

EXMOOR & North Devon COAST PATH

SW COAST PATH Part 1 – MINEHEAD TO BUDE

68 large-scale maps & guides to 30 towns & villages

PLANNING – PLACES TO STAY – PLACES TO EAT

HENRY STEDMAN & JOEL NEWTON



trailblazer

2nd
edition



This guide to the coast path from Minehead to Bude (124½ miles) covers the first part, the Somerset and North Devon section, of the 630-mile South-West Coast Path and is the first book in this three-part series. It was originally walked, researched and written by **Henry Stedman** (far left) and **Joel Newton** (right) accompanied by **Daisy**. This second edition was rewalked and updated by Joel Newton.

Born in Poole, Dorset, **JOEL NEWTON**, first discovered the South-West Coast Path whilst on a family holiday to Cornwall in the spring of 2007. Later that same year, feeling

somewhat jaded by everyday life (in reality, he had little else to do), Joel found himself on a bus to Minehead with a bag that he would soon discover was far too heavy. Six weeks later he arrived in Falmouth sun-drunk, blistered, happy and with a newfound love for walking national trails. This passion led to Joel ambling along Offa's Dyke, West Highland Way, Great Glen Way, Cotswold Way, Two Moors Way, South Downs Way, Dales Way and stretches of the Pennine Way amongst other paths. Sitting in a café in Hastings, East Sussex, in 2011, a stranger who was there (stroking a puppy) admitted that he was the author of the guidebook Joel was reading: Trailblazer's *Hadrian's Wall Path*. They got talking and in 2012, Joel, Henry Stedman (the stranger) and Daisy (the puppy, by now a dog) walked, researched and co-authored Trailblazer's three-part series to the South-West Coast Path. Since then Joel has written the Trailblazer guide *Thames Path* and travelled and trekked in South-east Asia. This, the second edition of *Exmoor and North Devon Coast Path*, is Joel's fifth book. When not walking he lives and works in Hastings.

Born in Chatham, Kent, **HENRY STEDMAN** has been writing guidebooks for over 20 years and is the author or co-author of half a dozen titles, including Trailblazer's *Kilimanjaro*, *Dolomites*, *Coast to Coast Path*, *Dales Way* and *Hadrian's Wall Path* as well as guides for Bradt and Rough Guides.

When not travelling or writing, Henry lives in the UK editing other people's guidebooks, maintaining his Kilimanjaro website and arranging climbs on the mountain through his company, Climb Mount Kilimanjaro.

DAISY is Henry's dog, though any assumption that ownership equates with control is entirely wrong in this instance. Two parts trouble to one part Parson's Jack Russell, together with her two human companions Daisy managed to walk the entire South-West Coast Path – indeed, for every five miles that they completed, Daisy did about ten.

Exmoor & North Devon Coast Path (SWCP Part 1)

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A request

The author and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. Nevertheless, things change. If you notice any changes or omissions that should be included in the next edition of this book, please write to Trailblazer (address above) or email us at info@trailblazer-guides.com. A free copy of the next edition will be sent to persons making a significant contribution.

Warning: coastal walking and long-distance walking can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp13-16) and outdoor safety (pp56-9). Every effort has been made by the author and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

Updated information will be available on: www.trailblazer-guides.com

Photos – Front cover and this page: Ilfracombe from the path to Hillsborough.

Overleaf: The sands and pebbles of Northam Burrows Country Park (see p171).

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TRAILBLAZER PUBLICATIONS

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This guidebook contains all the information you need. The hard work has been done for you so you can plan your trip from home without the usual pile of books, maps and guides.

When you're all packed and ready to go, there's comprehensive public transport information to get you to and from the trail and 68 detailed maps and town plans to help you find your way along it.

The guide includes:

- All standards of accommodation with reviews of campsites, hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you want a guided or self-guided tour, and a baggage-carrying service if you just want your luggage carried
- Itineraries for all levels of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when to go, degree of difficulty, what to pack, and how much the whole walking holiday will cost
- Walking times in both directions and GPS waypoints
- Cafés, pubs, tearooms, takeaways, restaurants and shops for buying supplies
- Rail, bus & taxi information for all villages and towns along the path
- Street plans of the main towns and villages both on and off the path
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

▣ MINIMUM IMPACT FOR MAXIMUM INSIGHT

Man has suffered in his separation from the soil and from other living creatures ... and as yet he must still, for security, look long at some portion of the earth as it was before he tampered with it.

Gavin Maxwell, *Ring of Bright Water*, 1960

Why is walking in wild and solitary places so satisfying? Partly it is the sheer physical pleasure: sometimes pitting one's strength against the elements and the lie of the land. The beauty and wonder of the natural world and the fresh air restore our sense of proportion and the stresses and strains of everyday life slip away. Whatever the character of the countryside, walking in it benefits us mentally and physically, inducing a sense of well-being, an enrichment of life and an enhanced awareness of what lies around us.

All this the countryside gives us and the least we can do is to safeguard it by supporting rural economies, local businesses, and low-impact methods of farming and land-management, and by using environmentally sensitive forms of transport – walking being pre-eminent.

In this book there is a detailed and illustrated chapter on the wildlife and conservation of the region and a chapter on minimum-impact walking, with ideas on how to tread lightly in this fragile environment; by following its principles we can help to preserve our natural heritage for future generations.

INTRODUCTION

This book covers the first 124½ miles (200.3km) of the South-West Coast Path (hereafter known as SWCP), Britain's longest national trail. The trail in this book starts at Minehead in Somerset and, after navigating the whole of North Devon's coastline, ends just across the border at Bude in Cornwall.

This book covers the first 124½ miles of the 630-mile South-West Coast Path

Together with the two other books in this 'mini-series', the entire length of this 630-mile-long coast path is covered.

This first section of the path is also by some distance the shortest of the three. But size isn't everything, as they say, and there's plenty here to tempt the discerning walker. Look at a map of the British Isles and this part of the coastal path – meandering as it does along some of Britain's most exquisite shoreline, backed by a vast swathe of green, a verdant outlook unbroken save for tiny villages and hamlets scattered here and there – is a logical place to go for an amble. That vast swathe of green is Exmoor National Park, the most delightful of



The trail takes you through numerous villages such as picturesque Clovelly.

wildernesses and one through which the route saunters along the coastal cliffs for 34 miles and includes Great Hangman, at 318m (1043ft) the highest point on the entire trail. Nor does the fun stop there for no sooner does the path leave the park than it immediately joins the North Devon coast, luxuriating in its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is here you'll find enormous beaches stretching for miles; Braunton Burrows, part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and the largest sand dune system in the country; plenty of pretty little historical towns and gorgeous villages where one can rest and recuperate, including the breathtaking harbour of Clovelly; and we haven't even mentioned the walk around Hartland Peninsula, the toughest, most isolated

Clearly, God was in a rumbustious mood when He designed this gorgeous little corner of England

and the most spectacular walking – in most experts' opinions – on the entire SWCP. Clearly, God was in a rumbustious mood when He designed this gorgeous little corner of England.

The North Devon AONB continues all the way to the border with Cornwall, though this book actually finishes just across the border at Bude – a more logical end to a walk, with fine accommo-



dition, good restaurants in which to celebrate and half-decent (by the standards of the South-West at least!) transport links back to the everyday world.

Sounds perfect doesn't it? A dozen days or so of walking along romantic, windswept cliffs, through Elysian fields and sylvan valleys, a small yet vital part of a mammoth odyssey around England's most idiosyncratic corner. But such rewards are not gained easily; for one thing, the weather in this blessed corner of England takes a perverse pleasure in its unpredictability – though boy, it does have more than its fair share of good weather too, especially compared to the rest of the UK. But there's also some hard walking to be done; by many people's estimates, this is actually the toughest leg of the entire SWCP, with plenty of fiercely undulating sections guaranteed to torment calf muscles and sap morale. Indeed, it can't be denied that there are a couple of days that will truly test your mettle.

But then again, few if any will disagree that the obstacles and difficulties this path presents to those who dare to pit themselves against it, are far outweighed by its compensations.

This is actually the toughest leg of the entire South-West Coast Path

History

The Somerset and North Devon section of the South-West Coast Path is the youngest part, having only been created and added to the rest of the path in 1978 – five years after the Cornish section was declared open. The entire path, however, including this section, existed way before its designation as a national trail, having been used by the coastguard for centuries to protect against smugglers and aid maritime safety. The nature of the coastguard's job meant that the path had to follow the cliff-tops closely to provide their officers with far-reaching views over land and sea – and to allow them to visit every beach and cove along the way. By chance, these are the exact same qualities that discerning walkers look for in a coastal path!

Left: The start of the trail in Minehead is marked with a sculpture of a giant hand holding a South-West Coast Path map.



□ THE SOUTH-WEST COAST PATH

Typing ‘Minehead to Poole Harbour, Dorset’ into Googlemaps, reveals that travelling between the two can be completed in a matter of 2½ hours by car, along a distance of 98.1 miles. Even walking, along the most direct route, takes only around 28 hours, so Googlemaps says, with the path an even shorter one at just 88.2 miles.

It is these two points that are connected by the South-West Coast Path (SWCP). This most famous – and infamous – of national trails is, however, a good deal longer than 89.3 miles. Though estimates as to its exact length vary – and to a large part are determined by which of the alternative paths one takes at various stages along the trail – the most widely accepted estimate of the path is that it is about 630 miles long (1014km). That figure, however, often changes due to necessary changes in the path caused by erosion and other factors.

