



East Devon
National
Landscape

EAST DEVON WAY - EAST TO WEST (WOODBURY CASTLE TO EXMOUTH)

Route Summary

Starting at the 2,500-year-old Iron Age hillfort of Woodbury Castle, this section of the route sweeps across the commons of Woodbury and Bicton. Enjoy the sense of space and, on a clear day, the far reaching views out towards the coast. The route then passes the disused Black Hill Quarry before continuing south over East Budleigh Common to traverse the edge of Squabmoor Reservoir. From here follow a quiet path down through the woods to Dalditch Common and on to the Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton Cycleway. On the outskirts of Exmouth follow footpaths, minor roads and tracks to the South West Coast Path and continue west along Exmouth seafront to the end of the route on the edge of the Exe Estuary.

Start: Woodbury Castle car park (free)

End: The Royal Avenue, Exmouth

Distance: 10.4 miles/16.7km

Estimated time: 4 hours 34 minutes

Difficulty: Category 4

Nearest postcode: EX5 1JJ **What Three Words:** ///diplomats.episodes.remotest

Accessibility information:

Access: Category 4 - Some sections are not accessible to mobility vehicles and buggies/pushchairs due to kissing gates, 2 in 1 gates with a stepover bar, steps and narrow bridges.

Terrain: Tarmac, stony tracks, narrow paths with tree roots, loose stone, mud and grass.

Field furniture: 5 gates and 6 kissing gates.

Total ascent: 633 feet/193m

Maximum gradient: The majority of this section is downhill! There is one ascent of approximately 1 in 11 (9%) for 109 yards/100 metres and one short sharp descent of approximately 1 in 5 (18.5%) for 77 yards/70 metres.

Maps: OS Explorer 115 Exmouth & Sidmouth

Other useful information:

Dogs: Welcome under close control. Please follow the Paws on Paths messages, particularly during the bird breeding season from 1 March until 31 July.

Refreshments: There is a shop and several pubs in Woodbury close to the start of the route and a wide range of shops and eating places in Exmouth at the end of the route.

Highlights: Panoramic views out across the commons towards the coast. The chance to explore the Pebblebed Heaths. If you're lucky you may spot a Dartford Warbler (year round) or hear a nightjar (summer months). The walk into Exmouth along the South West Coast Path.

A landscape of history

The heathland area was created by Neolithic farmers around 4000 BC when they started clearing the area of deciduous woodland to create pasture for their animals. Further clearance, grazing and burning over the centuries created the heathland.

Exmouth, with its two miles of golden sandy beaches, is one of Devon's oldest seaside resorts. It has the longest seafront promenade in the county and was established in the 18th century. The opening of the railway in 1861 made visiting the area much easier and the town remains popular to this day with visitors and watersports enthusiasts.

Important wildlife

The East Devon Pebblebed Heaths support over 3000 species of wildlife including many which are rare or threatened. Of the 140 bird species, the Dartford Warbler is one of the rarest and most iconic. Look out for it year round in areas of dense gorse. In early summer nightjars arrive from Africa. These nocturnal birds are more often heard than seen. Listen for their churring calls on summer evenings.

The Pebblebed Heaths also support a large number of insect species including 50 species of butterfly, 517 species of moth, 26 species of dragonfly and damselfly, 243 species of beetle, 94 species of wasp, bee and ant. Look out for the southern damselfly, one of the rarest species in the area, and the silver studded blue butterfly flying from June until August.

There are also 38 species of mammals on the heaths including 14 species of bat. Look out for evidence of roe deer, rabbit, badger and hazel dormouse.

The Exe Estuary is an internationally important wetland, a Special Protection Area and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. In winter it supports more than 20,000 birds and is a wonderful place to watch geese, ducks and various waders including black-tailed godwit and redshank.

Directions:

