From our doorstep...

There really is no place quite like the New Forest. With its combination of ancient woodland, open heathland and livestock roaming freely, it’s a unique landscape that has been home to generations of our family for more than 200 years.

It’s also known for its hundreds of miles of well maintained gravel tracks, cycle networks and footpaths. So, from our secluded northern corner of the New Forest, we’ve chosen a few of our favourite walks and routes either from our doorstep or a short drive away so you can enjoy the New Forest and all it has to offer, as much as we do.

Brook to Minstead Village

Directly from our doorstep, this varied walk takes you through ancient woodland, country lanes and open fields, passing the Rufus Stone, (said to mark the spot where the King was killed by an arrow shot by Sir Walter Tyrell in the year 1100), as well as the final resting place of the famous Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Accessibility

Easy, gentle walk via country lanes, forest woodland and open fields with a few short uphill and downhill inclines, gates, footbridge and five stiles.

Local facilities

The Bell Inn, Green Dragon, Trusty Servant and Minstead Village Shop.

1. Grassy bridleway past cottages 
Facing The Green Dragon public house, follow the road to the left and then turn right and follow the roadside path to Canterton Road. Follow this road past houses to a footbridge over a ford. Continue ahead to a waymarker on your left. Turn right onto a grassy bridleway and past cottages on your left (waypoint 1).

2. Sir Walter Tyrell pub
On leaving the wood the bridleway becomes a road. At the road junction, turn left past a red post box and head towards the Sir Walter Tyrell pub (waypoint 2).

3. Rufus Stone
Follow the road uphill until you reach the Rufus Stone car park on your left and the monument on your right.

4. Under the A31
Continue ahead uphill, turn right at low wooden barrier/waymarker 90 and follow gravel track to waymarker 91. Turn left following track to the A31 underpass. Turn left at metal gate/waymarker 92, past cottages on your right (waypoint 4).

5. Beech wood
After a few hundred yards turn right into Furzey Gardens car park. Waymarker is just past garden entrance on left. Turn left, follow track ahead, then turn right where track splits to follow waymarked path downhill to kissing gate and footbridge (waypoint 4).

6. Hop over a stile
Turn left at the next kissing gate, continue downhill along the edge of a larger wood; crossing a boardwalk and footbridge. Continue to the top of the hill, turn left over a stile. Follow the path alongside buildings to the road and over another stile (waypoint 6).

7. Minstead Church
Turn left and follow the road to a footbridge and ford crossing. Turn right at the road junction and continue to Minstead Study Centre and a ford crossing on your right. Cross the road ahead to a small gravel lay-by and waymarker. Turn left through a kissing gate and follow the path uphill to Minstead Church (waypoint 7).

Useful tip

All walking routes can be muddy in or following wet weather. Suitable waterproofs and footwear are a must!

Grid ref

SU 273 141

Postcode

SO 43 7HE

Duration

3 hours (approx.)

Distance

7.2 miles (11.6 km)
Take a New Forest Safari

Here in the New Forest National Park, we have our very own safari that has seen animals and people living side-by-side for hundreds of years. Our New Forest ‘big five’ can regularly been seen across the heath and lowland and are an almost daily sight nuzzling the hedgerows and regularly holding up the traffic.

If you’re lucky, your exploration of this wilderness could feature sightings of any of our big five, roaming freely throughout their home - just as they should!

Spot the New Forest’s ‘big five’

Ponies

The sight of a New Forest pony is one of the most iconic associations with the New Forest, with around 3,000 roaming freely. Owned by Commoners – each animal is branded and their tail is trimmed to the pattern of the Agister responsible for that pony.

Donkeys

The most adorable and docile animal on our safari is the New Forest donkey! Only around a hundred or so live in the New Forest. Although hugely popular with tourists, it’s worth knowing it’s an offence to feed donkeys. Only around a hundred or so live in the New Forest. Although hugely popular with tourists, it’s worth knowing it’s an offence to feed them. Donkeys are treated under the same commoning rules as ponies and being extremely hardy, can survive in the forest all year round.

Cows

Also calling the New Forest their home are herds of large, hairy locals. Cows are a prominent feature although the number reduces during the autumn and winter months as only a few breeds are hardy enough to brave winter in the New Forest. There’s approximately a dozen different breeds ranging from the Highland cattle to Galloway and Hereford crossbreeds and the Friesian cow. Typically, shy in nature, it’s still best to keep a safe distance as they’re notoriously protective of their offspring.