So why, when you could walk from Minehead to South Haven Point in just 29 hours, do most people choose to take 6-8 weeks? The answer is simple: the SWCP is one of the most beautiful trails in the UK. Around 70% of those 630 miles are spent either in national parks, or regions that have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The variety of places crossed by the SWCP is extraordinary too: from sun-kissed beaches to sandy burrows, holiday parks to fishing harbours, esplanade to estuary, on top of windswept cliffs and under woodland canopy, the scenery that one travels through along the length of SWCP has to be the most diverse of any of the national trails. Of course, maintaining such a monumental route is no easy task. A survey in 2000 stated that the trail boasted 2473 signposts and waymarks, 302 bridges, 921 stiles, and 26,719 steps. These figures are, of course, out of date now, though they do still give an idea of both how long the trail is, and how much is involved in building and maintaining it to such a high standard. The task of looking after the trail falls to a dedicated team from the official body, Natural England. Another important organisation, and one that looks after the rights of walkers is the South West Coast Path Association (see box p40), a charity that fights for improvements to the path and offers advice, information and support to walkers. They also campaign against many of the proposed changes to the path and help to ensure that England’s right-of-way laws which ensure that the footpath is open to the public – even though it does, on occasion, pass through private property – are fully observed.

History of the path

In 1948 a government report recommended the creation of a footpath around the entire South-West peninsula to improve public access to the coast which, at that time, was pretty dire. It took until 1973 for the Cornwall Coast Path to be declared officially open and another five years for the rest of the South-West Coast Path to be completed. The section covered in this book, North Devon and Exmoor, is the first part that most coastal walkers complete, though it was actually the last section to be opened to the public, in 1978.

The origins of the path, however, are much older than its official designation. Originally, the paths were established – or at least adopted, there presumably being coastal paths from time immemorial that connected the coastal villages – by the local coastguard in the 19th century, who needed a path that hugged the shoreline closely to aid them in their attempts to spot and prevent smugglers from bringing contraband into the country. The coastguards were unpopular in the area as they prevented the locals from exploiting a lucrative if illegal activity, to the extent that it was considered too dangerous for them to stay in the villages; as a result, the authorities were obliged to build special cottages for the coastguards that stood (and, often, still stand) in splendid isolation near the path – but well away from the villages.

How long do you need?

People take about 10-11 days to complete the walk; count on a fortnight away in total to give you time to travel there and back. Of course, if you're fit there's no reason why you can't go a little faster, if that's what you want to do, and finish the walk in eight days or even less, though you will end up having a different sort of walk to most of the other people on the trail. For, whilst theirs is a fairly relaxing holiday, yours will be more of a sport. What's more, you won't have much time to laze in the sun on the beaches, scoff scones in tearooms, visit an attraction or two, or sup local beers under the shade of a pub parasol – which

People take about 10-11 days to complete the walk; count on a fortnight away in total

The lifeboat patrols also used the path to look out for craft in distress (and on one famous occasion used the path to drag their boat to a safe launch to rescue a ship in distress – see p98). When the coastguards' work ended in 1856, the Admiralty took over the task of protecting England's shoreline and thus the paths continued to be used.

The route – Minehead (Somerset) to Poole Harbour (Dorset)



The SWCP officially begins at Minehead in Somerset (its exact starting point marked by a sculpture of a giant hand holding a map, see p9), heads west right round the bottom south-west corner of Britain then shuffles back along the south coast to South Haven Point, overlooking Poole Harbour in Dorset.

On its lengthy journey around Britain's south-western corner the SWCP crosses national parks such as Exmoor as well as regions that have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (including North, South and East Devon as well as Cornwall and Dorset) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Braunton Burrows being just one example – an area that also enjoys a privileged status as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve), and even a couple of UNESCO World Heritage sites, too, including the Jurassic Coast of East Devon and Dorset and the old mining landscape of Cornwall and West Devon.

Other features passed on the way include: the highest cliffs on mainland Britain (at Great Hangman – also the highest point on the coast path at 318m/1043ft, with a cliff-face of 244m); the largest sand-dune system in England (at Braunton Burrows); England's most westerly point (at Land's End) and Britain's most southerly (at the Lizard); the 18-mile barrier beach of Chesil Bank; one of the world's largest natural harbours at Poole; and even the National Trust's only official nudist beach at Studland!

The path then ends at South Haven Point, its exact finish marked by a second SWCP sculpture. The path also takes in four counties – Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Dorset, and connects with over fifteen other long-distance trails; the southern section from Plymouth to Poole also forms part of the 3125-mile long European E9 Coastal Path that runs on a convoluted route from Portugal to Estonia.

(cont'd overleaf)

▣ THE SOUTH-WEST COAST PATH (*cont'd from p11*)

Walking the South-West Coast Path

In terms of difficulty, there are those people who, having never undertaken such a trail before, are under the illusion that coastal walking is a cinch; that all it involves is a simple stroll along mile after mile of golden, level beach, the walker needing to pause only to kick the sand out from his or her flip-flop or buy another ice-cream.

The truth, of course, is somewhat different, for coastal paths tend to stick to the cliffs above the beaches rather than the beaches themselves (which is actually something of a relief, given how hard it is to walk across sand or shingle). These cliffs make for some spectacular walking but – given the undulating nature of Britain's coastline, and the fact the course of the SWCP inevitably crosses innumerable river valleys, each of which forces the walker to descend rapidly before climbing back up again almost immediately afterwards – some exhausting walking too. Indeed, it has been estimated that anybody who completes the entire SWCP will have climbed more than four times the height of Everest (35,031m to be precise, or 114,931ft) by the time they finish!

Given these figures, it is perhaps hardly surprising that most people take around eight weeks to complete the whole route, and few do so in one go; indeed, it is not unusual for people to take years or even decades to complete the whole path, taking a week or two here and there to tackle various sections until the whole trail is complete.

does rather beg the question as to why you've come here in the first place! There's nothing wrong with this approach, of course – *chacun à son goût*, as the French probably say. However, what you **mustn't do is try to push yourself too fast, or too far**. That road leads only to exhaustion, injury or, at the absolute least, an unpleasant time.

When deciding how long to allow for the walk, those intending to camp and carry their own luggage shouldn't underestimate just how much a heavy pack can slow them down. On pp32-3 there are some suggested itineraries covering different walking speeds.

See pp32-3 for some suggested itineraries covering different walking speeds

If you have only a few days, don't try to walk it all; concentrate instead on one area such as the coast path through Exmoor, the beaches around Woolacombe and Croyde, or the more low-key estuary path along a disused railway from Braunton to Westward Ho!. Or you can really challenge yourself by taking on the trail between lovely Clovelly and Bude.

How difficult is the path?

The South-West Coast Path (SWCP) is just a (very, very) long walk, so there's no need for crampons, ropes, ice axes, oxygen bottles or any other climbing paraphernalia. All you need to complete the walk is some suitable clothing, a bit of money, a rucksack full of determination and a half-decent pair of calf muscles.

That said, the part of the SWCP that is covered by this book is reputed to be the most challenging section, with plenty of steep ups-and-downs. It is also

a fairly wild walk in places – to cross Exmoor National Park is to traverse one of the remotest corners of the country. There are also plenty of places on the regular trail where it would be possible to fall from a great height, even if you strayed from the path by only a few metres. Still, with the path well signposted (see pp17-18) all the way along and the sea keeping you company for the entire stretch, it's difficult to get lost (though it's always a good idea to take a compass or GPS unit, just in case).

As with any walk, you can minimise the risks by preparing properly. Your greatest danger on the walk is likely to be from the weather, which can be so unpredictable in this corner of the world, so it is vital that you dress for inclement conditions and always carry a set of dry clothes with you.

When to go

SEASONS

'My shoes are clean from walking in the rain.' **Jack Kerouac**

Britain is a notoriously wet country and South-West England does nothing to crush that reputation. Few walkers manage to complete the walk without suffering at least one downpour; two or three per walk are more likely, even in summer. That said, it's equally unlikely that you'll spend a week in the area and not see any sun at all, and even the most cynical of walkers will have to admit that, during the **walking season** at least, there are more sunny days than showery ones. The season, by the way, starts at Easter and builds to a crescendo in August, before steadily tailing off in October. Few people attempt the entire path after the end of October though there are still plenty of people on day walks. Many places close in November for the winter.

Below: Sundown, Combe Martin. Heading west you should get some fabulous sunsets.





(cont'd from p29) If using public transport to get to the start and end of the walk see the **public transport map and service details and map** on pp48-50. Once you have an idea of your approach turn to Part 4 for detailed information on accommodation, places to eat and other services in each village and town on the route. Also in Part 4 you will find summaries of the route to accompany the detailed trail maps.

CAMPING

Night	Relaxed		Medium		Fast	
	Place	Approx Distance miles/km	Place	Approx Distance miles/km	Place	Approx Distance miles/km
0	Minehead	0	Minehead	0	Minehead	0
1	Porlock*	7.25/11.7	Porlock*	7.25/11.7	Lynton*	22/35.4
2	Lynton*	15.25/24.5	Lynton*	15.25/24.5	Watermouth	16/25.75
3	Watermouth	16/25.75	Combe Martin	14/22.5	Woolacombe	12.25/19.7
4	Woolacombe	12.25/19.7	Woolacombe	14.25/22.9	Chivenor	16/25.7
5	Croyde	6.25/10.1	Saunton*	10.5/16.5	Appledore*	18/29
6	Chivenor	9.75/15.7	Chivenor	9.5/15.3	Clovelly*	16.25/26.2
7	Appledore*	18/29	Appledore*	18/29	H'land Quay*	12/19.3
8	Abbotsham*	8.75/14.1	Clovelly*	16.25/26.2	Bude*	16/25.7
9	Clovelly*	8.5/13.7	Hartland Quay*	11/17.7		
10	Hartland Quay*	11/17.7	Bude*	16/25.7		
11	Bude*	16/25.7				

* **Note:** In this chart we have included in the mile counts an approximate figure for places where the campsite is out of town. For example, the campsite at **Lynton** is half a mile outside the town, so that those who are staying there have to walk half a mile further to reach it – and another half-mile the next day to return to the path.

The other places where this is relevant are: **Porlock** (quarter of a mile to Sparkhayes Farm Campsite from path); **Saunton** (two miles to Lobb Campsite from path); **Appledore** (Marshford Campsite one mile from Appledore; half a mile from SWCP, see Map 37); **Abbotsham** (Greencliff and Westacott farms half a mile from SWCP); **Clovelly** (campers will need to return by bus to Appledore or catch Stagecoach 319 on to Hartland and walk two miles to Stoke); **Hartland Quay** (half a mile to Stoke Barton Farm from path); **Bude** (from the SWCP at Bude Beach (Cerenety campsite one mile; Upper Lynstone campsite three-quarters of a mile).

