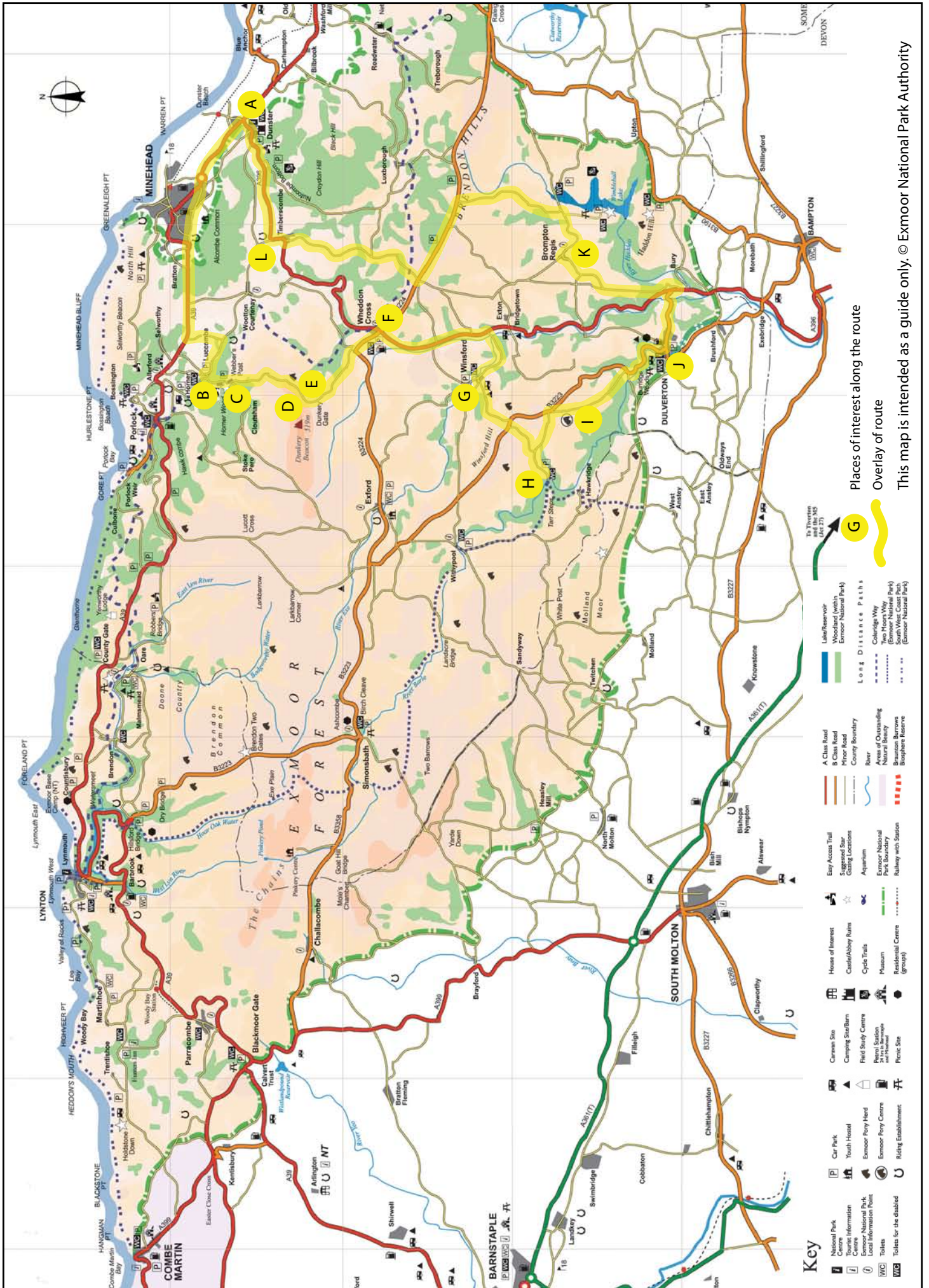


'Off-the-Beaten Track' Sightseeing Tour of Eastern Exmoor



Circular drive around the eastern side of Exmoor

This drive through the beautiful scenery of Exmoor, is designed to give you a sightseeing tour with plenty to do along the way. It includes small single-track roads which have passing places. The information starts at Dunster, but you can pick up the route anywhere along it, depending on where you are staying.

Places of interest are listed in the order you reach them going anti-clockwise around the route, which is the recommended direction to follow.

Distance: about 42 miles

Duration, including stops: all day

Please note: This route is not suitable for larger vehicles.

Main towns and villages visited

Dunster, Minehead, Luccombe, Wheddon Cross, Winsford, Dulverton, Brompton Regis, Timberscombe.

