

Porlock Pilgrim's Trail

Trip style: Guided trails

Destination:  Exmoor

Trip code: SEL04-LPT01

Grades: 1, 2, 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Porlock Pilgrim's Trail is a scenic 29-mile walking route set in the heart of Exmoor National Park. Linking nine of Exmoor's churches and chapels, this inspiring trail follows the footsteps of medieval pilgrims who once journeyed across the moorland to the historic village of Porlock and its ancient church of St Dubricius. This inspiring three-day trail offers walkers a chance to take in the timeless beauty of the Exmoor landscape all while embarking on a journey rooted deep in the region's remarkable past.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering the history of the region
- Spectacular scenery from start to finish
- Walking a route which links landscapes, legends and people
- Travelling a path walked by clergy and parishioners for hundreds of years
- The chance to spot red deer on the moors
- The sense of accomplishment upon finishing your journey

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Porlock Pilgrim's Trail Guide which can be stamped at each church.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Guided Walking/Hiking Trail has walks graded level 3

Your fitness Having a solid base of fitness before your holiday will ensure you've the best chance of completing the holiday and enjoying it to boot. Here's a few simple tips to help you get fit and ready for your challenge:

- Get out walking - whether the weather, get out there, and start building your fitness months before your holiday
- Build your distance gradually and get a number of 6-8hr hill days in
- Ideally, try and do two consecutive days training if possible
- Take the stairs every time
- Train on different terrain
- Train with your day pack and your walking boots too, to ensure they're well worn in before your holiday
- Other sports help improve your walking fitness too. The best ones are jogging, cycling, swimming, which will build your stamina, and yoga which will help strengthen your core and improve balance
- Time training will help ensure you enjoy your holiday to the max.

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ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check-in is available from 4pm. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea on arrival. Your walks leader will be at the bar area at 6:30pm to meet the group and give a short introduction to the trail before dinner.

Day 2: Porlock to Oare

Distance: 8 miles (13km) Ascent: 1,950 feet (600m) This scenic walk takes us along the stunning Exmoor coast and through peaceful woodlands, connecting four historic churches steeped in heritage. We begin our journey at St Dubricius Church in the charming village of Porlock. This ancient church, with roots dating back to the 13th century, offers a peaceful start to the day. From Porlock the path leads through woodland and descends to the coastal hamlet of Porlock Weir. Here, St Nicolas church, a tin tabernacle, sits close to the sea, offering dramatic views over the area. The route continues along the South West Coast Path, weaving through ancient woodland, toward the secluded St Beuno's Church at Culbone. Often cited as England's smallest parish church, Culbone is only accessible to the public on foot. The final leg of the day takes us inland via The Coleridge Way to the remote St Mary's Church in Oare - famously featured in R.D Blackmores novel Lorna Doone. The route follows an ancient farm track before ascending the ridge offering impressive views before descending into the peaceful Oare Valley

Day 3: Oare to Stoke Pero

Distance: 9.5 miles (15.5km) Ascent: 1,050 feet (320m) Starting in Oare, the path ascends steadily initially over fields but soon reaches the open moor. The ascent offers panoramic views across the moors and out to the coast – a worthwhile reward. The route continues across wild, open moorland, passing the now derelict Larkbarrow farmstead. Here, we get a real sense of what the landscape looked like before it was tamed by man for farming. Eventually, the walk reaches Stoke Pero Church, one of the most isolated churches in England. With no electricity and perched high above sea level, the tiny church is surrounded by farmland and steep, wooded slopes offering a peaceful and timeless atmosphere that feels miles from anywhere.

Day 4: Stoke Pero to Porlock

Distance: 11.5 miles (18.5km) Ascent: 1,400 feet (420m) Our final day begins back at Stoke Pero where we descend through steep valleys covered in ancient woodland to the sheltered valley of Luccombe where we'll visit the 13th Century St Mary's church. Continuing eastward through rolling farmland and quiet lanes to the hamlet of Tivington, we'll stop by St Leonard's Church. Adjoined to a cottage – it once had a connecting door – this little church, simple and serene, is a reminder of the area's deep rural roots. After time to explore St Leonard's, the walk ascends gently towards the picturesque village of Selworthy, with its iconic whitewashed cottages. The elegant All Saints Church perched on a hill, offers unrivalled views across the Vale of Porlock and Porlock Bay. Descending through wooded paths, the route leads to Lynch Chapel of Ease, a quiet and contemplative 14th century chapel tucked away near an ancient farmstead. We end our pilgrimage journey at St Dubricius church, where this spiritual trail began. The return to this ancient church ties together a pilgrimage that has lasted for centuries, thanks to the region's landscape and sacred spaces.

Day 5: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Holnicote House

There's plenty to look forward to at this beacon of Somerset hospitality near the impossibly pretty village of Selworthy. The location couldn't be more perfect; within rolling-out-of-bed distance from Exmoor National Park and an easy drive from Dunster Castle, Coleridge Cottage, the twin villages of Lynton and Lynmouth, and the sandy delights at Porlock and Minehead. The walking opportunities here are standout, too, not least for the trails around the Quantock Hills, Dunkery Beacon, Bossington, and a section of the England Coast Path that takes you on a glorious journey along the county's coastline.

A warm welcome

We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

Our HF Holidays walk leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on guided walking holiday arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's guided walks (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.