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# Dartmoor and Exmoor



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# Welcome to Devon

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**T**here's some spectacular riding down in the south west corner of the UK. With two distinct coastlines and two National Parks, Devon's the place to go if you're looking for dramatic scenery and top riding all in one spot. From dramatic seascapes and wide-open moorland to nadgery little lanes and picturesque towns and villages, this little corner of England really is a paradise for bikers.

To help inspire, this supplement pulls together three spectacular routes that take in some of the best roads that Devon has to offer. There's a cracking circular route that starts from Buckfastleigh and cuts through the centre of Dartmoor; an even better run along the North Devon coast from Lynton to Minehead that's one of the best stretches of road I've ridden in the UK; and a big, long (one - or two-day) ride that starts in Slapton Sands and winds through Dartmoor, before carrying on into Exmoor and up to the spectacular A39 before ending at the Valley of the Rocks just west of Lynton. There're also some tips for riding off-road, including how to go about finding legal lanes - and some advice about picking the right kit for your chosen adventure.

Ride safe and enjoy,

**Ross Mowbray**  
**MoreBikes Editor and**  
**Motorcycle Sport and Leisure**  
**Feature writer**

## MOTORCYCLE

FOR THE LOVE OF THE ROAD SPORT & LEISURE

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An aerial photograph of the Dartmoor landscape. The terrain is a mix of green grassy areas and darker, rocky moorland. A winding road is visible in the lower right, and a herd of cattle is grazing in a green field in the middle ground. The sky is clear and blue.

# Welcome to Dartmoor

From the thick mists that suddenly appear and roll across the moor, to the dark, bottomless mires and the craggy granite tors, ride a land of mystery and magic



**D**artmoor National Park is one of the last great wildernesses in the UK, with an inspirational landscape of heather-clad moors and rugged tors. Designated as a national park in 1951, this vast tract of largely untamed countryside of huge richness and diversity stretches across 368 square miles. Populated by lofty granite tors, trails wind through valleys with Neolithic tombs, Bronze Age stone circles and abandoned medieval farmhouses. The area is dotted with villages, including Princetown, home to Dartmoor Prison, which was used during the Napoleonic Wars.

With little public transport on to the moors, the park is most easily accessed by bike, where you can soak up its very special atmosphere. Dartmoor is full of unexpected delights, including stunning views at Castle Drogo; a tranquil Benedictine monastery at Buckfast Abbey where you can buy honey and mead; a granite railway at Hay Tor; while a visit to picturesque Widecombe-in-the-Moor of Uncle Tom Cobley fame is a must.



## Facts you (possibly) did not know about Dartmoor

- The lowest point on Dartmoor is Doghole Bridge, and is 98ft (30m) above sea level
- 65% of Dartmoor is made of granite – rock which was created around 295 million years ago
- Dartmoor National Park has 2,800 listed buildings, and 1,078 scheduled monuments
- It is the most important area for Bronze Age archaeology in Western Europe
- Home to the largest land slug. The Ash Black Slug can exceed 20cm and is found in Dartmoor's woodland
- The only place in Britain where the Bog Hover Fly exists
- Some of Europe's oldest stone formations still exist in Dartmoor. The national park protects standing stone circles, rows and cairns known as Drizzlecombe, Scorhill, Challocombe and Beardown Man. Stallmoor stone row is the longest in the world at 3.4km

For centuries the Dartmoor folklore and legends have encompassed tales of pixies, ghosts, witchcraft, weird happenings and a host of deep-seated beliefs, passed down through the generations via fireside stories, books and local tradition, all of which have played their part in keeping the tales alive. From the thick mists that suddenly appear and roll across the moor, to the dark, bottomless mires and the craggy granite tors, each lends an air of mystery and magic.

As well as amazing scenery, Dartmoor has many different layers to discover, from curious geology and fascinating archaeology, to centuries of history, the mining legacy, and its unique wildlife and flora. If history is something that appeals to you, find one of the great ancient settlements that sit on Dartmoor. With medieval villages, mysterious hut circles, towering castles and derelict hillforts, you will never be too far from some fascinating historical sites.

## Getting there

From the north and east of England, Dartmoor and the rest of Devon are accessed via the M5 motorway. To get to Dartmoor from London and the South East, choose routes via the A303, the M4 or the M3. Leave the M5 at Exeter (Junction 31). For North Dartmoor take the A30 dual-carriageway towards Cornwall. You can access a selection of North Dartmoor locations from the A30. For South Dartmoor, leave the M5 and take the Devon Expressway A38 dual-carriageway towards Plymouth. You can access a selection of South Dartmoor locations from the A38.

## Find out more

- [www.visitdartmoor.co.uk](http://www.visitdartmoor.co.uk)
- [www.dartmoor.gov.uk](http://www.dartmoor.gov.uk)
- [www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk)
- [www.nationalparks.uk](http://www.nationalparks.uk)





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Recommended ride

# Circular route from Buckfastleigh





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**S** start the route at Buckfastleigh and briefly head north on the A38 before turning left towards Hele and Buckland in the Moor. At the junction with the B3387 turn left and a short distance further right towards Bonehill. You are now heading towards Southcott. It is worth watching out for a sign to the medieval village of Hound Tor. Turn left in Southcott and head towards Lettaford. Turn right on to the 3242 to Sloncombe, and left on to the A382. This will take you to Whiddon Down, passing three castles off to the right – Cranbrook, Prestobury and Castle Drogo. At the junction with the A30, turn left to Okehampton, and then south through Meldon, picking up the A386 towards Sourton. You are now skirting the western edge of the national park as the road passes through Beardon and Mary Tavy to Tavistock. Watch for a left turn on to the B3357 on the northern edge of the town and signs to the right for Sampford Spinney and south to Walkhampton. Turn left on the B3212 which will take you to Princetown. Carry on this road to the B3357 towards Two Bridges and east to Poundsgate. You can then cut south to Buckfast and back to the starting point.



