



Exmoor, England

May 18 - 25, 2019

The trip to Porlock in Exmoor National Park begins and ends in Taunton, England. You can fly to London and then take the train to Taunton where we will meet you with a minibus to transport you to the village of Porlock. After the minimum of 10 reservations is reached, we will advise you to make your air travel reservations.

Trip Start: May 18, 2019 – Taunton train station 2:00PM
Trip Finish: May 25, 2019 – Taunton train station 10:00AM
Trip Length: 8 days, 7 nights
Trip Cost: \$3,300 per person sharing a room
\$3,750 for a single room

(Trip cost includes everything except airfare, 2 dinners, 1 lunch, beverages, and tips.)

Day by Day Overview

Saturday, May 18 – Meet Karen at the bus pick up area of the Taunton Train Station at 2:00PM. We will have a minibus to take us to Porlock to The Oaks Hotel. Get settled and explore the lovely village of Porlock. Meet at 6:00 PM in the hotel sitting room for refreshments and preview of our week. This will be followed by dinner at our hotel at 7:00PM.

Lodging: The Oaks Hotel - <http://oakshotel.co.uk/>

Sunday, May 19 - Horner Wood. We have a minibus from Porlock to Dunkery Hill. Our starting point is Easter Hill, the site of ancient cairns from prehistoric burials. Following a path over Dunkery Beacon to Stoke Pero church, we drop down into Dunkery and Horner Wood National Nature Reserve— an ancient woodland and one of the largest Nature Reserves in England (1604 hectares) owned and managed by the National Trust. . We follow the Horner Water stream through oak woods to Horner. There is a welcome tea room in Horner. After crossing a pack-horse bridge we follow the Coleridge Way footpath back into Porlock. Distance today: 8 miles; elevation gain: 200 feet.

➤ Dinner together at our hotel.

Monday, May 20 - Watersmeet and Valley of the Rocks. We will have a minibus today to take us west toward Lynmouth. Our goal is the Watersmeet Valley and the meeting place of the East Lyn River and Hoar Oak Water. Watersmeet (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/watersmeet/>) is part of the North Devon coast managed by the National Trust. Watersmeet House and Tea Garden is said to be the most beautiful in Devon! We follow the path along the river into Lynton and then to a very different topography at Valley of the Rocks. A dry valley

that runs parallel to the coast of North Devon, the Valley of the Rocks has formations carved by the Ice Age. The views from our path are dramatic with an open expanse to the Bristol Channel. In 1797 Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth came together to this valley and set some of their writing here. The poet Robert Southey visited and got writing inspiration here also. Minibus back to Porlock. Distance today: 7 miles; elevation gain: 650 feet.

- Dinner on your own.

Tuesday, May 21 - Free Day (kind of). This is a day to do whatever you want; however, we have planned a couple of things for our morning that we think will interest you. At 10:00 we have a guided tour of the Doverly Manor Museum, (<http://www.doverlymanormuseum.org.uk/>) a small 15th century manor house that contains artifacts, photos, and maps all relating to the Porlock area. Following the museum visit we are offered a walking tour of the very small village of Porlock. Your afternoon is free.

- Lunch on your own.
- Dinner together at our hotel.

Wednesday, May 22 – Lorna Doone Walk...tracing her story. This morning we take a minibus to the Doone Valley. Our footpath will drop steeply down to the river at Malmsmead. We will walk the Doone Valley south to Badgeworthy Water and to the site of a medieval village. We return via a moorland path to Lankombe Ford and then around Malmsmead Hill. The Lorna Doone Farm is at Malsmead. (Read **Lorna Doone** a 19th century novel by R. D. Blackmore, also on video). Return by minibus to Porlock. Distance today: 7.5 miles; elevation gain: 450 feet.

- Dinner on your own.

Thursday, May 23 - Selworthy Beacon. We walk out of Porlock village and across fields to the hamlet of Bossington. We follow a footpath along the edge of Aller Water to the coast of Hurlstone Point, the site of an old coast guard station. Our climb to Selworthy Beacon rewards us with fine views north across the Severn Estuary to Wales. Going gently downhill we connect with a bridleway to Selworthy village. This village is the epitome of an English country village with lovely thatched cottages set around a village green and a beautiful old church. After our picnic lunch we walk a green lane to Allerford where we will have the chance to visit a folk museum. It is then just a short walk back to Bossington and possibly a cream team. Another short walk across fields returns us to Porlock.

Distance today: 9 miles; elevation gain: 1000 feet.

- Dinner together at our hotel.

Friday, May 24 – Silcombe Farm to Culbone.

This morning we take a minibus which will drop us a mile from the Silcombe Farm. Our walk will take us to Silcombe Farm where Samuel Coleridge lived and wrote for a period of time. We continue on to Culbone Church. This church is said to be the smallest in England and is recorded in the Domesday Book. We'll return to Porlock via Porlock Weir with its galleries, old boats and quaint pubs (this is the tiny harbor area that serves Porlock). We'll get back to Porlock in time for packing and last shopping. Distance today: 6 miles; elevation gain: 500 feet.

- Farewell dinner in the hotel dining room.

Saturday, May 25 - Breakfast and departure to Taunton train station. Arrive at Taunton train station in time for any train from 10:00 AM forward.

Please Note: The above schedule is subject to change due to weather or other circumstances beyond our control.

Flight and Airport Info

Getting to Taunton, England—Fly from the U.S. to London Heathrow. From Heathrow take the Heathrow Express train to London-Paddington Station (costs 25 pounds and takes about 20 minutes). Trains to Taunton leave from Paddington Station...travel time is about 2 hrs. <https://www.heathrowexpress.com/>

Meals

Packed lunches provided by our hotel on hiking days and dinners as indicated on the itinerary.

Weather: Mild spring weather with some rain likely.

Helpful Websites:

Hotel in Porlock: www.oakshotel.co.uk
Train: www.nationalrail.co.uk
Porlock: www.porlock.co.uk
Exmoor: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
<http://www.everythingexmoor.org.uk/>

Reading:

Lorna Doone – R. D. Blackmore (fiction) – book or video

Exmoor –S.H. Burton (nonfiction) - 1984

Living on Exmoor—Hope Bourne (nonfiction) - 2010

Witch of Exmoor - Margaret Drabble (fiction) - 1998;

House of Lanyon (Exmoor Saga) - Valerie Anand (fiction) – 2007

The Summer House - Marcia Willett (fiction) – 2010

The Shepherd's Life – James Rebanks - 2015