



KDavisTravels

Exmoor, England

May 9 - 16, 2020

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 9, 2020 – Taunton train station 2:00PM
Trip Finish: May 16, 2020 – 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 9 – 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 10 - Horner Wood. We have a minibus from Porlock up onto Dunkery Hill. Our starting point is Kit Barrows, the site of ancient cairns from Bronze Age burials. Following the ridge over Dunkery Beacon we enter Dunkery and Horner Wood National Nature Reserve - one of the largest Nature Reserves in England (4000 acres), owned and managed by the National Trust. We then drop in to visit Stoke Pero church, perhaps the highest in England. Dropping further, we enter an ancient oak woodland and follow the Horner Water stream through the 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: 7 miles; elevation gain: 400 feet.

➤ Dinner together at our hotel.

Monday, May 11 - Watersmeet and Valley of the Rocks. We will have a minibus today to take us west to the Blue Bell coaching inn above 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 Lynmouth. After a picnic lunch, we ascend by funicular railway 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 to this valley and set some of their writing here. The poet Robert Southey visited and got inspiration here also. After visiting the small town of Lynton, we take our minibus back to Porlock.

Distance today: 7 miles; elevation gain: 650 feet

- Dinner on your own.

Tuesday, May 12 - 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. In the morning 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 13 – 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 Badgworthy Water and to the site of a medieval village. We return via a moorland path to Lankcombe Ford and then around Malmsmead Hill. The Lorna Doone Farm is at Malmsmead. (Read Lorna Doone a 19th century novel by R. D. Blackmore, also on video). Return by minibus to Porlock, pausing to visit the church that is featured at the end of Lorna Doone and where R.D. Blackmore's grandfather was rector.

Distance today: 7 miles; elevation gain: 450 feet.

- Dinner on your own.

Thursday, May 14 - Selworthy Beacon. We walk out of Porlock village and across fields to visit Porlock beach and then on to the hamlet of Bossington. We follow a footpath along the edge of Horner Water to the coast at Hurlstone Point, the site of an old coast guard station. Our climb to Selworthy Beacon rewards us with fine views north across the Bristol Channel to Wales. This area was once part of a large family estate and we will visit some of the remaining woodland shelters built by the family before going gently downhill into 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 tea. Another short walk across fields returns us to Porlock.

Distance today: 10 miles; elevation gain: 1000 feet.

- Dinner together at our hotel.

Friday, May 15 – 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.

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Distance today: 6 miles; elevation gain: 400 feet.

➤ Farewell dinner in the hotel dining room.

Saturday, May 16 - 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:

The Shepherd's Life – James Rebanks - 2015

Lorna Doone – R. D. Blackmore (fiction) – book can be tedious reading, suggest video instead

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

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