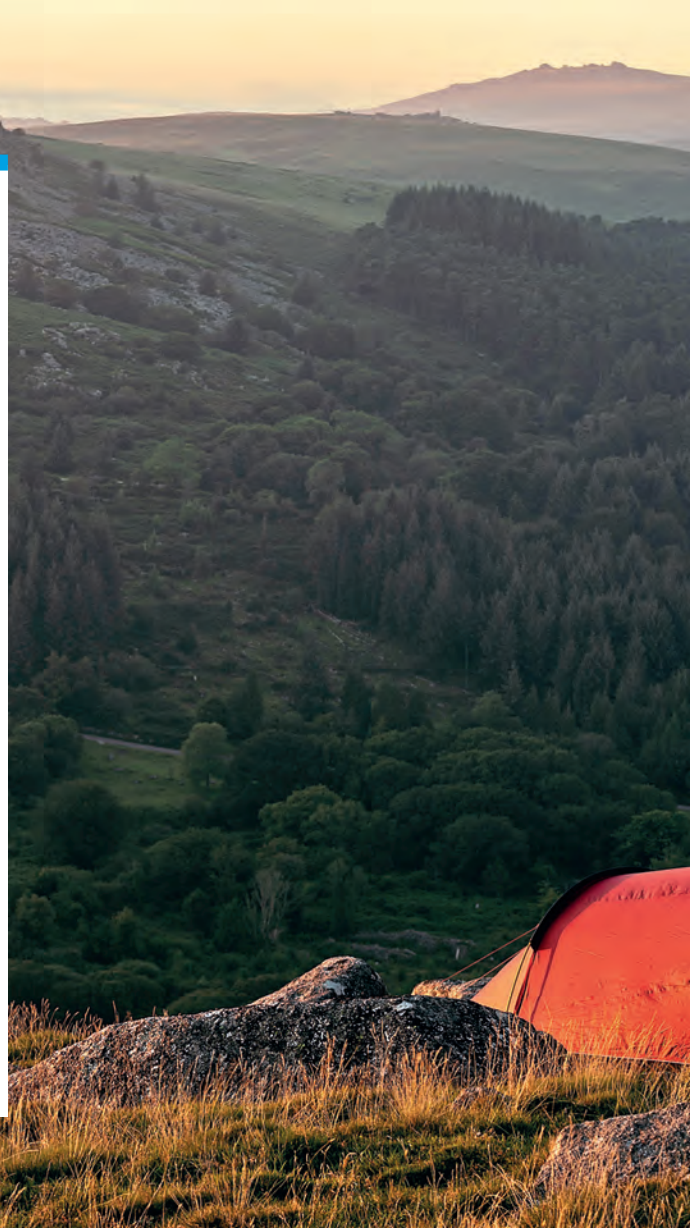
### Dartmoor Activities

- Haytor Rocks is probably Dartmoor National Park's most famous tor. Owing to its location on the eastern fringe of Dartmoor above populated areas such as The English Riviera, it can get exceptionally busy on the rocks during the summer months, on long bank holiday weekends or after snow.
- Set within 50 acres of woodland and streams, Becky Falls centres around a set of rapids with a waterfall drop of around 70 feet. This stunning attraction offers a choice of three trails ranging from the blue trail, which is reasonably flat, to the purple trail, which will take roughly 90 minutes and on which you will need to negotiate obstacles and a 200ft climb.
- Discover one of the highest oakwoods in Britain at Wistman's Wood. Owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and covering around nine acres, this tangled mass of lichen-covered trees and boulders is like being transported back to medieval times. Unspoiled for centuries, the oldest trees are estimated to be up to 500 years old.
- Located on a 200-acre farm in the South Hams, with access to thousands more acres of flying ground, Dartmoor Hawking Falconry Experience is a private falconry centre. With an emphasis on providing an interactive experience, visitors can spend a memorable day learning how to handle and fly owls, falcons, eagles and hawks.



### While you're there...

- Buckfast Abbey: Nestled in a valley on the edge of Dartmoor, Buckfast Abbey is home to a working community of Benedictine monks. Founded by King Canute in 1018, the Abbey was at the heart of the community until Catholic monasteries were dissolved by King Henry VIII. The site gradually fell into ruin, but several hundred years later it was brought back to life by a group of exiled French monks. Between 1906 and 1937 they rebuilt the Abbey Church on the medieval foundations and re-established the monastery. Located midway between Plymouth and Exeter, the Abbey Church and gardens are visited by thousands of people every year. Entry is free and there is ample free parking. The Grange Restaurant serves cream teas, home-made lunches, cakes and pastries, with the emphasis on locally produced ingredients.
- Princetown: The austere and foreboding Dartmoor Prison, built during the Napoleonic Wars, is the most iconic and famous part of Princetown. The jail is still an important part of the country's prison service, though today visitors can visit the prison museum and learn more about it. It is thought that Sherlock Holmes scribe Arthur Conan Doyle penned his most famous work, The Hound of the Baskervilles, during a stay at the Old Duchy Hotel, now the Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre in the heart of Princetown. Leave the bike, head to the centre and retrace Conan Doyle's steps on a walk to Grimspound.
- Castle Drogo: Situated high above the Teign Gorge, Castle Drogo was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for self-made millionaire Julius Drewe. It looks ancient, but this remarkable building was only constructed a century ago, the last castle ever built in England. From the beginning it has suffered from water penetration and for the last eight years has been undergoing a conservation project to make the Castle watertight. As the building work comes to an end the interior of the castle has been redisplayed after years in storage. Outside the castle, visitors can stroll around the formal gardens, alive with colour. Alternatively, explore the Teign Valley with its ancient gorge, teeming with wildlife. There are a variety of routes to suit all abilities.





