

Near the top you reach a wire fence on your left and woodland over to the right. Go quietly now as a good chance of seeing red deer. Go to the gate ahead and cross the stile by it. Continue ahead by a hump of an old hedge and fence on your right.

23, ST 002 413, 4.1 miles

At the next gate at the end of the grass, cross the stile by it and continue on the track to meet one coming in from the right from Carhampton. Continue ahead on it towards Dunster. Shortly the track divides, bear right to Dunster. Follow this track between gorse and beside conifers to reach a gate on the edge of woodland.

24, SS 994 416, 4.7 miles

Follow it ahead through the woods, ignoring all tracks off, slightly bearing to the right to reach a larger track following an old boundary wall with a gate and bridle gate in it, signed to Dunster.

25, SS 993 418, 4.8 miles

Pass through the bridle gate and now ignore the track ahead through the conifers to Bats Castle, instead turn right on a track signed to Dunster, along the other side of the old boundary wall. Follow it as it bears left and then loses height. Soon ignore track off to the right and other tracks off.

26, SS 989 424, 5.3 miles

Some way down the track divides. Take the right branch downhill into the valley, bearing right again where a track comes in from the left, dropping quickly amongst old oak trees. Near the bottom pass through the bridle gate by a locked gate. Follow the path round to the left to a kissing gate by a gate and then turn right to Dunster.

27, SS 989 431, 5.8 miles

Cross Gallox Bridge, bear right at car park to follow Mill Gardens. Bear left at the end to follow this small road to the main road.

28, SS 989 434, 6.1 miles

Turn right along the main road and soon turn right into Dunster Castle and Gardens entrance. Opposite the entrance to the castle bear left down to the High Street. Follow this past the Yarn Market and round to the right to the car park.