Places of interest along the way

- A. Dunster – Castle (NT), working watermill (NT), yarn market, priory church, dovecot, Gallox bridge
- B. Luccombe village – owned by the National Trust with a 13C church with wagon roof and Jacobean pulpit
- C. Webbers Post, car park with excellent views and sculpture walk
- D. Dunkery Hill, 519m, highest point on Exmoor, more excellent views with roadside parking
- E. Dunkery Gate, picnic area
- F. Wheddon Cross – shops, tea rooms, pub
- G. Winsford – shop, tea rooms, pub
- H. Tarr Steps, ancient clapper bridge, Tarr Farm for refreshments
- I. Exmoor Pony Centre, Ashwick
- J. Dulverton – guildhall, church and bridge, tea rooms and shops
- K. Brompton Regis, Pulhams Mill craft shop and tea rooms, Wimbleball Lake Country Park
- L. Cowbridge saw mill, Timberscombe

Public conveniences along the way:

Dunster car park; Wheddon Cross car park; Winsford car park; Tarr Steps car park; Dulverton; Wimbleball Lake.

Route directions

This route can easily be picked up at any of the towns it passes through. It has been started at Dunster, simply as it needs to be started somewhere. It is common for junctions to be named, usually written down the directions post at the junction. I will refer to these in these directions. The mileages shown are the distance between each direction. As the route can be started anywhere along it, cumulative distances are not given. Always continue ahead unless otherwise directed. The bracketed letters refer to the places of interest listed on the map along the route.

1. 0 miles, **Dunster (A)**, starting from Dunster Steep car park, turn right onto the A396.
2. 0.1 miles, A396 junction with A39, turn left at the traffic lights onto the A39.
3. 0.9 miles, Ellicombe roundabout. Continue ahead on the A39.
4. 0.6 miles, at the mini-roundabout bear left on the A39.
5. 3.2 miles, continue along the A39 to reach the turning on the left to Luccombe.
6. 1.3 miles, **Luccombe (B)**. At the T-junction, the church and village is to your left if you would like to visit it, otherwise turn right.
7. 0.4 miles, Chapel Cross. At the small cross-roads, turn left uphill to cross the cattle grid and up through the woods.

8. 0.7 miles, Webbers Post. At the Y-junction, **Webbers Post (C)** car park is just along the right fork if you want a break. Otherwise, bear left and follow this small road as it climbs with wonderful views over to your left and **Dunkery Hill (D)** up to your right.
9. 2.3 miles, Dunkery Gate. The road loses height to pass **Dunkery Gate (E)** and cross the cattle grid.
10. 1.6 miles, Blagdon Cross. Continue along this small road to reach the junction with the B3224 where you continue ahead towards Wheddon Cross.
11. 0.7 miles, **Wheddon Cross (F)**. At the cross-roads, turn right onto the A396 towards Tiverton.
12. 3.5 miles, Copleham Cross. Turn right towards Winsford at the triangle of grass.
13. 1.5 miles, **Winsford (G)**. Turn left to pass by the thatched pub and follow this road round to the left and uphill onto the moor.
14. 1.7 miles, Spire Cross. At this cross-road, go straight across to Tarr Steps, ignoring sign to Tarr Steps to the left. Soon follow the road to the left, ignoring the track ahead.
15. 1.3 miles, Tarr Steps car park. Follow this small road through the hamlet of Liscombe to reach Tarr Steps car park on the left. This is a pay and display car park with toilets. It is a 0.3 mile walk down to **Tarr Steps and Tarr Farm (H)**, to see the ancient clapper bridge over the River Barle.
16. 0.3 miles, Liscombe. Leave the car park and return up the road to Liscombe. At Liscombe turn right.
17. 1.0 mile, follow this road to the B3223. Turn right onto B3223.
18. 0.1 mile, Mounsey Hill Gate. Having turned onto the B3223, almost immediately turn right again before the cattle grid towards Ashwick to pass the **Exmoor Pony Centre (I)** on your right.
19. 2.4 miles, Marsh Bridge. Continue down this road to reach Marsh Bridge where you will find an ancient pack horse bridge next to a little more modern iron bridge over the River Barle. At this junction bear left, ignoring the road over the iron bridge and then bear right at the triangle to turn right, back onto the B3223 towards Dulverton.
20. 1.2 miles, Dulverton. Follow this road with the river on your right to reach **Dulverton (J)**. At the little cross-roads, with the church up to your left and the High Street to your right, go ahead to a T-junction, with a car park for the town ahead, with toilets. Turn left here onto the B3222.
21. 1.4 miles, Machine Cross. Follow the B3222 into a valley to cross the River Exe, now much larger! On reaching the T-junction at Machine Cross turn right and immediately left towards Brompton Regis.
22. 1.9 miles, Y-junction. Follow this road uphill to reach a Y-junction, where you turn right towards Brompton Regis.
23. 1.3 miles, Brompton Regis. On reaching **Brompton Regis (K)**, go to the T-junction with the church up on your right. and continue to the right here. At the next junction ignore the two roads off to the right with the triangle of grass, continuing round to the left uphill to pass Pulhams Mill, through a hairpin bend until the road levels out.
24. 1.2 miles, turning to Wimbleball Lake. On your right is a small road to Wimbleball Lake Country Park, where there are water sports, tea rooms and toilets.
25. 0.1 miles, turn left. Just after the turning to Wimbleball Lake turn left along a small lane, Blagdon Lane.
26. 2.8 miles, turn left. Follow Blagdon Lane until it reaches the main road, B3224. Turn left onto the main road.
27. 2.1 miles, Heath Poult Cross. Follow the main road to the next cross-roads at Heath Poult Cross. Turn right here towards Timberscombe.
28. 3.9 miles, Timberscombe. Keep on this road until you reach Timberscombe. In the village pass the church and turn right and then left to reach the main road, A396. Turn right onto the A396.
29. 3.0 miles, Dunster, junction A39. Shortly after leaving Timberscombe, on the junction on the left to Wootton Courtenay, is **Cowbridge Saw Mill (L)**. Continue on the A396 to **Dunster (A)**. You will reach the medieval village of Dunster before reaching the A39. There is so much to enjoy in this marvellous village, it has to be worth a stop. On leaving the village you reach a T junction with the A39 (Direction 2).