## The most dramatic tors on Dartmoor

- The hilltops of Dartmoor are made from granite and are called 'tors', and the word tor can be found in the names of more than 150 hills within Dartmoor National Park. The highest point on Dartmoor is High Willhays Tor at 2039ft (621m) above sea level
- Great Staple Tor is one of Dartmoor's most photographed tors and comprises an amazing set of rocky outcrops near the west border of the park
- Great Links Tor is a beast of a tor dominating the west flank of Dartmoor. It provides sensational views of Dartmoor's north moor, the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and Cornwall
- Great Mis Tor is a huge, rocky tor between Princetown and Tavistock in the west section of the park
- Leather Tor is a wonderful fin of rock overlooking Burrator Reservoir in the southwest section of Dartmoor
- Belstone Tor (Belstone Tors and Tors End) to Oke Tor is a long, flat moorland ridge running from the outskirts of Belstone to the high moor at Hangingstone Hill. The ridge is lined with superb rocky outcrops

## Where to stay Camp

### Wild camp on Dartmoor

Dartmoor is one of the few places you can legally camp for free in the UK (outside of Scotland), so providing you're happy with no facilities, you can rock up and set up shop in a remote spot on the moor and bed down for the night. It's always better to pitch your tent as late as possible and pack up nice and early, and always remember to Leave No Trace.

### Widdecombe Valley, Widdecombe in the Moor, Devon TQ13 7TF

This is a quiet little wild campsite tucked away just on the edge of Widdecombe in the Moor, about 25 minutes' drive from Newton Abbot. It's a simple set up here, with portaloos provided and campfires, and although there are no showers on site, you can take a refreshing dip in the River Webburn instead. You'll be treated to excellent views of farmland and Dartmoor's tors – but it's not completely isolated, as you can walk to the nearby village in about five minutes where there's a café, shop and pub.

- 07702888508
- [stay@dartmoor-camping.com](mailto:stay@dartmoor-camping.com)
- <http://www.dartmoor-camping.com/>

## Hotel/B&B

### White Hart Hotel, The Square, Moretonhampstead, Devon TQ13 8NQ

Dating back to 1639, The White Hart Hotel in the busy market town of Moretonhampstead (which is the perfect first stop if you're planning to explore Dartmoor) was originally a Posting Inn for horse-drawn carriages, who were looking for shelter for the night. Waiting inside was a home-cooked meal, a pint of cider and a warm bed – and not much has changed since. The family-owned hotel still offers a roaring fire, a delicious meal, a cosy bed and a warm welcome for anyone who visits.

- 01647 440500
- [enquiries@whitehartdartmoor.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@whitehartdartmoor.co.uk)
- [www.whitehartdartmoor.co.uk](http://www.whitehartdartmoor.co.uk)

### Beechwood on Dartmoor, Postbridge, Devon PL20 6SY

Situated pretty much slap-bang in the middle of Dartmoor National Park, Beechwood B&B offers everything you'd need for a cosy stay in a rustic, cottage setting. There're log burners, water from a well, six acres of land to enjoy and views over the moor. What more could you need? Breakfast is included in the price and there's an evening menu too, if you're too tired to head back out after a long day of exploring.

- 01822 880332
- [enquiries@beechwood-dartmoor.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@beechwood-dartmoor.co.uk)
- [www.beechwood-dartmoor.co.uk](http://www.beechwood-dartmoor.co.uk)

## Eat & Drink

### The Warren House Inn, Postbridge, Devon PL20 6TA

Open since 1845, this traditional inn with oak beams and log fires sits deep in the heart of Dartmoor, and it's the perfect place to refuel after a hard day on the moor. There's an extensive food menu (that caters to all), which makes the best of local produce, and there's a good selection of real ales and ciders too.

- 01822 880208
- [enquiry@warrenhouseinn.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@warrenhouseinn.co.uk)
- [www.warrenhouseinn.co.uk](http://www.warrenhouseinn.co.uk)

## Leave the bike and walk this way

South Devon has some of the finest walks in Britain, with hundreds of miles of ancient tracks and coastal paths for you to enjoy. Whilst walking in South Devon you can experience the contrast between the dramatic granite tors of Dartmoor against the shimmering seascapes on the coastal paths. Take a wander down a country lane and you will be slap-bang in the heart of some breathtaking scenery in just a few steps. Whether you plan to walk the entire South Devon coast or would just like to find a place to spot dolphins, basking sharks and coastal wildlife, the South West Coast Path gives you the chance to discover a huge range of natural and social history, as well as rocky headlands, hidden coves and sandy beaches all waiting to be discovered. Large parts of the South West Coast Path take you through two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site combining stunning scenery, tranquillity and a great active day out that everyone can enjoy.



# Finding an off-road route

It's not always easy to find legal lanes and byways, particularly if you haven't got much knowledge about the area you're exploring, but thankfully, you're spoilt for choice in Devon. The big questions are whether your bike's suitable and you're a good enough rider to tackle what could potentially be some seriously tricky terrain.