❑ Woolacombe to Westward Ho! – two or three stages?

Between Woolacombe and Westward Ho! there are nearly 40 miles of mostly flat and easy walking. For this reason, some choose to cover the miles in just two stages. Whilst doing so means you will get back to the more spectacular parts of the SWCP faster, you also risk exhausting yourself before the final three days to Bude, which are very strenuous indeed. Completing these 40 miles over a longer period of time will allow you to thoroughly explore the towns and villages on the way. There is plenty of accommodation en route so a plethora of itineraries is possible (see above and opposite).

This book splits the journey into three sections, but it can be divided into just two stages, or four or more.

STAYING IN B&B-STYLE ACCOMMODATION

Night	Relaxed		Medium		Fast	
	Place	Approx Distance miles/km	Place	Approx Distance miles/km	Place	Approx Distance miles/km
0	Minehead	0	Minehead	0	Minehead	0
1	Porlock Weir	9/14.5	Porlock Weir	9/14.5	Lynmouth	21.25/34.2
2	Lynmouth	12.25/19.7	Lynmouth	12.25/19.7	Ilfracombe	19.5/31.3
3	Combe Martin	13.75/22.1	Combe Martin	13.75/22.1	Croyde	14.75/23.7
4	Ilfracombe	5.75/9.3	Woolacombe	14.25/22.9	Barnstaple	13.5/21.7
5	Woolacombe	8.5/13.7	Braunton	14.75/23.7	W ^{ard} Ho!	18.5/29.8
6	Saunton	8.5/13.7	Instow	12.5/20.1	Clovelly	11/17.7
7	Barnstaple	11.25/18.1	Westward Ho!	11/17.7	H ^{land} Quay	10.5/16.9
8	Instow	7.5/12.1	Clovelly	11/17.7	Bude	15.5/25
9	Appledore	6.25/10.1	Hartland Quay	10.5/16.9		
10	Westward Ho!	4.75/7.6	Morwenstow	8/12.9		
11	Clovelly	11/17.7	Bude	7.5/12.1		
12	Hartland Quay	10.5/16.9				
13	Morwenstow	8/12.9				
14	Bude	7.5/12.1				

WHICH DIRECTION?

It's more common for walkers attempting the entire trail to start from Minehead and head west. This is also the logical way to walk and thus the way we have chosen to describe the route in Part 4. If this is your first taste of the South-West Coast Path – but think you may like to do it all one day – obviously this is the way to head, with the Cornwall section next up. Furthermore, many will argue that Bude is a more picturesque place to celebrate the end of your walk than Minehead!

That said, this may of course be the final leg of your walk on the South-West Coast Path and thus Bude to Minehead would probably be the way to go. What's more, the prevailing wind usually comes from the west, so by walking in this direction you'll find you have the weather behind you, pushing you on rather than driving in your face. If you prefer to swim against the tide of popular opinion and walk west to east you should find it easy to use this book too.

THE BEST DAY AND WEEKEND WALKS

Trying to pick one particular section that is representative of the entire trail is impossible because each is very different. The wilds of Exmoor, the beaches of Woolacombe and Croyde, the estuaries of Bideford and Barnstaple, and the windswept cliff-top beauty of Hartland – each region enjoys its own character and to think that, by visiting one, you have a flavour of the entire region, is erroneous. That said, if you don't have the time to walk the entire route the following will allow you to savour at least some of the joys of the Exmoor and

□ **BUS SERVICES** (*cont'd from p48*)

First (☒ www.firstgroup.com/cornwall)

95 Bude to Wadebridge via Camelford, Mon-Sat 6/day

Quantock Heritage (☒ www.quantockheritage.com)

300 Minehead to Lynmouth via Porlock & Countisbury, mid July to early Sep
daily 2/day

Stagecoach (☒ www.stagecoachbus.com)

5B Exeter to Barnstaple via Bideford, Instow & Fremington, Mon-Sat 8-10/day

6 Bude to Exeter via Holsworthy & Okehampton, Mon-Sat 7/day, Sun and bank
holidays 2/day

6A Bude to Exeter via Launceston & Okehampton, Mon-Sat 4/day, Sun 1/day

15A East-the-Water to Appledore via Bideford & Northam,
Mon-Fri 9/day, Sat 11/day

15C East-the-Water to Appledore via Bideford & Northam, Mon-Sat 11/day,
3/day start/end in **Barnstaple**

(note the services operate on a slightly different route and start in/continue to
Barnstaple in the early morning/evening)

21 (called North Devon Wave) **Ilfracombe to Bideford** via Braunton, Chivenor,
Barnstaple, Fremington & Instow, Mon-Sat 1-2/hr, Sun 1/hr continues to
Westward Ho! via Northam

Croyde to Westward Ho! via Saunton Sands, Braunton, Chivenor, Barnstaple,
Fremington, Instow, Bideford & Northam, Mon-Sat 1/hr

Croyde to Barnstaple, May-Sep Sun 5/day

Braunton to Westward Ho! via Chivenor, Barnstaple, Fremington, Instow,
Bideford & Northam, Mon-Sat 1/hr

21A Ilfracombe to Appledore via Braunton, Chivenor, Barnstaple, Fremington,
Instow, East-the-Water & Bideford, Sun & Bank Hols 1/hr

85 Barnstaple to Holsworthy via Bideford, Mon-Sat 4-5/day, 1-2/day continue to
Bude in the afternoon and start in Bude in the morning

155 Exeter to Barnstaple via Tiverton, Mon-Sat 5-6/day

216/217 Morwenstow to Bude, Mon-Sat 1/day

217/219 Hartland to Bude, Mon-Tue & Thur-Sat 5/day

319 Barnstaple to Hartland via Bideford, Abbotsham & Clovelly, Mon-Sat 4/day,
1/day continues to Bude and another 1/day goes from Bideford to Hartland; the
319 connects with the 219 service (see above).

Plymouth Citybus Service (☎ 01752-662271, ☒ www.plymouthbus.co.uk)

12B Launceston to Bude, Mon-Sat 6/day; this connects at Launceston with the
No 12 service to Plymouth (Mon-Sat 12/day, Sun 6/day)

C2 Common flora



Common Dog Violet
Viola riviniana



Common Centaury
Centaurium erythraea



Honeysuckle
Lonicera periclymenum



Ramsons (Wild Garlic)
Allium ursinum



Germander Speedwell
Veronica chamaedrys



Herb-Robert
Geranium robertianum



Lousewort
Pedicularis sylvatica



Self-heal
Prunella vulgaris



Scarlet Pimpernel
Anagallis arvensis



Sea Campion
Silene maritima



Bluebell
Hyacinthoides non-scripta



Hogweed
Heracleum sphondylium



Dog Rose
Rosa canina



Meadow Buttercup
Ranunculus acris



Gorse
Ulex europaeus



Tormentil
Potentilla erecta



Birdsfoot-trefoil
Lotus corniculatus



Ox-eye Daisy
Leucanthemum vulgare



Common Ragwort
Senecio jacobaea



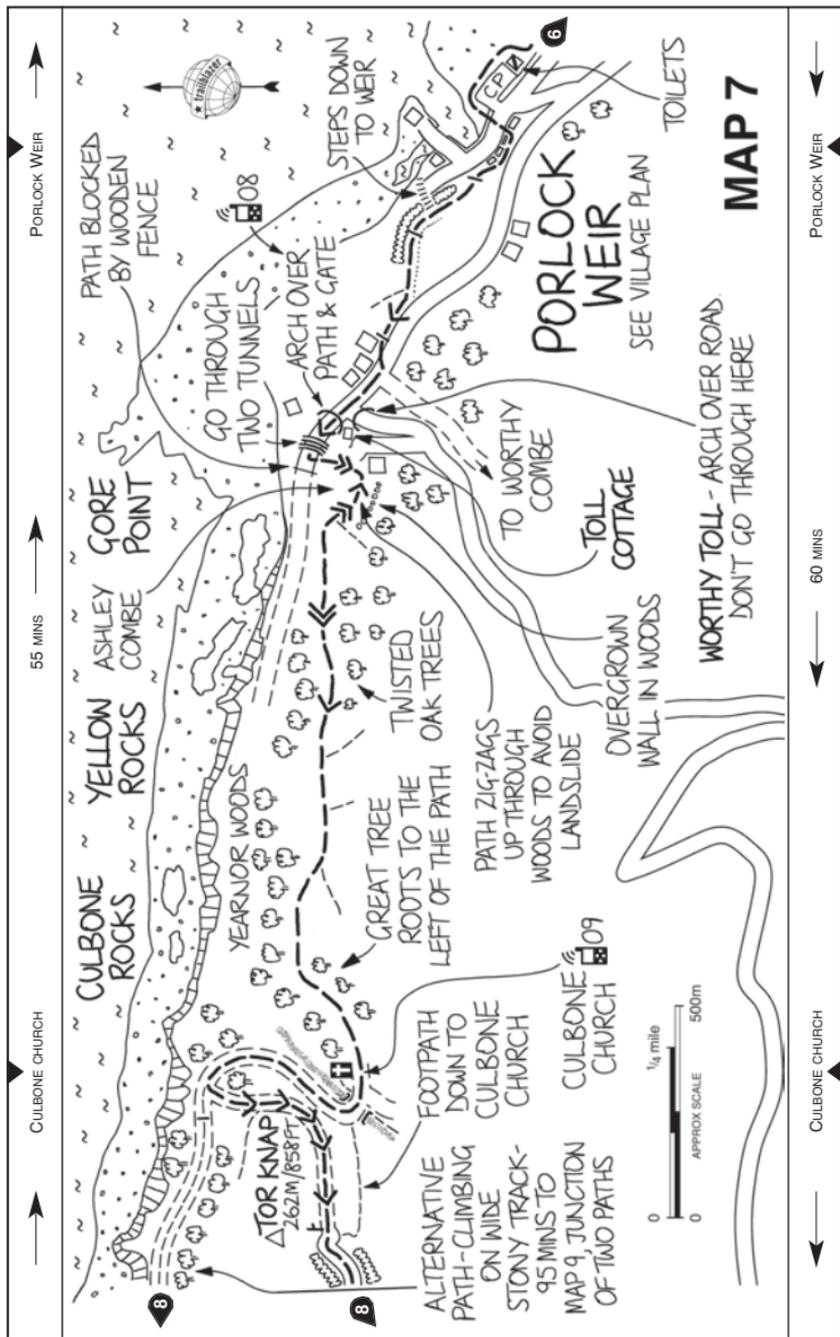
Primrose
Primula vulgaris



Cowslip
Primula veris

Colour photos (following pages)