Notes

General

The woodlands on Exmoor are predominantly native sessile oaks. These were grown to fuel the lime kilns, as they produce excellent steadily burning charcoal and were tolerant of the lighter, more acid, less fertile soil of this area. Sessile means stalkless, referring to its acorns, unlike the Pedunculate Oak, otherwise known as the English Oak, which sprouts its acorns from stalks.

Dunster

Dunster is reputed to be one of the most well preserved medieval villages in England and it possesses approximately 200 listed buildings. Here you can visit the beautiful Dunster Castle (01643 823004), the working watermill (01643 821759), Dolls Museum (01643 821220) and many buildings / landmarks including Gallox Bridge, the Yarn Market and dovecot. A wide range of great footpaths all around the village allow you to explore further.

Minehead

Considered as the eastern gateway to Exmoor, Minehead provides you with shops, services and attractions you would expect in a vibrant coastal resort. Situated in the old town, close to the harbour is the start point of the country's longest National Trail – the South West Coast Path. If you are feeling less energetic the West Somerset Railway runs steam trains skirting around the edge of Exmoor and the Quantock Hills to Bishops Lydeard.

Dunkery Beacon

Dunkery Beacon is the highest point of Exmoor and Somerset (519 m.) and affords superb views across the National Park and beyond to Devon, Somerset and South Wales. It is now owned by the National Trust and managed as a nature reserve. Maybe here you can also admire some Exmoor Ponies and if you are lucky, the famous Exmoor red deer. There are several walking routes – some of the most popular are from Webbers Post where the route winds its way through beautiful woodlands, before coming out on the open moor.

Wheddon Cross

Wheddon Cross is the highest village on Exmoor and home to the main livestock market for the area, It is also home to Snowdrop Valley, a real picture in February with minibus rides from the main car park.

Winsford

Winsford is an ancient moorland village with seven beautiful bridges spanning the River Exe. It also has a picturesque church and a deep ford. From the village, you can walk to Winsford Hill, home of Bronze Age burial sites, standing stone and a wealth of moorland wildlife. You can observe Exmoor Ponies and different species of birds such as the Curlew and the Golden Plover.

Winsford Hill

Winsford Hill is a wild expanse of open moorland where Exmoor Ponies roam freely and the observant can spot Exmoor's famous red deer. You can walk freely across the moor or follow any of the footpaths that cross the area. Whilst here, you can visit the Exmoor Pony centre (01398 323093) to learn more about this ancient breed or even take a ride.

Tarr Steps

Tarr Steps is justly one of the most popular locations within the National Park. It is a prehistoric clapper bridge consisting of large stone slabs spanning the River Barle. According to local legend the stones were placed here by the devil to win a bet. The surrounding area is a National Nature Reserve rich in flora and fauna. Whilst there are numerous footpaths in the area one of the most popular is to cross the bridge and turn right alongside the river until coming to the next bridge and returning on the opposite bank. This takes approximately 1 hour and there is an opportunity for refreshments at the end.



For more information on Exmoor please visit www.visit-exmoor.co.uk