**W**hile big adventure bikes are perfectly capable of making mincemeat of the trickiest of trails, many riders might think twice about taking a 200 kilogram motorcycle that's got 150 horsepower (and cost nearly 20 grand) down a lot of the stuff that's legal to ride in Devon.

With a good rider at the helm, there's a good proportion of it that'd be perfectly manageable, although most of you would probably feel much more comfortable riding a smaller, lighter and better-suited Enduro bike than a big adventurer. That said, on our trip to Devon we didn't have too much trouble finding a few slightly more lightweight lanes that still offered us a bit of a challenge. We're not going to list a load of lanes here though. We want you to take the time and find them yourself.

There are a number of ways you can find out about where you can legally ride 'off-road' in a particular part of the country. First there's the TRF. The lads (and lasses) at The Trail Riders Fellowship are always happy to help with advice and guidance, and you might even be able to join a regular ride out with a group of members.

There's little better than being shown around by a local, but if that's not an option, you'll have to take some time and do a bit of research. Get yourself a (recent) OS map of the local area and consult it to find out where to find the unclassified roads and byways open to all traffic. These are the ones you can ride. There's TrailWise too, a great resource for routes providing you're a paid-up member of the Green Lane Association. You can also check out forums, consult YouTube and do a bit of internet digging and, best of all, speak to people. You never know, that chap sat in the pub might know of the best lane in the area. You've only got to ask.

- Although it might be referred to as 'off-roading', if you do it legally, you'll not be going off-road at all. Unsurfaced unclassified roads (green lanes) and byways open to all traffic (BOATs) are actually roads, so you'll need to be in possession of a driving licence and insurance, and your bikes also must be taxed and registered. If you're in any doubt about the legality of a lane, you're best off giving it a miss. Although you're unlikely to be caught, there's a chance you could get a hefty fine of up to £1000 if you do end up on the wrong side of the law.







### WHAT ABOUT TYRES?

Your choice of rubber is extremely important no matter what riding you're doing, but if you're going to be hitting the dirt, you've got a serious decision on your hands. It's all about working out just how aggressive your tyres need to be. Would road tyres be up to the job? Do you need some 50/50 dual sport rubber, or do you need some big knobblies with a 70/30 off-road to road bias? The best way to work out what you need is to ask yourself three questions.

1. How much time will I spend off the Tarmac?
2. What surface will I be riding on?
3. What's the weather going to be like?

There're a few more things that could play a part in your decision-making process but really and truly, answering those three should help you make the

best choice. If you're going to be doing most of your riding off-road, it makes sense to pick something that's best suited to the job. If you're going to be doing most of your riding on the road, then maybe you could get away with something a bit less serious. It depends on what sort of terrain you'll be tackling though.

Hard-packed gravel won't cause any problems, but loose gravel, sand and slippery mud could all see you scrabbling around for grip if you're not on the right tyre.

That's why weather plays such an important part too. In the dry, most of the UK's green lanes are manageable on less aggressive rubber, but a bit of a downpour can cause things to change completely. If it's wet you're going to need to go for something more serious.

### TOP PICK Bridgestone AX41

**What is it?**  
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**Who is it aimed at?**  
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**Bridgestone AX41 highlights:**  
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**AX41 sizes:**  
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**What we thought:**  
'It's a top tyre that offers excellent off-road performance without ever really compromising handling on the road.'



### The TET?

There's another option for routes though. It's easy to use and you can even download an app to your mobile phone that lets you find trails in the local area. The TET.

For the uninitiated, the Trans Euro Trail is an amazing resource that maps out over 31,000 miles of dirt roads from the northern tip of Africa to the Arctic Circle.

It's run by volunteers and relies on its community to find and manage the ever-growing network of tracks and trails that traverse 30 countries. It's split into two arms: East and West. The Eastern route travels through Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, the Balkans, Italy and into France where it joins the Western

section of the TET. That crosses Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, the Low Countries, the UK, France, Andorra, Spain and Portugal.

There's talk that Austria, Hungary and Slovakia will all be added to the Eastern route soon.

The route can be fairly challenging and is aimed at small and mid-capacity trail bikes, but a capable rider should be able to enjoy him(her)self on a bigger machine. If you don't fancy a section, you can usually turn around and take a Tarmac detour to the other end.

### WHERE CAN I FIND THE ROUTES?

The TET website is the place to go. On it you'll find downloadable GPX files (for each specific country), which can be to your phone, tablet, PC or GPS device. There's also an Android app which you can download straight to your phone and access and download all of the routes with a couple of taps. It's very easy to use, and if you activate GPS location services, you'll even be able to see where you are in relation to the next trail. That's how we ended up finding a little hidden lane near Chagford on the Eastern edges of Dartmoor. It was a bit tricky, but five of us, with varying levels of off-road ability, all managed to make it to the other side unscathed.





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It may be one of the UK's smallest national parks at 693 square kilometres, but Exmoor has no shortage of things to excite the visitor. This secret pocket of the southwest of England straddles the counties of Devon and Somerset, and offers breathless vistas, from its towering sea cliffs to its heather and grass moors, its meandering streams, steep wooded valleys and oak woodlands, all offering a sense of tranquillity alongside a place to rediscover a real feeling of adventure. Little wonder, then, that it offers the perfect escape for bikers set to explore such a dramatic landscape.

