

# A Great Place To... ...Take A Winter Walk

## Hound of the Baskervilles Trail

Dartmoor

The new six-mile Hound of the Baskervilles Trail on the wild and windswept High Moor area of Dartmoor National Park is at its most atmospheric in winter. It takes in the moorland, mires and local legends that inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic Sherlock mystery and reveals some of Dartmoor's uniquely beautiful landscapes. Start at the National Park visitor centre at Princetown, where you can pick up the trail leaflet for guidance and explore some of *The Hound* connections (the centre was formerly the Old

Duchy Hotel where Conan Doyle stayed in 1901 while writing his famous tale). Features to look out for as you walk include the 19th-century farmhouse that inspired the home of Stapleton, *The Hound's* villain, and the flat, boggy expanse of Foxtor Mires, better known as the book's bleak Grimpen Mire, where much of the action takes place. The walk's final miles reveal typically sweeping Dartmoor views stretching towards Bellever Forest, Wistman's Wood and Haytor on the moor's eastern side. Back at Princetown visitor



The view from Top Tor to Haytor and Saddle Tor

centre don't leave without seeing the little Holmes exhibition, which boasts the most lifelike mannequin of Holmes ever made and a full-size replica of the fearsome hound itself, then head for the nearby Fox Tor Cafe

to refuel. It's a favoured spot among walkers and cyclists, with hearty, home-cooked food to put the colour back in your cheeks.

**For more details:** Call 01822 890 414 or visit [dartmoor.gov.uk](http://dartmoor.gov.uk)



Twisted ancient oaks give Wistman's Wood a spooky feel



## Mawddach Estuary

North Wales

Crossing the long wooden Barmouth Bridge that spans the estuary at this walk's start is a real highlight, with stunning views of the Snowdonia Mountains across

the water. Cadair Idris dominates the skyline and is especially attractive covered in a sprinkling of snow. Across the bridge you'll enter a serene nature reserve and can follow



Start your walk at the Barmouth Bridge (left) and finish it with a well-deserved drink at the George III Hotel

the southern banks of the estuary until you're ready to turn back. If you make it to Penmaenpool, just over six miles away, reward yourself with a drink on the terrace of the George III Hotel surrounded by hillsides and water. A couple of miles further and you'll reach the market town of Dolgellau, where weary walkers can catch a bus back.

**For more details:** Call 01341 280 787 or visit [visitwales.com](http://visitwales.com)



Glastonbury Tor looms on the horizon

## Somerset Levels

The Avalon Marshes in the Somerset Levels are pleasingly flat and effortless to walk around, plus there are incredible views of Glastonbury Tor on the horizon. You'll also get the chance to see one of the best winter wildlife

spectacles in the country, as millions of starlings gather at dusk and

swoop in unison overhead before settling to roost in the reeds overnight. Park for free beside the RSPB Ham Wall visitor centre and either follow the circular mile and a half Ham Wall loop through the nature reserve, or head into the neighbouring Shapwick Heath reserve. Staff at the visitor centre will be able to tell you which offers the best chance of seeing the starling spectacle as it varies each year.

**For more details:** Call 01458 860 494 or visit [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

## Bolton Abbey

Yorkshire Dales

This walk is gentle enough for all the family

Crunching through the fallen leaves in Strid Wood at Bolton Abbey is a wonderful sheltered walk for a crisp winter's day. Start at Riverside car park for a pleasant five-mile loop that follows the River Wharfe and weaves beneath thick oak woodland in this impressive steep-sided gorge. At the midway point you'll have the chance to explore the ruins of Barden Tower, then cross Barden Bridge to head back along the river's opposite side. This

return route climbs sharply in parts, but trailside benches allow a rest while enjoying long views down to the water. The cafe, shop and toilets at Cavendish Pavilion and seasonal activity trails along the riverbank during holidays make this a great walk for families.

**For more details:** Call 01756 718 009 or visit [boltonabbey.com](http://boltonabbey.com)



## River Cam

Cambridge

Take the weight off your feet with a winter river punt

A frosty amble along the River Cam in Cambridge makes a peaceful and scenic wintry walk. Start with a stroll along The Backs for lovely views over the city's handsome college buildings – King's College Chapel is perhaps most recognisable as it hosts the annual *Carols From King's* broadcast each Christmas. Make your way on to Jesus Green, then simply follow the gentle curve of the riverbank for a tranquil country outing

within the heart of this historic city. Boats glide along the calm water, cattle graze the surrounding commons and the riverside pubs are a tempting haven for a warming drink. If you work up an appetite, top chef Daniel Clifford's Midsummer House on the water's edge is renowned as one of Cambridge's finest restaurants.

**For more details:** Call 01223 791 500 or visit [visitcambridge.org](http://visitcambridge.org)

## Cotswold Way

Chipping Campden

Join the deer as you admire the Broadway Tower folly

The 102-mile Cotswold Way National Trail follows the Cotswold escarpment from Chipping Campden all the way to Bath, but you need only walk the opening miles to sample the trail's most dramatic scenery and prettiest towns. Follow the trail signposts from beside the Market Hall in the attractive town of Chipping Campden and within a mile or so you'll be enjoying fabulous

views across the Vale of Evesham from Dover's Hill. Around three miles further you'll reach Broadway Tower – a handsome folly with a rooftop viewing platform where up to 16 different counties can be seen on a clear winter's day. Pause for hot chocolate beside the log fire in the tower's stylish Morris & Brown Cafe, before heading back.

**For more details:** Call 01451 862 000 or visit [nationaltrail.co.uk/cotswold-way](http://nationaltrail.co.uk/cotswold-way)

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