Mendip Hills AONB





TRAIL TYPE Walking

GRADE Moderate

DISTANCE

5 miles (8 km)

TIME 2 hours

OS MAP

Explorer: 141 Landranger: 182

CONTACT

01934 844518 cheddargorge@nationaltrust.org.uk

FACILITIES

Pay and Display car parks on both sides of the gorge (not National Trust)

National Trust

Nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

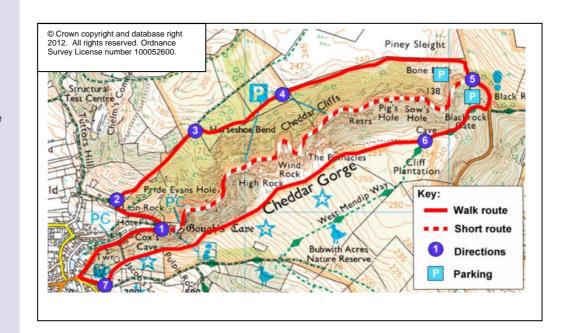
Cheddar Gorge

At almost 400ft (122m) deep and 3 miles long, this is England's largest gorge, and with its weathered crags and pinnacles, one of our most spectacular natural sites. It plays host to a varied community of specialized plants and wildlife, many of which you'll get to spot on this exhilarating circular walk.



TERRAIN

This is a moderate 5 mile (8km) route along paths. Several stiles and kissing gates, rough walking in sections and some steep climbs. It is not advisable to attempt this walk in foggy or very windy weather. SAFETY IN CHEDDAR GORGE: Please do not stand under cliffs as small rocks may fall at any time. Use only footpaths signed for the gorge walk at the top and bottom of Cheddar Gorge – it is dangerous to depart from these paths.



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START/END

National Trust shop and information centre, grid ref: ST 468543

HOW TO GET THERE

BY BIKE

Strawberry Line (National Cycle Network Route 26) an 8 mile route linking Cheddar to Kings Wood, Winscombe and Yatton.

www.sustrans.org.uk

BY BUS

Service 668, Street to Lower Langford. Service 126, Weston-super-Mare To Wells

BY CAR

Take A371 and follow signs to Cheddar.

DIRECTIONS

- (1) Take the track called Crufic Lane, which is off Cheddar High Street, opposite the National Trust Information Centre. A short way up this track you'll see a National Trust sign and a gate leading up a steep path. Cheddar Gorge is a great, deep fissure cutting through the Mendip Hills which would have begun forming about one million years ago. At the end of the last ice age, water from melting glaciers formed a river, which over time started to carve into the limestone rock creating the steep cliffs you see today. The Cheddar Yeo River gradually made its way underground, creating the famous Cheddar caves.
- (2) Go through the gate and keep to the path leading up through the woods. This is a very steep path, and the most strenuous part of the route, but worth the climb. Continue uphill until you get to the top of the path and go through the gate to the top.

Britain's oldest complete skeleton, the Cheddar man, was found in Gough's cave in Cheddar Gorge. It is estimated to be over 9,000 years old. Other remains dating back even further suggest humans have lived here for a very long time.

- (3) Head towards the stone wall diagonally to your right. Keep the wall/fence to your right at all times, the cliff edge is just below this area. Head for a wooden post currently displaying number 4. Continue up the path until you reach a kissing gate, go through this and follow the path. At the bottom of the hill, turn right and follow the track to reach the main road.
- (4) Turn left and continue up the road for a short distance until you see a footpath on the right side of the road, heading steeply uphill through the woods. Follow this and on reaching the top of the hill, continue walking until the path divides.

N.B. for a shorter walk, turn right and follow the B3151 back to the Information Centre – caution is needed as there are no pavements and the road is busy with some sharp bends.

- (5) Bear Right rather than taking the route marked to Draycott, and continue until you see a very tall gate. This is now going into land owned by Cheddar Gorge, but this part of the attraction is free and open to the public. You'll quickly reach the highest part of the Gorge and can look across to the other side you've just walked along.
- (6) Follow the path leading downwards until you get to Jacob's Ladder and Pavey's Lookout Tower. Don't go down Jacob's Ladder but instead take the quieter path to the left, through the trees, which brings you out onto Lippiatt Lane. From this section of the trail there are fine views over the Somerset Levels to the Quantock Hills and Exmoor.
- (7) Turn Right down the hill and right again at Gough's Craft Village, onto the high street. Walk back up this road to arrive back at the National Trust Information Centre.