Dissected by combes or steep, wooded valleys which have been formed by fast-running streams, the moor itself is named after its main river, the River Exe. Exmoor's dramatic coastline stretches from Minehead in the east to Combe Martin in the west. This spectacular coast, boasting the highest sea cliffs in England, was one of the reasons why Exmoor was designated a National Park in 1954. High spots are near Culbone Hill and on Great Hangman near Combe Martin.

The reason that Exmoor's shoreline is the most remote in England is because of the height and steepness of the cliffs, which offer no landward access to the six-mile stretches of shoreline from Combe Martin to Heddon's Mouth and Countisbury to Glenthorne, and there are few places where one could land even a small boat. It has been estimated that if one were to wait for tides low enough to walk between access points it would take five years to walk the 34-mile length of shore, and in itself that would involve sections of serious rock climbing.



# Welcome to Exmoor

Boasting the highest sea cliffs in England and, inland, breathless landscapes, there is little wonder that this secret pocket of the southwest offers both a sense of adventure and tranquillity



## Facts you (possibly) did not know about Exmoor

- It has the highest coastline on the British mainland, reaching a height of 314 metres above sea level
- Exmoor National Park is accredited as an International Dark Sky Reserve
- The highest point is Dunkery Beacon at 1704ft (519m)
- The length of the coast is 34 miles (55km)
- Exmoor has the most extensive broadleaved coastal woods in Britain, stretching along 10 miles of cliff from Countisbury to Porlock
- It is the national stronghold of the heath fritillary butterfly, one of the rarest butterflies breeding in Britain
- The South West Coast Path, which starts along the Exmoor coast, is the longest National Trail in England and Wales
- Exmoor has species of plants that are found nowhere else. These include at least two species of whitebeam tree: *Sorbus subcuneata* and *Sorbus 'Taxon D'*. Taxon D is named after the area around Desolate where it is found.

The national park is peppered with traditional rural towns and villages, each with their own unique sense of identity. Coastal towns such as Lynton and Lynmouth, Porlock and Porlock Weir are popular for their authentic reflection of harbour life of old, whilst the medieval village of Dunster offers a glimpse into ancient times, with Dunster Castle a popular attraction. Tea rooms, traditional pubs and excellent restaurants make the most of excellent local produce and talent, celebrated during the Exmoor Food Festival.

Exmoor has long inspired writers, artists and poets. From the Romantics such as Coleridge and Shelley who loved nothing better than to walk the moorland paths, to RD Blackmore who did much to raise the profile of Exmoor through his novel 'Lorna Doone', it is easy to understand why lovers of the outdoors have been coming to Exmoor to enjoy its scenery for over 200 years.

## Getting there

Leave the M5 at junctions 23 or 24. These will bring you to Bridgwater. Follow the A39 which skirts around the northern edge of the Quantock Hills to Williton. The A358 from Taunton links with the M5 and A303 to Williton. From Williton the A358 continues along the western edge of the Quantock Hills. You can continue along the A39 from Williton and this will bring you to the eastern side of Exmoor at Dunster and Minehead. To reach the western side of Exmoor, continue along the M5 to junction 27 for North Devon. From here follow the A361 towards Barnstaple. At the first roundabout you reach, turn right along the A396 along the River Exe valley and the southern edge of Exmoor. Otherwise keep on the A361 to Aller Cross roundabout. Turn right on to the A399 towards Combe Martin. This will bring you along the western edge of Exmoor with various roads to the right taking you into the moor and the North Devon coast on Exmoor.

## Find out more

- [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)
- [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk)







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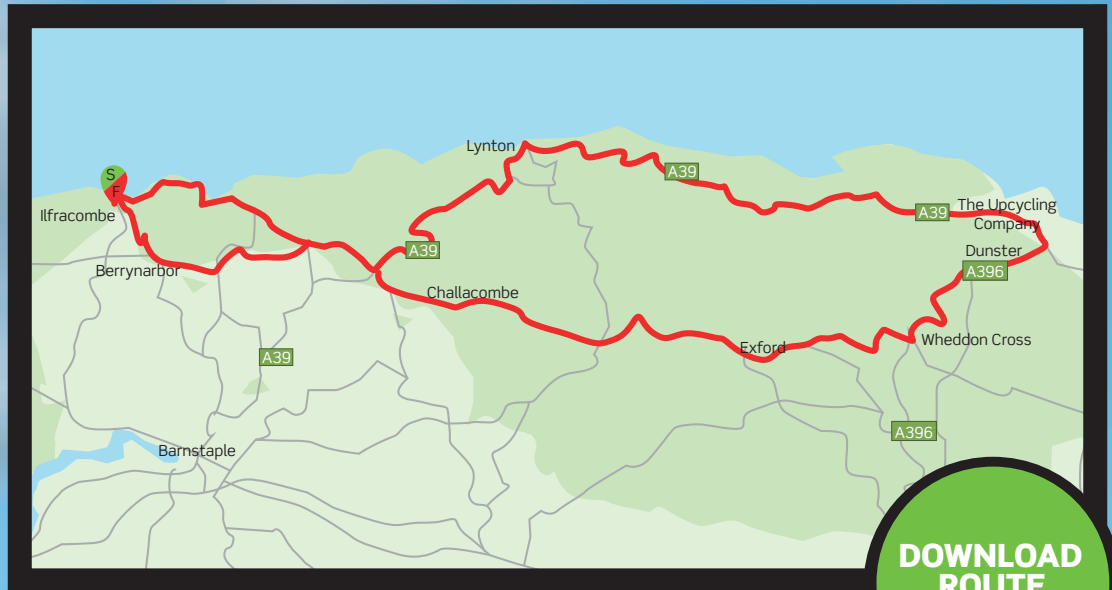


