

WALES – OFFA'S DYKE NATIONAL TRAIL

VALUE TOUR

8-days / 7-nights **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn walking in the border country between England and Wales



Back in the 8th Century it is said the ruthless Anglian King of Mercia, Offa, had trouble with his Welsh neighbours in Powys and Gwent marauding and stealing cattle. He built a huge earthwork following the high ground with commanding views into the Welsh mountains and valleys, which largely remained the frontier between England and Wales for hundreds of years. Today the remaining 80 miles of embankment forms Britain's longest archaeological monument and is the route of this famous walk. Crossing the border between England and Wales several times, the 177-mile (285km) Offa's Dyke National Trail path gives you some of the finest scenery in both countries.

This self-guided walk follows the southern half of this trail from Chepstow to Knighton. It is a journey packed with interest, through patchworks of fields, over windswept ridges, across infant rivers, beside ruined castles and through market towns. Traditional farming continues here and the hedgerows, oak woodlands and hay meadows form protective wildlife habitats for buzzards and the rare Red Kite.

Cost from: **\$1415** twin share per person. Single room supplement from \$350

Departs: Daily, 7th April to 6th October (*except during Hay-on-Wye Book Festival 23rd May – 2nd June 2019*)

Starts: Chepstow **Ends:** Knighton

Includes: 7 nights' hotel or guesthouse accommodation with ensuite facilities where available; 7 breakfasts; luggage transfers (1 piece per person up to 20kg); information package including route notes and maps (one set per room); emergency assistance.

Not included: Lunches, dinners, drinks and snacks; entrance fees; personal expenses; unscheduled transfers or taxis required during the trip; travel to/from the start and end points of the tour; travel insurance.

Grading: Moderate. This walk offers some long days and steep climbs and descents, although the terrain is generally undulating. Mixed weather can be expected. The trail is generally well waymarked, with National Trail Acorn marks often visible. But you will have to use map interpretation especially in times of low visibility, so you should be accustomed to using map and compass. Not recommended for first-time walkers.

Getting to the Start: Cardiff and Bristol airports are closest, but Chepstow is easily accessible from London by coach or train, around 2½ - 3 hours, or slightly slower rail connections from the Midlands via Shrewsbury. If arriving via London Heathrow, the Cardiff coach service from Heathrow stops in Chepstow en route.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Chepstow

Plan to arrive as early as you can today – if you arrive early enough you can start the walk (which actually begins at Sedbury Cliffs to the south of Chepstow) and save yourself 2 miles tomorrow. Our usual hotel in Chepstow is an old coaching inn dating to the 16th Century in the town centre.

Day 2: Chepstow to Redbrook or Monmouth

walk @ 14 miles (23km) or 17 miles (28km)

Begin from the mud flats of the River Severn at Sedbury. Join the Wye Valley with great views of Chepstow with its Norman castle. The way climbs high above the Wye Valley with views down to Tintern Abbey. Eventually descend to Redbrook, a 19th Century industrial village, or up and over the hills again to the famous border town of Monmouth, depending on where you are staying tonight.

Day 3: Redbrook or Monmouth to Llangattock Lingoed

walk @ 16 miles (26km) or 13 miles (21km)

From Redbrook, climb to the Naval Temple for perhaps one of the best views along the route, then down to Monmouth for a mid-morning coffee or tea break. Then climb through boggy King's Wood and cross into rural farmland. Another pause and a pint might be worthwhile in Llantillo Crosseny village with its fine 13th Century church. Descending from White Castle, a 12th Century Norman keep in an Arthurian setting with intact walls and a little moat, you walk over undulating terrain to Llangattock Lingoed.

Day 4: Llangattock Lingoed to Longtown

walk @ 9 miles (15km)

The trail continues via Pandy where you leave the lowland farms and rivers and climb up onto the Hatterrall Ridge and into the Black Mountains. The ridge mainly follows the border of England and Wales and the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Spectacular views all around in good weather.

Day 5: Longtown to Hay on Wye

walk @ 13 miles (20km)

A steep ascent of Hatterrall Ridge and over Cats Back to the highest point of the path near Red Darren at 2306 feet (703m). The ridge ends at Hay Bluff, a great northerly viewpoint towards Hay and the Wye Valley, the Hills of Radnorshire and the Black Mountains to the west and parts of the Brecon Beacons. Come off the ridge and stroll via five kissing gates into Hay on Wye, known for its many second hand book fairs and shops and for its annual book festival. The town with its 12th Century keep was the site of the Anglo-Welsh power struggles in the 13th Century. We use a variety of accommodation in bustling Hay on Wye. For dinner there are plenty of pubs and restaurants in the town.

Day 6: Hay on Wye to Kington

walk @ 15 miles (24km)

Cross the River Wye and walk into the Radnorshire Hills. The walking undulates past sites of Roman encampments to reach Glades, where you may like to break for a pub lunch. The last few miles you travel up and along the Hergest Ridge amongst thyme, gorse and Welsh ponies. Descend to Kington, with its 13th Century church and the parallel lanes and long back gardens that may preserve the pattern of the strips in the former open field system.

Day 7: Kington to Knighton

walk @ 14 miles (22km)

Perhaps the finest day's walk of the whole path, with beautiful westward panoramas across the Radnor Valley. On a clear day you get views of 30 miles in each direction, over both the Brecon Beacons and The Malverns. The route climbs over Ffridd hill, before descending very steeply to Knighton (Tref y Clawdd in Welsh – Town on the Dyke) on the Shropshire / Powys border. It is a very busy little market town.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. From Knighton take the train to Shrewsbury for onward connections.

Outdoor Travel offers other walking holidays – centre-based, guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals – in many parts of the UK and Europe including Wainwright's spectacular **Coast to Coast** route, the **Lake District**, **Snowdonia**, the coastal paths of **Cornwall**, the **Cotswolds** and the wild and scenic **West Highland Way**.

In France and Italy we offer many popular walks including the **Way of St James** or **Camino de Santiago** from Le Puy in France to Santiago in northern Spain, the **Dordogne**, **Provence** and **Burgundy**, the **Cinque Terre** or **Amalfi Coast**, **Tuscany** and the pilgrims' **Road to Rome**, the **Via Francigena**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

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