- **C4 Top left:** After the steep climb, take a well-deserved break to enjoy the tremendous views back over the Heddon Valley. **Right:** The Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway (see p102), with Foreland Point in the distance. **Bottom:** The riverside at Lynmouth (see p98).
- **C5 Left:** Looking east, across Lee Bay. **Top right:** Culbone Church (see p93). **Bottom right:** The local lifeboat shelters in the estuary to the Taw and Torridge rivers; across the water the southern end of Braunton Burrows can be seen.
- **C6 Top:** Woolacombe's award-winning beach. **Right:** *Verity*, Damien Hirst's sculpture (see p120), gazes out over the Bristol Channel from Ilfracombe. **Bottom:** Ilfracombe.
- **C7 Left:** After a hard day's walk, Clovelly's steeply cobbled streets can be a challenge (see p180). **Right (top):** Staunton Court, visible from the alternative route out of Staunton Sands. (Photo © Henry Stedman). **Middle:** South of Hartland Quay, you'll experience mile-upon-majestic-mile of cliff-top walking. **Bottom left:** A matter of metres from Cornwall you'll pass the hut of the writer, Ronald Duncan (see p194). **Bottom right:** Wherever you look, the views from Hartland Quay are tremendous; Lundy Island in the distance.



Continuing on the SWCP, the path plots a flat course between the back of the beach and the farmland before turning sharp right to rejoin the shoreline to **Porlock Weir**.

PORLOCK WEIR

Peaceful Porlock Weir feels like the type of place where you could quite easily sit back and forget that you're supposed to be walking, as you opt instead to while away your time listening to the sea and staring wearily out towards Wales. The boats rock lazily in the weir's small port and the waves lap somnolently onto the pebbles and shingle of the millennia-old harbour arm.

The one-room **Boatshed Museum** (Easter-Oct daily 10am-5pm; free but donations welcome) features interesting displays about the settlement's seafaring heritage.

For supplies, **Harbour Stores** (☎ 01643-863033; summer Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun 9am-5pm, winter 10am-1pm) sells essentials (including takeaway drinks).

Buses of Somerset's No 10 service operates between here and Minehead (see p48-50 for details).

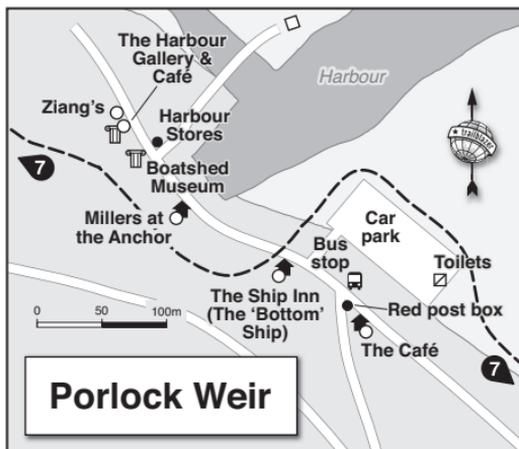
There are three **B&B** options in Porlock Weir, all with restaurants. **Millers at The Anchor** (☎ 01643-862753, ☑ www.millersuk.com/anchor; 11D/3T, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; Ⓛ; 🐾) is as much a museum and gallery as it is a hotel (£45-115.50pp, sgl occ £55-144). The interior is fabulous, with paintings, busts and antiques crammed into every spare space. The walls are lined with books, including some written by the owner himself; everywhere you look there is something to catch the eye. There's also a small **cinema** (offering a £15/20 two/three course 'Movie and Meal' deal on Sun & Wed eves, booking recommended) and even an honesty bar providing drinks on the basis of trust – definitely a novelty in this day and age! Lunch (Mon-Fri noon-3pm, Sat & Sun to 5pm; sandwiches/baguettes from £8) and cream teas (available all day; from £5.50) are served, with an

à la carte menu (Wed-Sun 7-9pm; £25-33) in the evenings. One tip: this is not a place to come with a full rucksack on your back – just turn up with an empty belly and a thirst for the obscure!

The Ship Inn (also known as **The Bottom Ship**, see p87; ☎ 01643-863288, ☑ www.shipinporlockweir.co.uk; 2D/1T, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; Ⓛ; 🐾) is a simpler place, with far fewer distractions, charging £30-37.50pp (sgl occ £40). Amongst the hearty **food** served (daily noon-2.30pm & 6-8.30pm) is an Exmoor steak and ale pie (£10.95).

The Café (☎ 01643-863300, ☑ www.thecafeporlockweir.co.uk; 4D/1D or T, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI downstairs; Ⓛ sandwiches; 🐾) sits in a slightly elevated position with good views across the harbour and beyond, though one room doesn't have a view. B&B costs £50-68.75pp (sgl occ £50-104) and in terms of food (Wed-Sun noon-8pm) they focus on fresh fish and main courses generally cost £10-15.50.

Lunches (£4.20-8.50) can be found at **The Harbour Gallery and Café** (☎ 01643-863514, ☑ www.harbourgalleryandcafe.co.uk; Apr-Oct daily 10am-5pm, winter Fri-Tue 10.30am-3pm but hours can vary),



LEE AND LEE BAY [MAP 20, p127]

On your left before you leave Lee Bay is *Smuggler's Cottage Tearooms* (☎ 01271-864897; Easter-Oct daily 10.15am-5/5.30pm but weather/business dependent; w-f; ♿). Evidence exists of a tea garden being here for 150 years – although not consistently – and the current incarnation has been in the same family for 40 years. Breakfasts and lunches (£4.50-9) are on offer as are snacks and homemade cakes; hot food is available all day and is freshly cooked. There are vegetarian and gluten-free options and the tearoom is licensed.

In the village itself, *The Grampus Inn* (☎ 01271-862906, 🌐 www.thegrampusinn.co.uk; food served daily noon-3pm, Mon-Sat 7-9pm) serves real ales and reasonably priced sandwiches/ploughmans (£5-7.50) as well as a more hearty menu including bangers & mash (£9) and venison steak & chips (£18). They also do cream teas (Easter-Oct daily 3-6pm) for £4.80.

Ilfracombe & District's No 35 bus service calls here on a Tuesday and Friday; see pp48-50.

Becoming a little more testing, the path now makes its way along **Damage Cliffs**, a National Trust site. The trail then passes by 19th-century **Bull Point Lighthouse** (Map 21) housed in its own secure compound (the Bull Point Pen?), before following the cliff-tops to **Morte Point**, a place so wild it was once referred to locally as 'the place God made last and the Devil will take first'.

Notice that despite all this natural splendour many of the cliffs and peninsulas have such morbid names: Damage Cliffs, Breakneck Point, 'Morte' (French for 'Death') Point; shipwrecks were common here in the 19th century and many of the geological culprits were named appropriately. Indeed, Morte Point was said to be responsible for five shipwrecks in 1852 alone, while **Grunta Beach** is so named because after one unlucky ship ran aground the cargo of pigs she was carrying ran into the cove – grunting.

As you coax and tease your legs into the final stretch around Morte Point, take time to admire Baggy Point across the bay and stare in awe at the golden sands of Woolacombe's blue-flag beach: surf's up!

WOOLACOMBE [see map p131]

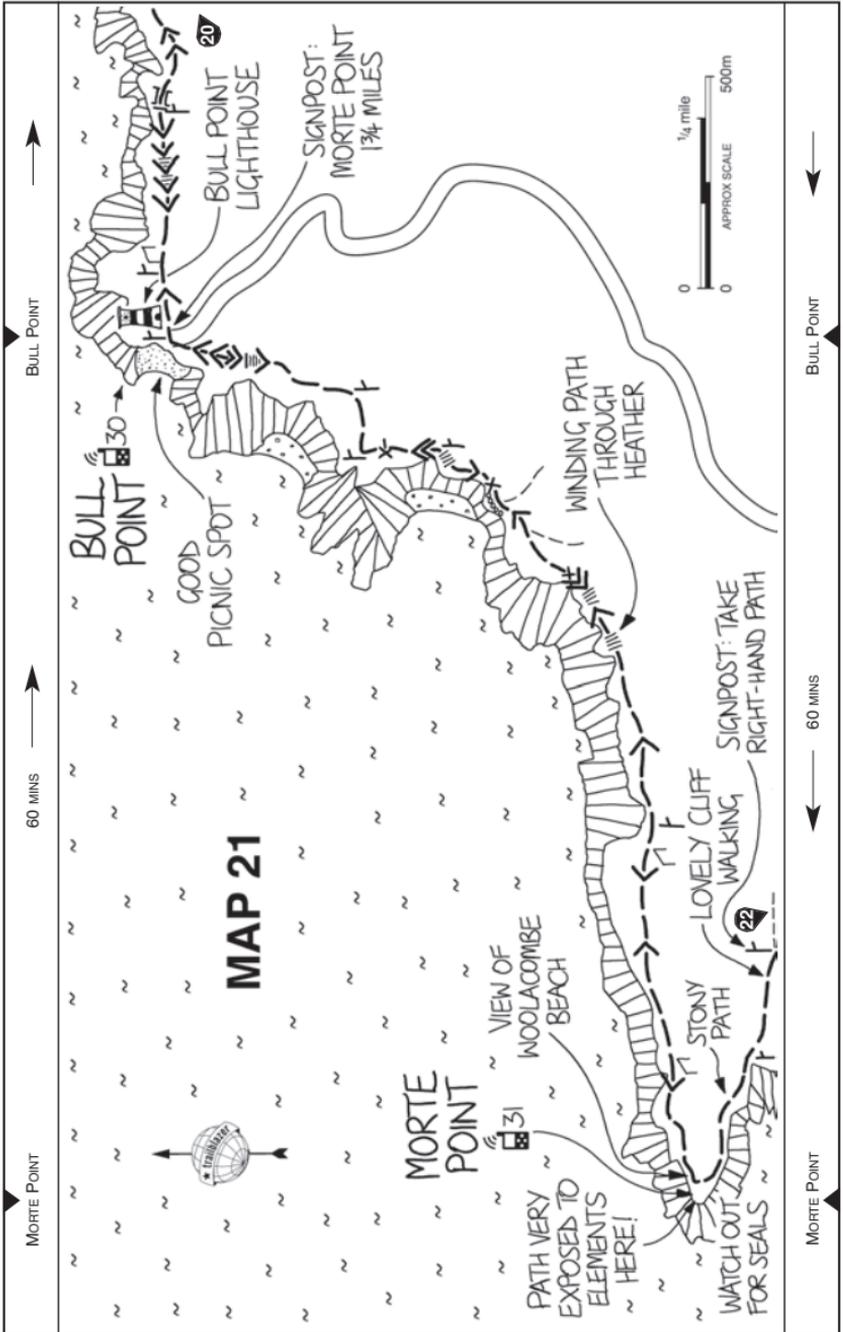
Nestling at the eastern end of Morte Bay, the village of Woolacombe has a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. Stretching out to the south, its vast and wonderful beach, which accompanies the path for approximately two miles (3.2km), is often granted the title of 'Britain's best beach' by traveller surveys and magazines. The view of