# Ilfracombe to Minehead

Enjoy a coastal run passing sublime scenery before heading back via the middle of the national park







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**T**his is a great opportunity to head along one of the best, uninterrupted coastal roads in the country. You will ride across cliff-top moorland at the top of the national park, tackle steep descents and have the opportunity to linger in some quaint Devonshire villages. Starting in Ilfracombe, the route travels along the A399 past Hele Bay and Combe Martin Bay before heading southwest to join the A3123 at Kentisbury, where you turn left. Upon reaching the A39, turn left and ride through Churchtown towards Lynmouth. If you are stopping for a break in Lymouth, you will find a nice selection of eateries along the harbour front. From here you head on to Lynton, passing close by the stunning Valley of the Rocks before emerging in the coastal town. Back on the A39, keep heading east, following the coast. It is pretty much a straight run to Minehead, passing to your left the lovely Exmoor Heritage Coast. At a junction with the A396, it is worth taking a deviation right to Dunster, where you can visit Dunster Castle. If you want to make a big circle and continue to enjoy a splendid day's riding, continue south along the A396 and upon reaching Wheddon Cross, turn right on to the B3224, taking you through the centre of Exmoor National Park. Pass through Edgcott and Simonsbath, continuing to Challacombe where to your left lies Shoulsbury Castle. At Stowford, turn right on to the A399 and continue north back to Ilfracombe, our starting point.



### Exmoor Activities

- **Starry, starry night:** Exmoor was Europe's first International Dark Sky Reserve, and is one of the best places in the country for stargazing. Be there on a clear night, and the Milky Way, shooting stars and thousands of stars and constellations are clearly visible to the naked eye. Head to Wimbleball Lake, Webbers Post or the highest point on Exmoor, Dunkery Beacon, to enjoy a late-night show of astronomical delights, or head there in October for the annual Exmoor Dark Skies Festival.
- **Wimbleball Lake,** a stunning spot towards the southeast of Exmoor, is well worth a visit. A reservoir lake, the area is open to the public for watersports, walking and other outdoor activities. There are facilities such as changing rooms and showers available, as well as a café. Around the lake, archery, high ropes, climbing and fishing are also available. To stretch your legs, walk the entire perimeter of the lake. Start from the on-site café car park.
- **Hollow Brook at Martinhoe** is arguably the highest waterfall in the West Country and amongst the highest in Britain, depending on the definition of a waterfall. It drops 200 metres to the sea in a series of cascades over a horizontal distance of 400 metres and includes two nearly vertical leaps of 50 metres each.



### While you're there...

- **Funicular fun:** Lynmouth was once known for herring fishing. Perched 500 feet above the pretty harbourside town is Lynton, full of 19th century buildings, independent shops, galleries and tea rooms. Connecting them both is a distinctive Grade II listed funicular Cliff Railway, which is the highest and steepest water-powered railway in the world. Originally built to transport Victorian holidaymakers up the hill to Lynton, the funicular is still popular today thanks to its postcard-perfect coastal views and retro aesthetic.
- **Rock solid:** Half-a-mile from Lynton on the northern edge of Exmoor, The Valley of Rocks is famous for its dramatic views and population of feral goats. Travelling west from Minehead or Porlock, follow the stunning coast road towards Lynton. The ride is well worth doing in its own right, with stunning views across the Bristol Channel to the north or over the rolling hills of the open moor and farmland to the south. Once at Lynton, you can leave the bike and continue on foot for 10 minutes. Alternatively, continue riding into the valley to park up.
- **Dunster Castle & Gardens:** The castle was first constructed in timber in the 11th century, with the addition of a stone shell keep in the 12th century. Over the years the castle has been expanded, mostly by the Luttrell family, who have owned the castle since the 14th Century. Today, the heart of the modern castle is a manor house, but a few features of the medieval castle remain. These include the Great Gatehouse and several of the towers in the Lower Ward, as well as other features such as 13th Century gates and various artworks and tapestries. Mill Lane, Dunster, Minehead, Somerset TA24 6SL





## Get out of that mux (dirt) before the parish-lantern (moon) comes out

Exmoor has its own unique words used to describe the landscape, animals, plants and objects. Here are a few examples:

- Belve - Lowing noise made by cows or stags
- Clam, Clammer - Stone or tree placed across a stream to form a footbridge
- Dimity - Twilight
- Dumbledore, Dumbledrone - Bumblebee
- Emmet-heap - Ant-hill
- Knappy - Steep field is always either a nappy field or a cleevy field
- Pink-Twink - Chaffinch
- Vuz-Peg - Hedgehog

## Where to stay

### Camp

#### Caffyns Farm, Lynton, Devon EX35 6JW

Enjoy sea views, open fields and endless space on the North Devon coast. Alongside the farm's family B&B and café, campers can enjoy a relaxed, rule-free, pitch-whenever-you-fancy haven and are free to wander over any of the 150 acres of farmland. There are four camping fields edged by protective hedgerows.

#### Halse Farm Caravan and Tent Park, Winsford, Somerset TA24 7JL

This small, peaceful park lies adjacent to the moor on a working beef and sheep farm. The owners loan a laminated map with six circular walks for a small charge. Site is one mile from Winsford with a shop/PO, thatched inn with bar and restaurant food, and tea gardens. Signposted from the A396, Halse Farm is three miles from the famous Tarr Steps on the River Barle.

