

Coleridge Way Guided Trail

Trip style: Guided trails

Destination:  Exmoor

Trip code: SEL07-LOL01

Grades: 1, 3

Carbon Footprint:  138kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

The Coleridge Way leads you through the Somerset landscapes that helped inspire one of Britain's most celebrated poets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. An avid walker, Coleridge frequently journeyed between his home in Nether Stowey and the fishing village of Lynmouth and this much-loved trail follows some of the very same paths the wordsmith would have taken in the late 18th century. Exploring sweeps of open moorland, heather-clad hills, historic villages, and wooded valleys with panoramic views over the Exmoor coast, we'll discover places that inspired the poet to pen famous works including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the epic ballad, *Kubla Khan*.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Spotting wild goats in the Valley of Rocks
- Visiting Coleridge Cottage, the poet's former home
- Hiking around the Quantock Hills
- Passing Alfoxton House, William Wordsworth's one-time home
- Walking through the heart of Lorna Doone Country
- Seeing where Coleridge was inspired to write *Kubla Khan*
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our country house
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

TRIP SUITABILITY

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 - whatever 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.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2: Valley of Rocks to Malmsmead

Distance: 9 miles (14.5km) Ascent: 2,400 feet (740m) We start the day at Poets Corner in The Valley of Rocks, a fascinating, rocky valley known for its wild goats and stunning landscape. It's easy to see why it was named 'Little Switzerland' by Robert Southey, a friend of Coleridge. Descending into Lynmouth, where Samuel Taylor Coleridge was a frequent visitor, we reach the true start of the Coleridge Way. From the harbour, we follow the banks of the East Lyn river on an undulating woodland path to Watersmeet, a former fishing lodge now owned by National Trust and open as a tea room. We continue through woods alongside the East Lyn emerging at Brendon. From here, the path rises above the river valley with extensive views across Lorna Doone country to reach Malmsmead.

Day 3: Malmsmead to Porlock Village

Distance: 9 miles (14.5km) Ascent: 1,650 feet (500m) From Malmsmead we rejoin the Coleridge Way descending to join the riverside path to Oare, where we have an option to visit Oare Church, made famous in R D Blackmore's book Lorna Doone. We then steeply ascend the ridge of Deddy Combe where we're rewarded with views of Exmoor including the Doone Valley, one of Exmoor's hidden treasures. We now head towards the Somerset coastline, on hedged tracks and lanes with glimpses of the Bristol Channel. We head past Ash Farm where Coleridge was inspired to write Kubla Khan and finally descend through Worthy Wood to the village of Porlock with its grade I listed 13thc church dedicated to St Dubricius.

Day 4: Porlock Village to Wheddon Cross

Distance: 8.5 miles (13.5km) Ascent: 2,210 feet (675m) Departing Porlock, there's a steep ascent that flattens out as we reach the lanes and tracks that lead to Horner, an attractive hamlet of thatched cottages. Heading uphill through woodland takes us to the lookout at Webber's Post. After enjoying the views over Horner Wood and up to Dunkery Beacon (the highest point on Exmoor) we skirt around the base of Dunkery Hill to reach the River Avill. Once across the river, we follow wooded paths to the village of Wheddon Cross where there's an aptly-named pub called Rest and be Thankful (so-called because of its hilltop location at the end of a very long climb from the coast at Dunster and Minehead).

Day 5: Wheddon Cross to Roadwater

Distance: 9 miles (14.5km) Ascent: 950 feet (295m) From Wheddon Cross, we'll visit the 13th century Cutcombe Church with its stained-glass window depicting a line from Coleridge's poem Frost at Midnight. Following an ancient sunken lane and footpaths, we cross fields to ascend Lype Hill – the highest point of the Coleridge Way. From here, we're rewarded with far-reaching views over the Brendon Hills. We'll then descend to the hamlet of Kingsbridge and take a route that rises and falls to reach our finish point for the day, the village of Roadwater. Perched on the Washford River, it served as one of the stations on the Old Mineral Line that brought iron ore from the Brendon Hills to Watchet,

ready to be shipped to Wales for processing.

Day 6: Roadwater to Bicknoller

Distance: 9.5 miles (15km) Ascent: 1,300 feet (400m) From Roadwater, the path climbs gently through fields and woodland to follow a level track above the Washford River and the route of the Old Mineral Line. We'll follow old lanes into Monksilver and continue to the village of Sampford Brett - birthplace of Richard le Breton, one of the four knights who murdered Thomas Becket in 1170. Crossing the West Somerset Steam Railway line and the A358 to Bicknoller, we'll pass by its 12th century church full of interesting features. Keep an eye out for the ornately carved angels and nightmarish animal heads.

Day 7: Bicknoller to Nether Stowey

Distance: 10 miles (16km) Ascent: 1,740 feet (530m) On our final day, the route winds around the lower slopes of the Quantock Hills – one of Coleridge's favourite places to roam. Ascending from Bicknoller, we join a woodland path with a brief section of road and walk into West Quantoxhead. It's then onto a grassy track that weaves through the woods before descending to Alfoxton House – the one-time home of William Wordsworth. Continuing to Holford, we'll head up and over heathland to Woodlands Hill and down to Dowsborough where an Iron Age hill fort once stood. Lanes and paths lead us past the remains of Stowey Castle to our final destination - Nether Stowey. The village has an interesting collection of old houses crowded along its narrow streets, including the National Trust-owned, Coleridge Cottage - the former home of Samuel Taylor Coleridge himself and a fitting end to our journey.

Day 8: 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.

Walking safety - SHARED WITH ALL

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests. Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you. If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

Packing list - UK Guided Walking

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and

raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleeces make a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

For holidays operating October through to the end of March, please also bring the following on your walks: spare warm clothing spare high energy food head torch and spare batteries please note for the October to March season your waterproof jacket needs to offer a high level of waterproofing and wind resistance, and a hood. Look for a waterproof jacket with sealed/taped seams and a minimum HH (hydrostatic head - this is the rating given on waterproof jackets) of 10,000mm+ Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and insect repellent
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- Walking poles