1. **Leave Woodbury Castle Car Park on the opposite side** to the Castle (south side) and follow the track straight on across the common going straight across the cross paths and ignoring all side turns.
2. **Continue straight on to a road and TAKE CARE** crossing into the car park entrance. Go under the metal barrier and head diagonally right across the car park to the far corner.
3. **Go through the gate and turn right.**
4. **At the cross tracks turn left.**
5. **At the next cross go straight on and, ignoring all side turns,** head for the left end of the wood.
6. **At the next junction go right (straight on)** and take the second right, leaving the wood on your right.
7. **At the cross paths by the bench go straight over** and follow the track down a very steep stoney slope to the next junction.
8. **Turn left and follow the track alongside the quarry** boundary ignoring all side turns until you come to a wooden bridleway gate.
9. **Go through the gate and follow the fenced track** to a junction just before a minor road.
10. **Turn right and follow the path parallel** with the fence on the right.
11. **The path divides twice. Each time keep right alongside the fence** and keep following the fence until you come to a T-junction of paths.
12. **At T-junction turn left and follow the path for a short distance** to a wooden bridleway gate. You are now on a new section of the East Devon Way that was created in 2026 to offer a more enjoyable route into Exmouth.
13. **Go through the gate and straight on at the cross paths.**
14. **At the next cross go straight on and through a wooden bridleway gate** onto a minor road. Go diagonally left across the road onto a footpath.
15. **Follow the footpath and where it divides keep left** and continue over the boardwalk to the next junction.
16. **Turn right (straight on) at the junction.**
17. **At the cross paths go straight on.**
18. **At the Y-junction keep right and continue,** ignoring all side turnings until you come to a minor road.

19. **Go diagonally left across the road** into the entrance to Squabmoor Car Park. Cross the car park and turn right.
20. **Follow the footpath ignoring side turns and keeping right.**
21. **Go through the barrier and continue to follow** the path alongside the reservoir on your right until you come to a car park.
22. **Go straight across the car park and, ignoring the entrance track** on your left, follow the footpath bearing left into the woods where the path divides in an open grassy area. Follow the path around and then alongside a field on your right.
23. **At the entrance to the field continue straight on along the footpath.** Follow the footpath straight on across the heath after the field and through the woods to a T-junction.
24. **Turn right along a track and follow it down.** Bear right past the farm entrance to a minor road.
25. **Turn right up the road and at the next junction bear left.** Follow the road uphill for a short distance and turn left onto a narrow path opposite the second entrance on the right.
26. **Follow the path through the trees and out onto Dalditch Common.** Stay right, above the trees
27. **At the Y-junction keep left and follow the path to a junction.** Go diagonally left onto a permissive path and follow it through a gap in the bank to another path junction.
28. **Turn left and follow the path around to the left above the Forest School.**
29. **At the next junction turn right and follow the boundary** on your left to a T-junction.
30. **At the junction turn right for a short distance** to join the Exmouth to Budleigh Salterton Cycleway. Turn right.
31. **Follow the cycleway for approx 1.7 miles/2.7km passing under two road bridges.**
32. **Just before the third road bridge turn left** through a metal kissing gate onto a footpath through fields. Stay parallel with the hedge on the right to another metal kissing gate into the second field.
33. **Go through the gate and bear right along the footpath towards the church.**
34. **Go through a metal kissing gate into the churchyard** and turn left. Follow the footpath between the graves and parallel with the wall on the left. At the end of the grassy path turn left through a stone gateway and follow the tarmac footpath to the road.
35. **Turn right along the road to the next junction.**
36. **Turn left towards Country Life Sandy Bay.** Follow the road around, over a bridge and straight on.

37. **Just before the entrance to Sandy Bay Holiday Park** turn right along West Down Lane. Follow the lane to the next junction.
38. **At the T-junction turn right and follow Gore Lane** for approx 0.8 miles/1.3km to a permissive path on your left.
39. **Turn left through a wooden kissing gate** onto the Permissive Path to Coast Path.
40. **Follow the hedge on your left to a wooden field gate.** Go through and continue to follow the hedge on the left through a fenced area to a wooden kissing gate.
41. **Go through the kissing gate and continue to follow** the hedge on the left to the Coast Path.
42. **Go through a wooden kissing gate** and turn right along the Coast Path to the Geoneedle.
43. **After the Geoneedle continue to follow the fence** on your right to an enclosed path beside houses.
44. **Follow the fenced path and then where it divides** bear left on the Coast Path.
45. **Follow the zig-zag path down to the seafront and turn right.**
46. **Follow the surfaced route along the seafront** passing the RNLI Station and shop and continuing to the Esplanade. This route is divided into two for walkers and cyclists. TAKE CARE that you stay on the side for walkers.
47. **Follow the Esplanade to the end** and bear around to the right into Victoria Road.
48. **Follow Victoria Road and then take a left along Camperdown Terrace.**
49. **At the T-junction cross the road and turn right** along the shared use path. Go past Exmouth Rugby Club to a roundabout.
50. **At the roundabout turn left along the pavement** and follow The Royal Avenue around to the right and the end of the route.