- 01643 851259
- info@halsefarm.co.uk
- www.halsefarm.co.uk

### Hotel/B&B

#### Edgcott House, Edgcott Road, Exford, Somerset TA24 7QG

B&B nestled amongst beautiful Exmoor moorland. Historic property believed to date from the 17th century. Bike lock-up. Modern rooms, free WiFi, excellent breakfast.

- 01643 831164
- info@edgcotthouse.co.uk

#### Southcliffe, 34 Lee Road, Lynton, North Devon EX35 6BS

Situated a few minutes' walk from the centre of Lynton, the stunning Valley of Rocks and the famous Cliff Railway which links Lynton and Lynmouth are not far away. Two private parking areas, one at the front of the guesthouse and the other at the rear. Accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, and easy walking distance of restaurants and pubs.

- 01598 753328
- info@southcliffe.co.uk
- www.southcliffe.co.uk

### Eat & Drink

#### Tarr Farm Inn, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9PY

Located by the Tarr Steps, a medieval stone bridge crossing the River Barle, this textbook ancient inn is an idyllic setting for lunch or dinner. It sources local and seasonal ingredients, serving up classic dishes with a contemporary twist using the likes of Exmoor lamb, Devon Red Ruby beef and Cornish seafood.

- 01643 851507
- enquiries@tarrfarm.co.uk
- www.tarrfarm.co.uk

### Leave the bike and walk this way

**Cross Tarr Steps:** This ancient 'clapper bridge' crosses the River Barle, near Withypool and Dulverton. Possibly dating from the Bronze Age, this bridge has stood here for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and is still functional to this day. Fifty-five metres in length, this is the longest bridge of its type in Britain. You can complete a circular walk from here. Follow the river for about a mile before crossing a footbridge to return on the other side, finally crossing the Tarr Steps to return. The Tarr Steps are situated towards the southern aspect of Exmoor, near Withypool, some five miles from Dulverton. There is a car park and toilets close to the bridge, reached from the B3223 road (Withypool to Dulverton). Use postcode TA229QA for satnav directions.



# Talking textiles

There's more choice than ever if you're in the market for a new textile suit. But what's the most important thing when it comes to making your final decision about how to spend your hard earned cash...? Value for money, outright cost, quality, features – or all of the above?

**T**here're plenty of people that'll tell you to always buy the best kit you can afford, but is that really the best use of your cash? Would it not be better to find something that'll do the job well, and keep a bit of money back for your next adventure? We're all different, with different needs and different expectations and different budgets, and that's why we've picked two dramatically different brands to show you just what you get for your hard-earned cash.

Rukka's probably considered the cream of the crop when it comes to all-weather motorcycle clothing. The Finnish company has made a name for itself, thanks to its wide range of kit that's capable of dealing with some extreme temperatures... although it is important to remember that it's very, very expensive. Bering's a bit different. The French company isn't massively expensive, but it's not cheap either; it sits somewhere in the middle, offering a reasonable compromise between quality, capability and cost.

We've covered nearly a thousand miles in kit from both manufacturers in all manner of weathers and each have their strengths and weaknesses, although all of them managed to keep us warm and dry when the weather took a turn for the worse. There's no doubt that the Rukka gear is the best. That shouldn't be a surprise. The two of us wearing it couldn't believe how good it was, but the kit from Bering has plenty going for it too. Here's what you need to know.



## BERING BALISTIK JACKET AND TROUSERS

£594.99

Laminated textile suit with a waterproof membrane, removable fleece liner and armour.

7/10



**RUKKA KINGSLEY  
JACKET AND  
TROUSERS**

£2500

New for 2021, the Gore-Tex laminated Kingsley suit from Rukka really is as good as it gets. It's got quality protection all round, including some built-in chest armour. There's a removable down liner set, a very capable storm collar and capable cuffs which prevent water from seeping up your arms. It's a brilliant bit of kit.

9/10

**RUKKA KALLAVESI  
JACKET AND  
TROUSERS**

£2100

Breathable, windproof and waterproof, the Rukka Kavallesi suit is a step down from the all-new Kingsley - but it's still exceedingly capable.

8/10

**BERING YUKON  
JACKET AND  
TROUSERS**

£1099.98

Gore-Tex laminated kit with removable thermal lining, air vent system and protective armour.