Pigs

Each year, from mid-September, in a practice known as ‘pannage’, a few hundred pigs are allowed to live out on the forest to eat items which are poisonous to the other forest animals. For 60 days, the pigs will work their way throughout the Forest, snaffling anything from acorns and nuts to beech mast and crab apples from the forest floor.

Sheep

Sheep are not generally seen roaming the open forest as only one Commoner turns them out in the New Forest at present, and that’s in our village of Bramshaw and the surrounding National Trust-owned commons in our northern corner of the National Park. If you get caught up behind these noisy bleaters as they move through the village, be prepared for a delay to your journey!

Accessibiltiy

Moderate, short but steep walk.

Local facilities

No facilities on this route.

1. Car park At the left-hand corner of the car park, a prominent white gravel track leads towards the edge of the ridge and heads towards farmland in the valley below. Follow this path and soon it descends very steeply. As the gradient lessens the path becomes narrower and heads down to cross Deadman’s Brook.
2. Cross the brook Cross over the Brook and follow the obvious path ahead.
3. After 20 metres, a small path joins to the right. Take this path to reach the tree line above you.
4. Large clearing Once the climb becomes more gradual and begins to flatten out, the woodland to the right peters out and a large clearing is reached. A solitary fence post standing alone marks the start of an indistinct path into the woods. Take this path which doubles back at 7 o’clock from the original path.
5. Giant ant hills On reaching a junction with a track at the bottom of the hill, turn right. At this point, keep your eyes peeled for some giant ant hills which rise majestically from the forest floor.
6. Cross the ditch The path winds uphill to the left. After 80 metres, and before it veers around to the right, take a small path leading downhill to the left. Soon you will cross a ditch and bank.
7. Cross the stream Cross the stream and straight away on reaching a t-junction head left following the small track leading gently uphill.
8. Through the forest On reaching a further junction, take a sharp left onto the path that leads in at 7 o’clock. Follow this through some beautiful deciduous forest to re-cross the stream.
9. Re-cross the stream Across the stream, the path snakes through a clearing and comes to a line of trees. Pass through a gap in the trees before taking the path immediately to your right. This path meanders through the heathland to re-cross the stream.
10. Car park Follow the path straight ahead steeply uphill back to the car park.
Bolderwood Arboretum
Situated on an old coaching route, Bolderwood has all the ingredients for a great family day out, where you can get very close to the famous herd of fallow deer which live in and around Bolderwood. Take a picnic and spend all day exploring the waymarked trails, cycling or playing games on the open field.
Take Roger Penny Way/B3078 to Furzey Lane and turn left and continue to Bolderwood Arboretum to Ornamental Drive (SO43 7GE)

Accessibility
A variety of moderate walks will lead you deep into a secluded part of the Forest and into stunning scenery of a hidden valley, home to several herds of deer.

Local facilities
There are facilities at Bolderwood.

Bolderwood Deer Sanctuary has an incredible viewing platform overlooking a large meadow and is one of the best places to see deer in the New Forest. From April to September, herds of fallow deer regularly gather in the field as they wait for a Forestry Commission Ranger to come and feed them. Feeding takes place any time between 12.30noon – 2.30pm.
There are also three circular signposted walks which are also suitable for wheelchair and buggy users, each of them consists of a compact gravel track. Each walk begins from the car park and consists of a 1/2 mile, 1 mile and 2 miles distance winding through Bolderwood’s ancient and ornamental woodland, home to some of the tallest trees in the New Forest. The waymarked routes include:
The Bolderwood Cycle Trail
Viewing the wildlife, that can often be missed by car. Using a bicycle is the best way to experience the magnificent beauty and fascinating wildlife this truly ancient forest has to offer.
The Jubilee Trail
This meandering route leads you past some majestic trees, the oldest of which date back to 1860.
Deer Watch Trail
A short stroll which leads you to a deer viewing platform at Bolderwood, overlooking fields where wild herds of fallow deer are regularly seen.
The Radnor Trail
A longer route which explores a range of woodland types both ancient and modern in the New Forest.

Cadman’s Pool
A beautiful walk that leads you deep into a secluded part of the forest and the stunning scenery of a hidden valley, home to several herds of deer.

Accessibility
Moderate.

Local facilities
Parking.