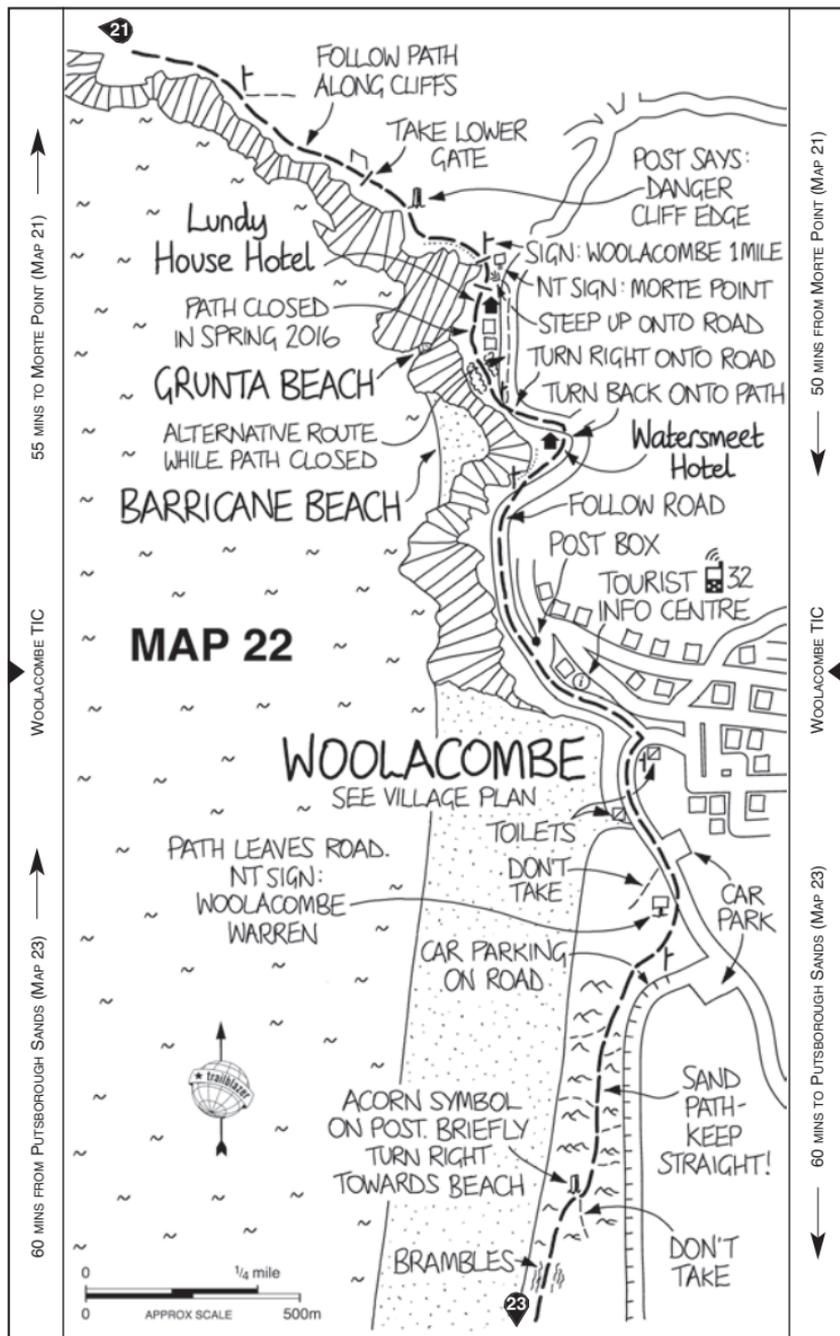
the golden expanse as you enter the village certainly acts as a fine welcome.

The village remained pretty much untouched until a fashion for sea bathing took the country by storm in the early 19th century, leading to the village's slow conversion into a resort. Bustling now with surfers in summer, it also has all the amenities a coastal-path walker needs.

🐕 Dogs on Woolacombe Beach

Dogs are allowed on the beach but only to the south of the stream which lies a couple of hundred metres south of town (ie the main entrance to the beach) – and even then only on a lead. You can release them, however, beyond the large Mill Rock that lies at the back of the beach. There are no restrictions between December and March.





Oddly, the name 'Woolacombe' is said to have nothing to do with the large sheep population that lives hereabouts, but actually comes from Wolmecoma, or 'Wolves Valley', referring to the large wolf population that presumably lived in the woods that existed around here at one time!

Services

The helpful and well-stocked **tourist information centre** (☎ 01271-870553, 🌐 www.woolacombetourism.co.uk; Easter-Oct daily 10am-5pm, Oct to Easter Mon-Sat 10am-1/4pm weather dependent) also boasts free **internet access** and **wi-fi**: they've even got iPads for customers to use. They are also happy to book accommodation (see box p40) and sell tickets for Lundy (see box p122).

You can take money out for free at the **ATM** on South St (with others that charge for withdrawals at Red Barn, see p133, and by the post office): money that you can then spend at the Londis **supermarket** (daily 8.30am-8pm) on West Rd or at Barton **Pharmacy** (Mon-Fri 9am-1pm & 2-6pm, Sat 9am-4pm) opposite. Also on West Rd is the **post office** (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, Sat 9am-12.30pm) at the back of a newsagent. Another **newsagent**, Shirley's (Mon & Tue 6.45am-7pm, Wed-Fri 6.45am-7.30pm, Sat

7am-7.30pm, Sun 7am-6.30pm), near Puffin Café, is well stocked and sells OS maps.

Back up on South St is a **laundrette**; and for tent pegs, also on South St, is **Devon Camping Equipment** (☎ 01271-871551, 🌐 loveyourcampervan.com; Easter-Oct daily 10am-5pm but hours may vary depending on business).

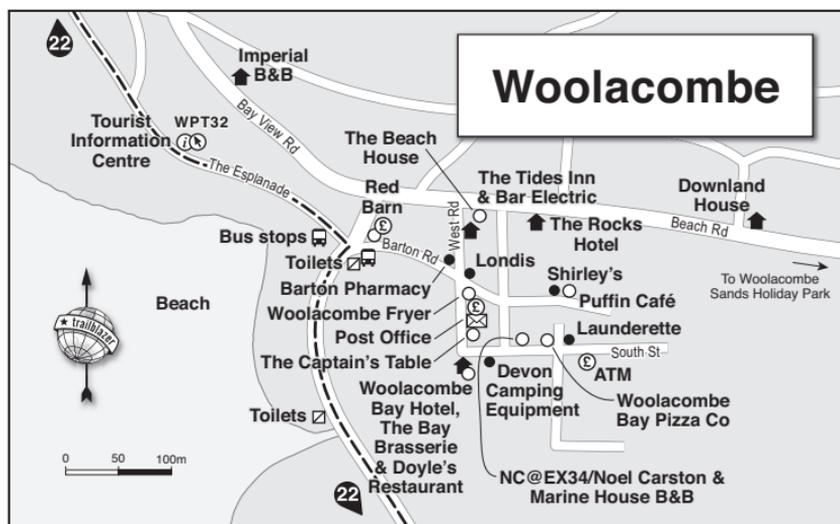
Transport

[See also pp48-50] As is usual for this path, Woolacombe is once again poorly served by public transport. Filers Travel's No 31 **bus** operates to Ilfracombe, as does their No 302, but on Sunday (May-Sep) only. Their No 303 goes to Braunton and Barnstaple. There are bus stops on Barton Rd and The Esplanade.

The local **taxi** firm is E Zee cabs (☎ 07966 548303).

Where to stay

Campers should head straight for **Woolacombe Sands Holiday Park** (☎ 01271-870569, 🌐 www.woolacombe-sands.co.uk; £5-20pp; WI-FI free in the club house; 🐾; late Mar to Oct) on Beach Rd. Though it's about 15 minutes' walk from the village centre it's a nice place with exceptional facilities and even has its own restaurant and bar.



If you wish to go north to Woolacombe or Ilfracombe you will need to change in either Braunton or Barnstaple.

There are **bus stops** near Billy Budd's in the centre of the village as well as nearer the beach close to Ruda Holiday Park.