8/10





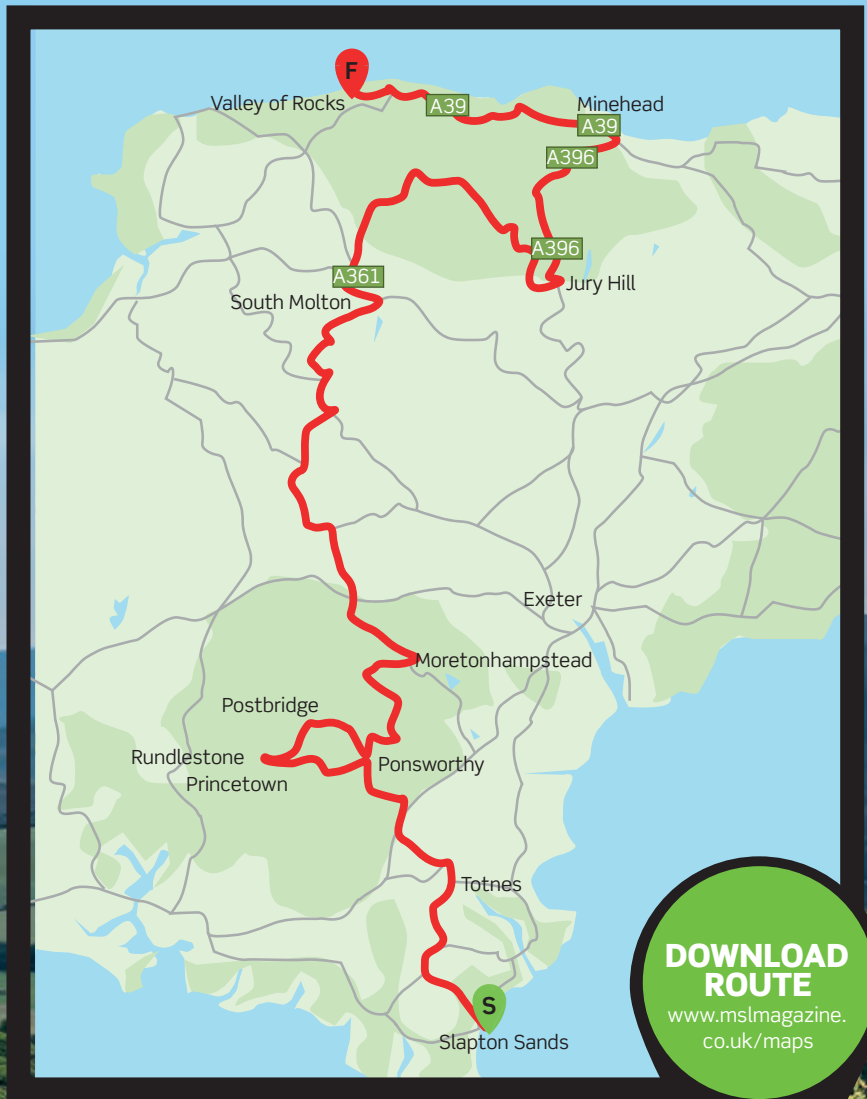
Recommended ride

# Coast to Coast: Slapton Sands to The Valley of the Rocks

Starting out with tight and tricky single track lanes before progressing to a run through the wide-open moorland, you'll be eventually rewarded with one of the best biking roads in Britain: the A38 coastal road from Minehead to Lynton.







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**T**his is the longest run of the three. It might only be 150-odd miles, but it'll easily take you five-and-a-bit hours because of the steady pace out on Dartmoor and Exmoor (there're 40mph limits across a lot of the moorland, to help protect the sheep and horses that are roaming free). If you really want to make the most of the spectacular scenery and picturesque towns and villages, you'd be far better off taking two days to tackle this one. You'll be able to do it in a single day... but that's not what we'd suggest. There's plenty to see and do, so there's little point in rushing your way through if you can afford to take a bit more time to enjoy it.

It's essentially a coast to coast route starting from Slapton Sands in the south of Devon, ending up at The Valley of the Rocks near Lynton in the north, passing through both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks on the way. Once you leave the A38, much of the first part of the route is tight and twisty and extremely rewarding as you wind your way up to the famous B3212 that cuts right through the centre of Dartmoor, passing

through Princetown on the way. From there you'll pass through Widdecombe on the Moor, Moretonhampstead and Chagford (all great places to stop for a brew, a bite to eat and stretch of the legs), before leaving Dartmoor and taking a slightly more direct route up into Exmoor. The middle section isn't the most exciting (and more scenic routes are available), but it's all about making decent progress and getting into Exmoor as quickly as possible. The moor here is a bit more open, with some smoother and faster stretches of road to enjoy as you make your way up to Minehead where things really start to get interesting when you join the A39 that leads you all the way to Lynton and beyond. This is one of the best stretches of road in the country – fast, free-flowing and fun. On a sunny day you'd be forgiven for thinking you'd been transported to Sardinia, but no, this is Devon in all its glory. There're several places to stop along the road, with ice cream vans and spectacular seascapes offering all the excuse you'll need to take a few minutes for yourself – but there would be no harm in riding the road one way in full and then turning around and coming back again. It really is that good.



## Where we stayed

### **The Watermans Arms, Bow Bridge, Totnes TQ9 7EG**

We spent the first night at a pub called The Watermans Arms in Ashprington (outside Totnes) just north of the start of the route. It's a special spot on the river, with cosy rooms, an extensive range of pub fare (plus proper pizzas a few nights a week) and a good selection of beers and ciders which are perfect after a long ride. The staff were extremely friendly and the owners are keen bikers themselves, so expect a warm welcome if you're on two wheels. There's no specific biker parking, but there was plenty of room to the side of the hotel for us to lock our five bikes together. If you're in the area this is a great place to stay - or even just for a bite to eat.

- [info@thewatermansarms.net](mailto:info@thewatermansarms.net)
- 01803 732 214
- [www.thewatermansarms.net](http://www.thewatermansarms.net)

### **Blindwell Bunkhouse, Twitchen, South Molton EX36 3LT**

This is a great little hidden gem out on the south edge of Exmoor. It's well out of the way of everything and might take a bit of finding, but once you're there you'll never want to leave. It's a big bunkhouse with room for 10 people, but because of Covid, we had the place to ourselves. There's a fully equipped kitchen with everything you'd need to make some quality grub after a big day on the bike, and there's even a garden with a BBQ, firepit and fantastic views over the surrounding farmland. If you don't fancy paying a few quid extra each, you'll need to bring your own sleeping bags and towels (plus toiletries). You can even park your bikes up in the adjoining courtyard, where they will be safe and secure overnight.

- [contact@blindwellbunkhouse.co.uk](mailto:contact@blindwellbunkhouse.co.uk)
- 01598 740246
- [www.blindwellbunkhouse.co.uk](http://www.blindwellbunkhouse.co.uk)





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