

Dart Estuary Circular Walk

Region – Torbay

County/Area – Devon

Length – 5.6 miles / 9.0 kms

Duration – 3 hours

Ascent – 384 feet

Grade – Challenging

Start – Dartmouth Station

Postcode TQ6 9BH (approximate location only)

Walk Route Description

This walk has a bit of everything. It skirts the magnificent estuary of the River Dart and also explores part of Dartmouth, one of Devon's most attractive towns as well as one of its most historic and interesting. Not surprisingly, variations of this route are among the most popular walks in this part of the County.

Route

- The walk starts at Dartmouth Station, next to the ferry landing pontoons.

Note: Much of the walk follows part of the South West Coast Path and gives superb views of both sea and estuary.

- Cross the road to the little harbour, known as the Boat Float, and walk away from the river alongside the Boat Float to the inland side, the original quay.
- Turn left and continue along Fairfax Place.
- After a short distance turn right and continue along Smith Street.
- Continue along Smith Street uphill. The street narrows and climbs steeply to the left.
- At the top of the hill, bear left into Above Town.
- After a short distance the road descends steeply and joins Warfleet Road.
- Bear right and continue along Warfleet Road.
- At the bottom of the hill turn left into Castle Road, rounding the top of Warfleet Creek.
- Continue past the rear of the coastguard cottages.
- Continue ahead through the gate and follow the path around the top of a bowl-like feature.
- Pass through the gate to a hedged green lane. At the end of the green lane continue ahead through the farmyard of Little Dartmouth Farm.
- Continue along the access lane beyond to arrive at a car park. At the car park turn left and go through the gate in the far right corner.
- Follow the Coast Path back into the town.

Note: Be aware of the National Trail acorn waymarks and arrows to guide you.

- Continue along the path towards the sea, bearing left to stay on the cliff top at the kissing-gate and bench.

- Continue alongside the fence.
- Follow the path left through the gap in the wall at the end.
- Shortly after passing a pond, follow the path as it bears to the right, then keep on to the right-hand end of the field.
- Continue along a path between fields and the cliff edge.
- Continue along the path as it descends to a grassy valley which heads down towards the sea. Turn right down this valley.
- As you approach the bottom of the valley, bear right along the narrower path to a stile.
- Cross the stile and turn left to descend to sea level at Compass Cove. Cross a footbridge spanning a rocky inlet.
- Continue along the path which runs alongside the rocky platform. The path then begins to climb next to the mouth of the estuary.
- Continue climbing into woodland. The path then emerges from the woodland onto a surfaced lane.
- As the path starts to descend, bear off right, descending through more woodland.
- At the junction, turn right, the path then zig-zags steeply down numerous steps until it arrives above the scenic Sugary Cove.
- Climb the steps on the far side of the cove and continue above a grassy picnic area on a wide tarmac path.
- At the end the path, it meets a lane by a parking area. Turn right here, down more steps, to arrive at Dartmouth Castle.
- Continue down the steps next to the café and bear left at the bottom to St. Petrox Church.
- Pass the church and continue along the tarmac path.

Note: For an alternative way of returning to Dartmouth, a ferry can be taken from this point, back to the town during the summer.

- At the road at the end of the tarmac path turn left then immediately right onto a footpath above the road.
- At the end of the path continue ahead, retracing the walk's outward steps around Warfleet Creek.
- At the junction with Warfleet Road turn right, cross to the footway, and follow the road towards the town.
- Approaching the town, look out for some steps descending on the right. There is a Coast Path sign pointing down. Turn right down these steps, which lead to Bayards Cove Castle.
- Continue beyond on to the quay at Bayards Cove.
- Continue ahead past the Dartmouth Arms then turn right to follow the Embankment back to Dartmouth Station and the Boat Float to the Start Point.