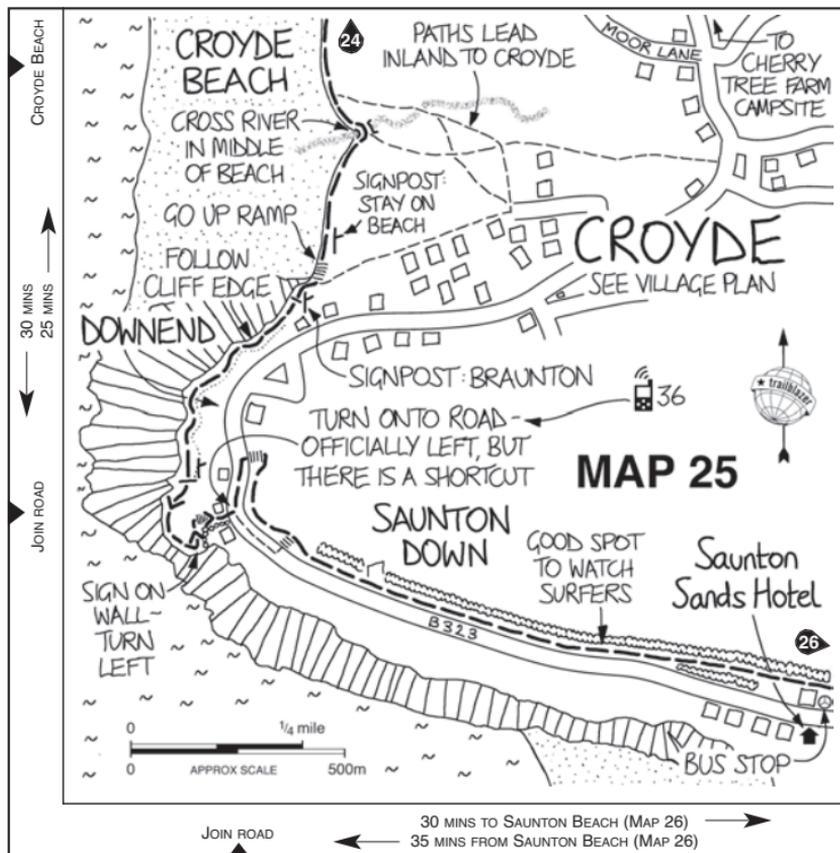
For a **taxi** try Croyde Coastal (☎ 07788-703188, 🌐 www.croydecoastal.co.uk).

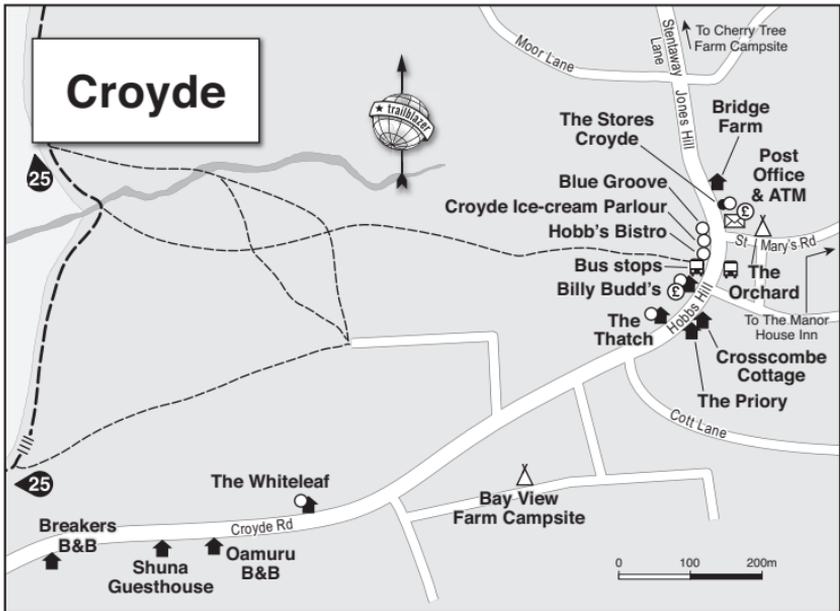
Where to stay

Croyde has a number of **campsites**. **Ruda Holiday Park** (Map 24; ☎ 0844-335 3677, 🌐 www.parkdeantouring.com; £14-50 per pitch; mid Mar to end Oct) is a behemoth with its own Costcutter **supermarket** (daily 8am-6pm) and **café** (daily 10am-6pm, later if resident), both of which are open when the park is open.

Smaller and cheaper than Ruda are **Bay View Farm Caravan & Camping Park** (☎ 01271-890501, 🌐 www.bayviewfarm.co.uk; WI-FI; Easter to end Sep; approx £23pp) and **Cherry Tree Farm Campsite** (☎ 01271-890495, 🌐 www.cherrytree.croyde.co.uk; £13pp plus a £5-10 bond, see website for details; May half-term & mid July to late Aug); the latter, despite advertising a minimum three-night stay policy, will often allow walkers to stay for only one night. To reach the campsite go to the end of Moor Lane then left up Stentaway Lane.

In central Croyde, **The Orchard** (☎ 07779-371195, 🌐 www.theorchardcampsitecroyde.co.uk; £12pp; WI-FI; 🐕) is the only site in Croyde to allow dogs. They





always try to squeeze hikers in but booking is recommended, particularly for Bank holiday weekends.

For **B&Bs** look on Croyde Rd which runs into Hobbs Hill – the centre of the village – at its southern end. Close to both the beach and the path you will find **Breakers** (☎ 01271-890101, 🌐 www.croydebreaks.co.uk; 2D or T/1Tr, all en suite; WI-FI; Ⓛ; Easter to end Oct), which charges from £45pp (sgl occ £60, three sharing £135), but does not take one-night bookings on Friday or Saturday nights; the small and family-run **Shuna Guesthouse** (☎ 01271-890537, 🌐 www.shunaguesthouse.co.uk; 5D, all en suite; WI-FI) which charges £45-50pp (sgl occ £85), and **Oamaru** (☎ 01271-890765, 🌐 www.oamarucroyde.co.uk; 1D/1Tr both en suite; ☹; WI-FI; Ⓛ), where B&B costs £35pp (sgl occ £52.50).

A little closer to town and with its own restaurant you will find **The Whiteleaf** (☎ 01271-890266, 🌐 www.thewhiteleaf.co.uk; 3D/1T/1Qd, all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; Ⓛ); the tariff here is £41-49pp (sgl occ £68-74, three sharing £115-140, rates on request for four sharing).

More central still is **The Thatch** (☎ 01271-890349, 🌐 www.thethatchcroyde.com; 10D/5T/2Tr, bunk-bed room, most en suite but three rooms share facilities; ☹; WI-FI; Ⓛ; 🐾), whose rooms are in four different buildings, including some at **Billy Budd's** (see Where to eat), **Crosscombe Cottage** and **The Priory**. B&B costs £30-50pp (sgl occ rates available on request, three sharing room rate plus £10).

The most charming place to stay is right in the noisy centre. The pretty, thatched **Bridge Farm** (☎ 01271-890422; 2D en suite/1Tr private facilities; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾; Easter to end Oct/Nov), 8 Jones Hill, is, according to the owner, at least 400 years old. The place is quirky and full of character – as you'd expect from a house this old – and the owners are pleasant too. It also provides a lovely contrast to the brash and noisy street outside. The tariff is £35-37.50pp (sgl occ room rate, three sharing £85).

Where to eat and drink

Croyde Ice Cream Parlour, in the centre on Hobb's Hill, is famed in the village because of its use of clotted cream as one of

its toppings! **The Stores Croyde** (see Services) has some splendid breakfast and lunch options!

For a pub meal try **Billy Budd's** (☎ 01271-890606, 📧 www.billybudds.co.uk; daily noon-10pm; Wi-Fi) which has Sky TV and does pizzas (from £8.95) to eat-in or take away and burgers (£11.95-14.95) as well as nachos (£6.95-11.95), paninis (£6.95) and fish 'n' chips (£11.95).

Pretty much next door, **The Thatch** (see Where to stay; daily 8am-10pm) is known for its beef nachos (£9.95-11.95). It's a large pub with surfboards hanging off the walls and daily surf reports adorning them as well as real ales such as Proper Job and Tribute.

At **The Manor House Inn** (☎ 01271-890241, 📧 www.themanorcroyde.co.uk; food served daily noon-10pm), a little out of town at 39 St Mary's Rd, the menu is extensive and varies but may include pan-fried

tiger prawns and chorizo linguine for £14.95. They also serve real ales.

For an à la carte menu made up of local produce there is the restaurant at **The Whiteleaf** (see Where to stay; Mon-Sat 7-8.30pm; booking essential); a roast loin fillet of venison is just one of the mouth-watering meals that may be on offer (all the produce is seasonal and prices can vary). **Hobb's Bistro** (☎ 01271-890256, 📧 www.hobbbsbistrocroyde.co.uk; daily 6.30-9pm, school hols Tue-Sat 9am-2pm) is the smartest place in town and has some great dishes such as seafood paella (£16.95) whilst just a few yards down the hill, **Blue Groove** (☎ 01271-890111, 📧 www.bluegroove.co.uk; mid Mar to Oct daily 9am to late, Nov & Dec Fri & Sat 10am-late, Sun & Mon 10am-4pm, closed Jan-mid Mar) serves breakfasts, lunches and evening meals, though it's best known for its *moules frites* (£13.95).

Having navigated **Croyde Sands** a small headland – **Downend** – separates you from Saunton. Round this and the path drops down to the busy B3231 before running around the side of Saunton Sands Hotel (see p142).

From the car park below the hotel the path heads up the slope on the tarmac, turning off right halfway up (unmarked) to walk around the back of houses before rejoining the B3231 for an unpleasant stretch of pavement-less road walking. Thankfully, there is an alternative.

The alternative route begins after you reach Saunton Sands Hotel, though the price you pay is to climb instead the biggest gradient between Woolacombe and Westward Ho!. This route then passes through a couple of fields before dropping down via elegant Saunton Court to a crossroads, where you rejoin the main trail. Turn left at the crossroads if going to Lobbs Field Caravan and Camping Park (see p142).

