

Local walks that can be combined to make longer loops around the village and forests

Route A to Tintern Abbey

Tintern Abbey is at the opposite end of the village and if you walk along the road you can get there very quickly. Follow this route if you would like to make this a long walk avoiding the road:

Turn right out the hotel and immediately right at Gothic Cottage towards Whitestone.

Take the first left up a diagonal track with fields on your left and backgardens on your right.

Look left and you will see a new house with a large window on the top of the hill. Take note as you are aiming to walk behind this.

Turn the first left up a steep stony track with very high hedges – almost like a tunnel.

Take the first left so you are almost walking back on yourself but parallel above the fields you first walked past. This part is ancient stone-walls. It is a good incline and to a slight right diagonal. Keep walking until you go past a small white cottage on your right.

Keep on walking until you come to a forest clearing on the edge of Barbadoes Woods. You are above the original house on the hill. You may need a breather as you are now near to the top of the valley!

Take the left track (not forest access dirt 'road') through the trees, parallel to the Tintern Rd heading towards the Abbey. You will see little of the road or the houses along it, but will traverse lots of rocky outcrops, streams and tiny waterfalls on a steady decline (pew!).

You will reach a point where you can either go:

- right – further into the woods and explore the tracks up the Angiddy Valley
- left into the lower village – here you can bear right and go up and visit either (a) the Abbey (which you can see from here) (b) keep right and up the hill to the ruined church of St Mary's or (c) right and up the river to the wireworks carpark where you can pick up the Angidy Trail.
- If you cross the road and over the bridge you can follow paths to Monk's Walk (see B below) Offa's Dyke, the Devil's Pulpit or, if you continue along the ancient railway tracks past the quarry and through a bat-filled railway tunnel and then all the way to Chepstow.

Route B to Tintern Abbey – The Old Railway Station, Brockweir and the Monk's Walk.

Step outside the hotel (situated over what was the Roman settlement of Tintern Parva) and immediately cross the road to St Michael's church. To the right of the church is a medieval slipway and a nice bench where you can sit and keep watch for otters and kingfishers.

Walk through St Michael's along the riverside path. The church is Victorian, replacing an older medieval church that was built over caves where St Tewdrig was a hermit (some people say he was at Tintern Abbey, this is disputed! Dowsing and soundings have proved caves are below St Michael's church).

At the end of the first (or second) field you can go up steps to the Old Railway Station and follow a wooded sculpture trail all the way to Brockweir Bridge or continue walking along fields to the river.

Turn right over Brockweir Bridge and turn first right past The Brock pub.

You can either follow the lane (which becomes a footpath) past stables (formerly HAPPA) or turn right to go and look at the Moravian Church. From the church you can continue through a field (parallel to the way you have come, but opposite the river) and then turn an upwards left onto the Monk's Path.

The Monk's Path is a steady, gentle incline that goes through the woods parallel to the Wye. The medieval monks toiled along the monks' road to farm their fields, and to pick apples for cider.

Keep going until you reach a footpath junction. If you go upwards and left you can access footpaths to the Offa's Dyke, a radio transmitter and Devil's Pulpit. If you go right and downwards you will quickly reach the bridge and sightings of Tintern Abbey. Cross the bridge and track left to reach the Abbey.

Tintern Parva to Offa's Dyke

Take route B until you reach what was HAPPA's stables in Brockweir. Instead of joining the Monk's Walk straight ahead, walk left up the hill to the next field. At the first field follow a steep incline right up the valley to Offa's Dyke, which is the ridgeway along the top. Offa's Dyke is a 177 mile earthwork built by Offa, King of Mercia from 757 to 796 A.D. The area around the Dyke is known as the 'Marches'. If you turn right along the Dyke this will take you in the signposted direction of Tintern Abbey and Sedbury, near Chepstow. Turn left, you can walk all the way to Prestatyn North Wales!

Tintern Parva – Past Brockweir loop.

Turn left outside the hotel and walk up the track towards the Tintern Parva Vineyard. Straight ahead to the side of a field, before you walk up the hill to the shop and grounds, is a footpath. This may be a shallow stream in mid-winter. Keep walking upwards and this will take you between fields towards the back of the Nurtons and the Kingstone micro-brewery. Look out for badger sets! In February enjoy huge drifts of snowdrop displays.

As you leave the Nurtons complex you can either:

- track left and follow footpaths towards Trelleck, Catbrook and Whitestone Woods (going over the hill you see behind the hotel). If you bear right this will bring you down the Trelleck rd back to the hotel.
- or track right zig-zagging down the hill. This brings you out on the road between Bigsweir and Brockweir. Cross the road and turn right back to Brockweir where you can either return to Tintern walking along the riverbank or the sculpture trail at the Old Station river. If you go onto the English side of the river and turn left you walk past Llandogo (on the other side) all the way up to Bigsweir and back. If you want to do a really long loop you can then pick up route B.

Tintern Bridge- the Devil's Pulpit

Cross over the river and go left uphill on wooded paths towards ancient Offa's Dyke. The path has metal posts at start. When it levels at a junction take the right-hand path.

Follow until next path junction, turn right, then continue to third junction.

Turn left, follow path uphill. As it levels off, path bears right - ascend wooden steps on left (just past uprooted tree) to reach track junction.

Turn right, walk short distance to next junction with stone marker. Bear left, follow path uphill to Offa's Dyke Path.

Turn right (south) at footpath sign. Walk along path until junction and sign at right-hand bend. The earthen wall of the Dyke is on your left, and you are walking in the 'ditch' part of the structure).

Continue west along Offa's Dyke Path from footpath sign to reach Devil's Pulpit at left-hand bend. Sign marks Devil's Pulpit. Which is a limestone rock jutting out from the cliffs. Legend has it that the devil preached to the monks below, tempting them to desert their order. Others say that the stone and ancient yew tree were the site of pagan religious rituals – Tintern has, after all, been populated since the stone-age.

After you have looked at the views from the Pulpit, you may want to carry on for ¼ mile or so because more views have been opened up along this section of the Dyke.

Retrace your steps.

Whitestone Woods

Turn right up the Trelleck Rd towards Catbrook and Trellech. If you are driving cross at the junction into Whitestone woods. At the top you will find astonishing views over the Wye gorge and trails that include seats engraved with quotes from Wordsworth's poetry. There are picnic areas and a rustic playground. This is the best place to go mushrooming in the autumn – spot the Fly Agarics (proper red capped, white spotted mushrooms) under the pines. If you are walking you can pick up a variety of footpaths going up (eventually) into the woods. Retrace your steps.