

1. Devon's Little Switzerland

This circular walk is based on the scenic little town of Lynmouth, on Devon's Exmoor coast. A walk of contrasts, its outward leg follows the valley of the East Lyn River while the return, on the route of the Two Moors Way and Tarka Trail, is a high, airy walk along the valley top.

From the little tower at Lynmouth Harbour walk inland, alongside the harbour.

Lynmouth was "discovered" as a scenic and romantic location in the early 19th century.

The tower at the harbour, known as the Rhenish Tower, was built at this time in imitation of similar towers on the Rhine.

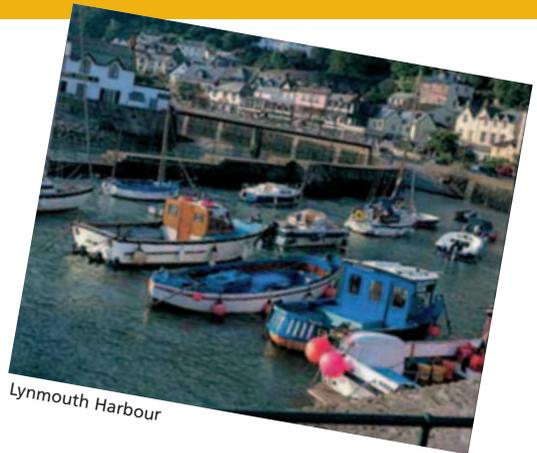
The poet Southey and the Shelleys were among the early visitors who praised the area, calling it "England's Little Switzerland". The steep hill on the right, next to the pub, was the original main road into Lynmouth, giving some idea how isolated it was then.

Continue walking inland, past the footbridge, alongside the rocky River Lyn. At the bridge at the road junction cross the road and walk the path alongside the river.

Note the commemorative plaque on the bridge. At this point the East and West Lyn rivers meet. The route now follows the valley of the East Lyn, a deep and wooded valley, or "cleave".

Cross the next footbridge over the river, at the end of the car park, then turn right along the lane and continue alongside the river. At the end of the lane continue on the footpath ahead into East Lyn Cleave. At the next footbridge keep to the riverside path, signposted to Watersmeet.

The cleave is important as an area of ancient oak woodland, one of the largest remaining areas of semi-natural ancient woodland in the South West.



Lynmouth Harbour

Continue following the signs to Watersmeet, re-crossing the river at another footbridge. Shortly afterwards, the National Trust seasonal café at Watersmeet comes into view. Keep on the path to climb, then descend to two footbridges.

There are two rivers which meet here, to give the location its name.

The Watersmeet café and shop, open April - October, was built in the 19th century as a fishing lodge when the area was becoming fashionable.

The route now follows the Hoar Oak Water. Take the steps which climb on the right immediately after the first footbridge, signed to Hillsford Bridge, then continue ahead parallel to this fast-flowing river.

A little way along the path a short diversion on the right goes to a waterfall viewpoint. Keep an eye open on the river for dippers on stones or the river bed.

The path continues to climb steadily until it reaches Hillsford Bridge, where the road from the Simonsbath direction crosses the Hoar Oak Water. Go through the gate and turn right over the bridge.

At the road junction ahead the walk joins the route of the Two Moors Way and the Tarka Trail.



East Lyn Cleave

After the bridge cross the main road ahead to the grass verge with the "steep hill" and "road bend" signs; walk up this to the sharp bend at the top. At the top follow the path ahead signed to Lynmouth, with a MW symbol on the post (the symbol of the Two Moors Way).

The path climbs through woodland to emerge at Myrtleberry, an Iron Age settlement site. It is one of a number in the area, chosen for their defensive strength and views of potential attackers.

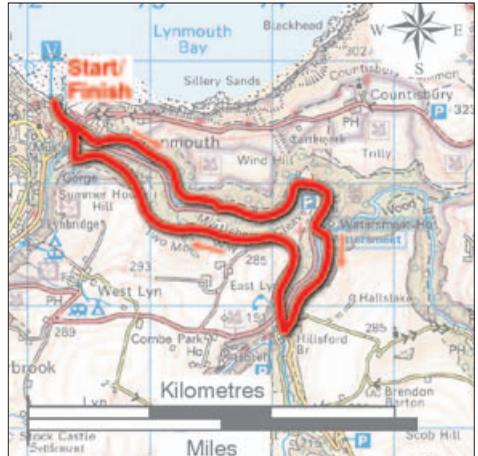
Keep following the MW marked path, signed to Lynmouth.

Very soon the distinctive wooded dome of Hollerday Hill comes into view ahead with the town of Lynton sheltering below. Then Lynmouth and its harbour become visible, at the foot of the hill.

The path follows a series of steep zigzags down to cross a stream, then another series back up again, to an even higher point. As the sea gets closer, look out for the signpost indicating Lynmouth and MW on the slightly fainter path to the right. Go down here.

Superb views over Lynton and Lynmouth open out from this path.

Keep to the path as it descends, sometimes quite steeply, and with the aid of some more zigzags. It eventually enters Lynmouth on a narrow enclosed path. After a gate the tarmac path is steep and often very slippery – take special care here.



At the road at the bottom, notice the stone erected for the Two Moors Way opening in 1976.

For the town centre and harbour turn left at the road, then right and immediately left at the road junction.

Facts & Features

Walk Length: 8km / 5 miles

One long steady climb of 100m / 330ft

One short sharp climb of 60m / 200ft



Lynmouth is accessible by bus:

The Exmoor Coastlink service, from Taunton, Barnstaple, Minehead and Ilfracombe operates 7 days a week (a more frequent service at weekends) and a regular bus links Barnstaple and Lynton.

Call the Traveline **0871 200 22 33** for details.

Facilities: Lynmouth (all facilities); Watersmeet (café and toilets – seasonal, April – October).

OS Maps:

Explorer (1:25,000):

No. OL9 Exmoor

Landranger (1:50,000):

No. 180 Barnstaple and Ilfracombe

For further information on the Tarka Trail and the Two Moors Way, see pages 6 and 7.

To order books and leaflets, see pages 32 and 33.