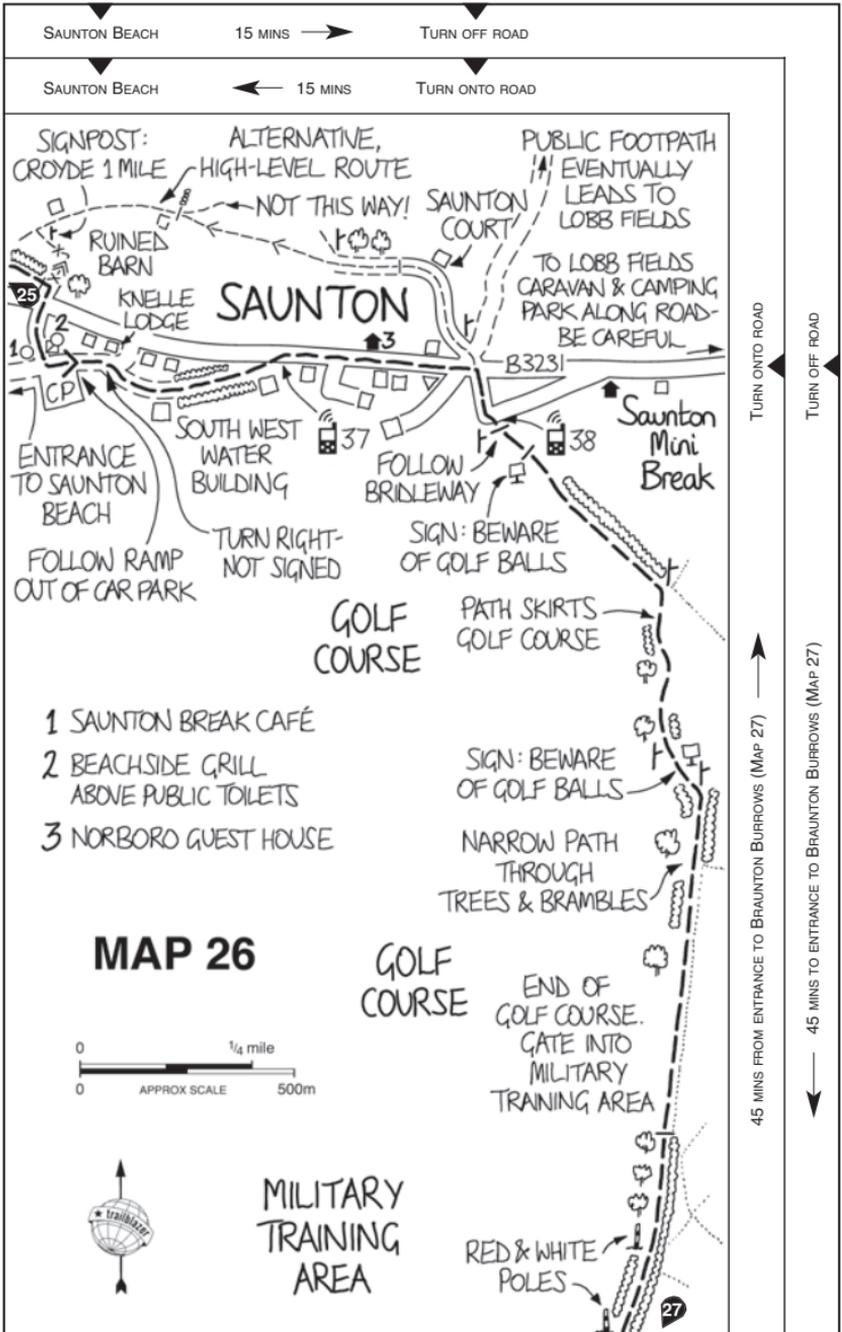
SAUNTON [MAP 26]

Despite Saunton's far larger beach there are fewer amenities than in Croyde, with scant options for food and accommodation.

The beach is renowned for its wildlife, with the possibility of spying oystercatchers, cormorants, and numerous other birds. From the shore you might see porpoise, seals and possibly dolphins in summer. Fishermen have reported foxes and even otters sneaking up behind them in attempts to steal their catch!

If wishing to get a **bus** (see pp48-50), Stagecoach's 21 service stops by Saunton Sands Hotel.

The nearest **campsite** is approximately two miles along the road (B3231) although there is an alternative way, leading via a series of footpaths, to the top of the campsite; this is worth doing as the road is very busy. From the road by Saunton Court, turn left up unmade Hannaburrow Lane to Long Lane (first turning on the right). Follow this



to the road junction, then take a right down Lobthorn Lane, following it down the hill until you can see Lobb Fields campsite. **Lobb Fields Caravan and Camping Park** (☎ 01271-812090, 🌐 www.lobbfields.com; wi-fi; 🐾; walkers £7-16 tent plus up to two people; mid Mar-late Oct) has its own snack bar and a laundry room.

There are two **B&Bs**, both a short jaunt inland from the beach and close to where the path leaves the road. **Norboro Guest House** (☎ 01271-816210, 🌐 www.norboroguesthouse.co.uk; 2D/2T, all en suite or private facilities; ♥; wi-fi) is an Edwardian house that has views across the Burrows and charges £35-37.50pp (sgl occ £40-55); at **Saunton Minibreak** (☎ 01271-813672, 🌐 sauntonminibreak@hotmail.com; 1T, en suite; wi-fi; 🐾), 1 Warren Cottages, one-night stops are not available at the weekend from July to September and the breakfast is continental. The tariff is £32.50-37.50pp (sgl occ £45-55).

Saunton Sands Hotel (Map 25; ☎ 01271-890212, 🌐 sauntonsands.co.uk; 11S/79D or T, all en suite; ♥; wi-fi; 📺) is owned by the local B&B chain. This whitewashed colossus is something of a landmark; indeed, you will see this hotel from as far away as Westward Ho!. Rates

are £101-205pp (sgl occ/three sharing rates on request), but they also have special offers so it is worth contacting them to check). The rooms are comfortable without being remarkable – but, given the views along the three-mile beach from most of them, who cares! – and some can have additional beds. Note that in the summer school holidays it's week-long stays only, and at Easter guests are required to stay for a minimum of three nights. **Food** is served daily from 7.30am till about 9.30pm).

There are two other options for **food** by the sand. **Saunton Break Cafe** (☎ 01271-890077; July-Aug daily 8am-7pm, Feb half-term daily 9am-4pm, Mar-July & Sep-Oct Mon-Fri 10am-4pm, Sat & Sun 9am-5pm, rest of year Fri 10.30am-3pm, Sat & Sun 10am-4pm) is a takeaway which sells pasties and sandwiches. Note that their opening hours do also depend on the weather. **Beachside Grill** (☎ 01271-891288, 🌐 www.beachsidegrill.co.uk; food Mar-Dec Wed-Mon noon-7pm, Jan-Mar Wed-Sun) is owned by the hotel and has a sizeable balcony with magnificent views. The menu's impressive too, including open grilled sandwiches (£8-10), steaks (£19-24) and Lundy lobster (£19/31 half/whole).

The path then heads off along the edge of a **golf course** and through a **military training area** to **Braunton Burrows** (see box below). (*cont'd on p146*)

□ Braunton Burrows and The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Braunton Burrows is the centre of The North Devon UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (🌐 www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk), an area of 3300 sq km that, according to the United Nations, encompasses a 'world-class environment' rich in wildlife and containing a mix of extraordinary landscapes. As well as the Burrows, the Biosphere Reserve includes **Braunton Marsh and Great Field, the Taw and Torridge Estuary, Fremington Quay and Northam Burrows Country Park**. No wonder, therefore, that there are over 60 SSSIs (see p61) within the area's boundaries.

The Burrows themselves are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, as well as the largest sand dune system in England. There are nearly 500 recorded species of **flowering plants** on the site, including such rarities as the sand toadflax, which is unique to the Burrows, the water germander and the round-headed club-rush. There are also 33 species of **butterfly**, over half of Great Britain's regularly recorded species. For enthusiasts, resident is the small blue butterfly (*Cupido minimus*), although you are far more likely to spot a dark green fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*) or marbled white (*Melanargia galathea*). **Guided tours** of the Burrows run regularly throughout the summer. Details can be found at 🌐 www.brauntoncountrysidecentre.org.

(cont'd from p183) Eventually, around four hours after setting off, you pass the turn-off to **West Titchberry Farm** (Map 46; ☎ 01237-441287, 📧 westtitchber ryfarm.co.uk; 1Qd en suite, 1D/1T private facilities if only one room booked; ☹; WI-FI; 📶), a typical Devon longhouse and B&B that charges £30-35pp (sgl occ £35-37, three/four sharing £90/120), and offers evening meals (£13/15 two/three courses if requested in advance) as well as a pick-up/drop-off facility (subject to a small charge) for walkers. (Its neighbour, by the way, **East Titchberry Farm**, is a 17th-century National Trust property with its own malt-house that's unfortunately closed to the public.)

Shortly afterwards – though it's been visible a long way beforehand – is the giant white golf-ball-on-a-tee that is the **radar station**. At its foot is **The Point @ Hartland** (☎ 07977-010463, 📧 www.thepointhartland.co.uk; Easter-Oct daily 10am-5pm); a rest stop is hard to resist at this stage, though note that they do not have a toilet. Lunches, hot drinks and cream teas are available, as are OS maps, sun-cream and Compeeds (£1.50) should you have developed any blisters.

From here, it's but a short skip to **Hartland Point** (Map 47), where the Bristol Channel meets the Atlantic and the SWCP begins to head in a more southerly direction after so long heading west. The point is marked by the **light-house**, built in 1874 and said to be visible up to 25 miles away.

Though you're on the homeward stretch, there's still plenty to be done on this leg before you can finally call it a day. Passing a **memorial** to *Glenart Castle* (a hospital ship that was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1918 with the loss of 153 men and women out of a total of 186 on board), the path takes you on several steep descents, the second leading towards **Gull Rock**, the third towards the isolated valley of **Blackpool Mill**. Heading up and out of here, the path finally flattens as it crosses **The Warren**, decorated by the ruins of a **tower** – once a folly, so it is believed, but which now makes a nice frame for your photo of the village church in the distance. From here, the way is straightforward to **Hartland Quay**, turning right down the hill by Rocket House.

