

Walk Offa's Dyke



Highlights

Walk Offa's Dyke, the ultimate walking holiday! Follow the long distance trail as it wends its way from Prestatyn in the north of the country to Chepstow in the south. Available as a guided or self-guided trip, this one's not for the faint-hearted – by the end of it, you'll have covered 177 miles.

The Offa's Dyke is a trail steeped in history and shrouded in a certain amount of mystery. King Offa of Mercia is said to have ordered the construction of the dyke back in the 7th century to provide an artificial border between Wales and her neighbour. Some of the ditch is still visible today and its route has now been designated a national walking trail stretching from Prestatyn in the north to Chepstow in the south.

This walk can be done in 12 or 14 days and over this time you'll cover 177 miles. Some of the things you'll set eyes on are the Iron Age forts on the Clwydian Hills, the fairytale-esque woods known as Bettws Dingle, and Dinas Bran castle – set high on a perch above Llangollen. But the most spectacular sight of all has to be the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct – the longest and highest bridge of its kind in the UK. And up close the sheer size of it is awe-inspiring - it looms 126 feet above the River Dee and stretches a thousand feet in length.

Is it for me?

Fourteen days of solid walking isn't everyone's cup of tea, so it's fair to say you should be a pretty keen Rambler. You'll be covering 177 miles over the two weeks so make sure you're prepared. But it's not just the distance to consider, there's the landscape too – this is Wales after all, and it's not known for being flat. All things told though, this is a really rewarding holiday, and if you've got the stamina and the will, you'll have an amazing time.

Accommodation

You'll be staying in B&B accommodation and good guesthouses that the team has used previously – so they know they're of a high standard. In terms of food, you'll get breakfast at your accommodation, and will then need to sort out your own lunches and evening meals – so budget extra for this. Don't forget to bring snack supplies too – and plenty of them.

Itinerary

Day 1-Prestatyn to Sodom (11 miles)

Leaving Liverpool Bay and the coast, the route heads inland through Denbighshire on the first day.

Day 2-Sodom to Clwyd Gate (13 miles)

A more challenging day today as you cross the Clwydian Hills. However, hard work is rewarded with wonderful views and a number of iron age hill-forts to explore.

Day 3-Clwyd Gate to Llangollen (14 miles)

Down from the hills and through the conifer forests to Llangollen. Don't miss Plas Newydd, a beautiful black-and-white timbered building at the heart of this charming town.

Day 4-Llangollen to Craig Nant (10 ½ miles)

Craggy limestone cliffs replace the gentle hills today, as the path heads south past Dinas Bran Castle and on to a

Prices from

785 GBP (12 days) per person

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highlight of Offa's Dyke – the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. A thousand feet in length and 126 feet above the River Dee, this is one section of the walk you won't forget!

Day 5-Craig Nant to Llanymynech (11 miles)

Chirk Castle makes a worthwhile detour today. A 700-year old fortress surrounded by a Medieval hunting park, you can enjoy views over nine counties from the roof.

Day 6-Llanymynech to Buttington (10 ½ miles)

The path now crosses a flat plain and follows the Tir-y-Mynach embankment for several miles, making for easy walking and good views as you travel southwards to the town of Welshpool.

Day 7-Buttington to Brompton Crossroads (12 ½ miles)

Leaving the River Severn, there's a stiff climb to the Beacon Ring Hill Fort before the gradient eases as you cross the Plain of Montgomery.

Day 8-Brompton Crossroads to Knighton (14 ½ miles)

Cross the ancient drovers' road, the Kerry Ridgeway, which has survived almost intact for centuries in this unspoilt corner of the Marches. Pretty villages lie en route, before an exhilarating stretch onto Llanfair Hill. The dyke itself is well-preserved on this airy section of the path, which leads down to Knighton, the "Town on the Dyke".

Day 9-Knighton to Kington (13 ½ miles)

Spectacular views and lovely walking across springy turf as you continue through the county of Powys. A stiff climb up Hawthorn Hill gives you a good excuse to pause to watch the once-endangered Red Kite, a striking bird of prey which has become an emblem of Mid Wales' regeneration. There's a thriving craft tradition in Mid Wales too, with many artists deriving their inspiration from the landscape.

Day 10-Kington to Hay-on-Wye (14 ½ miles)

More great scenery as the route heads down to the Wye Valley through an area of atmospheric conifer woods known as Bettws Dingle. End the day by sampling the delights of Hay-on-Wye, the world-famous book town. If book-browsing is not your thing, there's wonderful local food and drink on offer in the town's pubs, tea shops and restaurants.

Hay on Wye makes an excellent choice if you would like to include a rest day.

Day 11-Hay on Wye to Longtown or Llanthony (12 ½ miles)

A strenuous but very scenic day through the Black Mountains, beginning with a climb up to Hay Bluff and the Gospel Pass – Wales' highest motorable road. Enjoy wonderful views of the Wye Valley and the ruins of 11th-century Llanthony Priory, deep in the quiet Vale of Ewyas.

Day 12-Longtown or Llanthony to Llanvetherine (10 miles)

Easier walking as you leave Powys and enter the gentler landscapes of Monmouthshire, skirting north of Abergavenny through an area rich in castles and quaint villages.

Day 13-Llanvetherine to Redbrook (15 miles)

Walk through the heart of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) today, with spectacular craggy limestone cliffs and dense woodland. A good chance to spot bird life and otters at the water's edge.

Day 14-Redbrook to Chepstow (14 ½ miles)

The route passes right by Tintern Abbey, where you can visit the monastic ruins before continuing on to Chepstow with its fine, 11th-century castle.

Details

Getting there

Prestatyn has its own railway station. Trains from here run direct to Birmingham International and Manchester Piccadilly, as well as stops along the way.

Price includes

Price quoted is for the self-guided 12 day walk. The price for the self-guided 14 day walk is £875.

The price for the guided 14 day walk is £1195.

Guided walk date: 6 May - 21 May 2011

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

2 weeks

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