1. Car park Leave the farthest corner of the car park by the extended gravel track through a gate marked ‘Richard’s Retreat’. At the far end of this extension a Forestry Commission gate marks the start of the track skirting the wood to the right.
2. Through the woods After approximately 100 metres, the path forks. Take the right-hand fork through the bracken into the wood. This path descends briefly before entering a small clearing on level ground. Take the path straight ahead and downhill between the birch trees. Follow this path which curves to the right as it descends.
3. Cross the ford On emerging from the trees, a grassy crossroads is reached. Turn left. As the path brings you in sight of a stream to the right, head straight on at 1 o’clock to reach a ford crossing. The ford is characterised by low banks either side and crosses the stream between a large conifer and holly tree.
4. Up to the ridge After fording the stream, head uphill directly ahead towards a row of conifers. Pass under the line of conifers and keep straight ahead with a stand of holly bushes to the right of the path. Follow the path as it skirts the edge of the holly. Keep the holly to your right at all times and DO NOT enter the woods. At the far corner of the wood the path swings to the right and uphill to bring you onto a ridge.
5. Gravel road At the top of the ridge a muddy track is reached. Turn left along it and follow as it skirts the basin to your left. Pass a grassy crossroads and continue along the track until you emerge onto a gravel road.
6. Pass the white cottage Turn left onto the gravel road and when it divides, take the left-hand track downhill towards a solitary white cottage.
7. Into the wood Immediately in front of Holly Hatch College a five-bar gate leads into the woods to the left. Take this path and do not deviate from the main path.
8. Through the enclosure When the path turns sharply at 90 degrees to the right after a further 30 metres, another path heads uphill to the left. Take this path and shortly after the crossroads is reached. Turn left to reach the enclosure gate.
9. Car park After the gate turn left on a grassy path back to the Pool and the car park.

Grid ref
SU 228 123
Postcode
BH24 3QZ
Distance
Duration
4 miles
2 hours

Grid ref
SU 243 086
Postcode
SO43 7GE
Distance
Duration
Variable
As long as you like
Pedal Power

There are many cycle routes to enjoy in the New Forest, perfect for a car-free experience. If you fancy exploring on two wheels, don’t worry about bringing your own! We can arrange for a quality bike(s), for all ages and abilities, to be delivered directly to the Inn.

Bike hire: £12 per day (includes: overnight locker storage, helmet, puncture repair kit).

Please book in advance when booking or by calling Reception on 023 8081 2214.

Picnics — made easy

There’s nothing better than eating alfresco in the countryside, and it’s even better when someone’s made it for you! Stay with us and we can pack a picnic for your day out in the New Forest or even for your return journey home!

Picnics include: freshly prepared homemade rolls made with local produce such as cheese or crab, crisps, fruit and New Forest spring water. Homemade sausage rolls or Scotch eggs can be added for a small charge.

From £9 per person.

Pre-order 24-hours before day required with Reception.

New Forest Bus Tour

DAILY THROUGHOUT JULY — SEPTEMBER

Explore the New Forest by an open-top safari! The New Forest Tours bus has three routes taking in every corner across this expansive heathland enabling you to hop on and off wherever you like from pretty villages and attractions to footpaths and cycle trails.

Discover the northern part of the New Forest on the ‘red route’ which conveniently has a bus stop situated directly outside The Bell Inn (opposite the Green Dragon pub).

Red Route bus tour:

Burley — once the haunt of smugglers and witches
Ringwood — explore this market town, famous for its brewery
Fordingbridge — small country town on the River Avon
Sandy Balls — an eco-friendly camping holiday resort
New Forest Wildlife Park — get up close to amazing animals
Lyndhurst — the capital of the New Forest!

Tour duration: 2 hours 15 minutes (approx.)

Visit www.thenewforesttour.info for more information.
Local Cycling & Walking Routes

1. Brook to Minstead Village
   - Grid ref: SU 273 141
   - Postcode: SO43 7HE
   - Duration: 3 hours (approx.)
   - Distance: 7.2 miles (11.6 km)

2. Deadman's Hill
   - Grid ref: SU 193 165
   - Postcode: SP6 2QY
   - Duration: 1 hour
   - Distance: 2-3 miles (3-4 km)

3. Cadman's Pool
   - Grid ref: SU 228 123
   - Postcode: BH24 3QZ
   - Duration: 2 hours
   - Distance: 4 miles (6 km)

4. Bolderwood Arboretum
   - Grid ref: SU 243 086
   - Postcode: SO43 7GE
   - Duration: As long as you like
   - Distance: Variable

SCALE 1:90,000 (approx)