HARTLAND QUAY, STOKE & HARTLAND

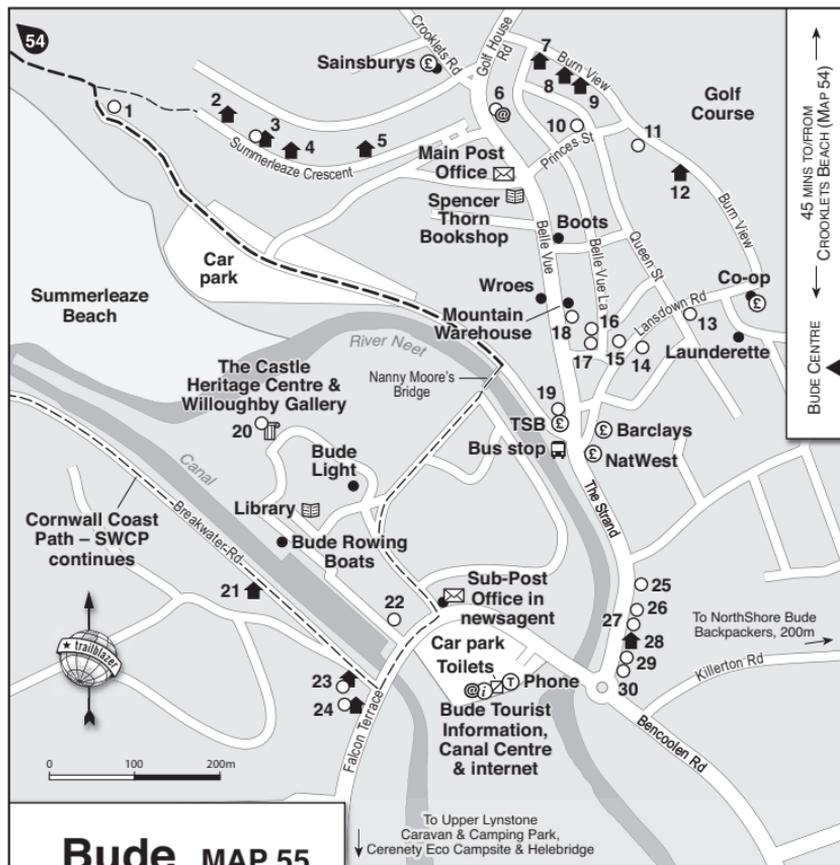
Hartland Quay [Map 48]

There's little to Hartland Quay other than the hotel. This hotel, converted from what were once stables and customs houses, hints at the importance of this spot as a major port in Tudor times. A storm in 1887 destroyed the quay, and these days there's only a small modern slipway. Nevertheless, the past can still be glimpsed in the hotel's very own museum, with photos and mementoes of various shipwrecks that have occurred on this stretch of shoreline over four centuries. (They've plenty of raw material to choose from, for it's said that

this coastline has approximately ten shipwrecks per mile!)

As for the accommodation, **Hartland Quay Hotel** (☎ 01237-441218, 📧 hartland quayhotel.co.uk; 1S/1T/5D/3Tr/2Qd/annexe sleeps up to 6; all en suite; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾 stay in annexe only) offers rooms (from £50pp, sgl/sgl occ from £65, three-six sharing £50pp) that are the perfect place to nurse sore feet while gazing out over the crashing surf.

The hotel's bar, **The Wreckers' Retreat** (food served daily noon-2.30pm & 6-9pm plus 3-5.30pm at weekends and in summer) is also decorated with photos and souvenirs



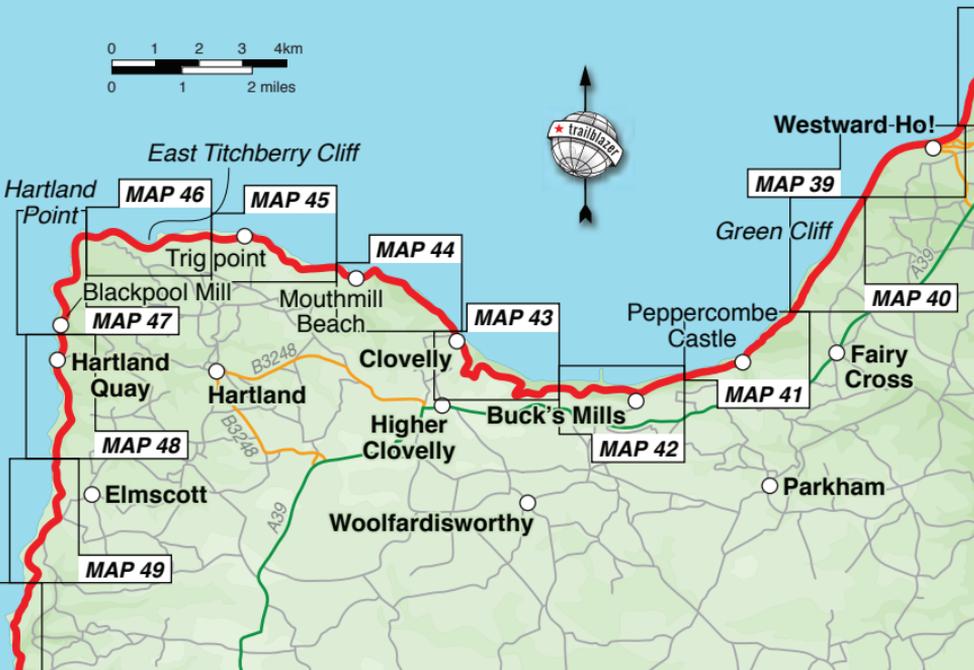
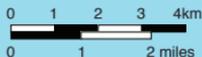
Where to stay

- 2 The Beach
- 3 The Edgcombe
- 4 Atlantic House
- 5 The Grosvenor
- 7 Tee-Side Guest House
- 8 Sunrise
- 9 Links Side Guest House
- 12 Sea Jade Guest House
- 21 Breakwater House
- 23 Falcon Hotel
- 24 Brendon Arms
- 28 Premier Inn

Where to eat and drink

- 1 Life's a Beach
- 3 The Deck (at The Edgcombe)
- 6 Coffee Pot Café (& internet access)

- 10 Sizzlers (Fish & Chips)
- 11 Bude Tandoori
- 13 The Coffee Shop
- 14 Lansdowne Bakery
- 15 Scrummies
- 16 KJ's
- 17 Pengenna's Pasties
- 18 Costa Coffee
- 19 Atlantic Diner
- 20 Limelight Café
- 22 Olive Tree Coffee House & Bistro
- 23 Falcon Hotel
- 24 Brendon Arms
- 25 Tiandi
- 26 Silver River Chinese Takeaway
- 27 Carriers Inn
- 29 La Bocca Pizza Kitchen
- 30 The Shack



Maps 39-43

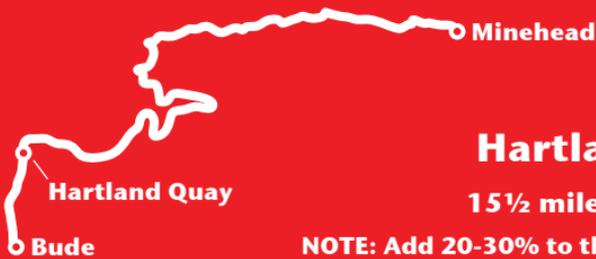
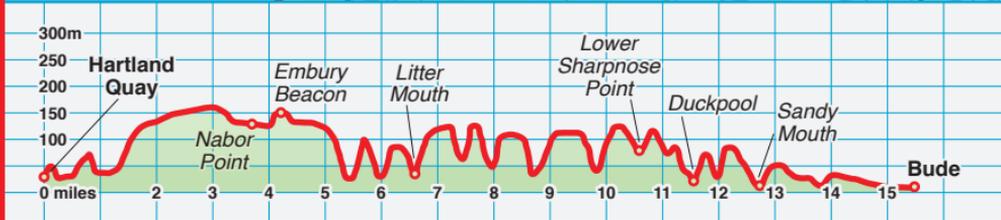
Westward Ho! to Clovelly

11 miles/17.7km – 4hrs 35mins

Maps 43-48 Clovelly to Hartland Quay

10½ miles/16.9km – 5hrs 5mins

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



Maps 48-55

Hartland Quay to Bude

15½ miles/24.9km – 8hrs 45mins

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



**EXMOOR & N DEVON
COAST PATH**

FINISH

See 'Cornwall
Coast Path'

Exmoor & N Devon Coast Path

MINEHEAD – BUDE

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- Map 3 – p81 Furzebury Brake
- Map 4 – p82 Western Brockholes
- Map 5 – p83 Bossington
- Map 6 – p86 West Porlock
- Map 7 – p90 Porlock Weir
- Map 8 – p95 Culbone Wood
- Map 9 – p96 Sugarloaf Hill
- Map 10 – p97 Coddowcombe
- Map 11 – p99 Countisbury
- Map 12 – p107 Lynton
- Map 13 – p109 Woody Bay
- Map 14 – p110 Heddon's Mouth
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- Map 17 – p113 Combe Martin
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2
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This guide to the coast path from **Minehead to Bude** (124¹/₂ miles, 200km) covers the first section, Exmoor & North Devon, of the 630-mile (1014km) **South-West Coast Path**. This spectacular 10- to 12-day route crosses Exmoor National Park following the highest coastline in England (over 800ft), through idyllic villages such as Lynton and Clovelly, by some of Britain's best sandy beaches, and around Hartland Point to Bude just into Cornwall.

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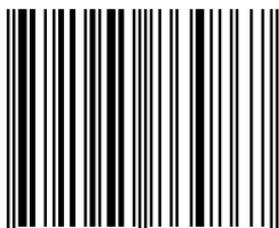
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