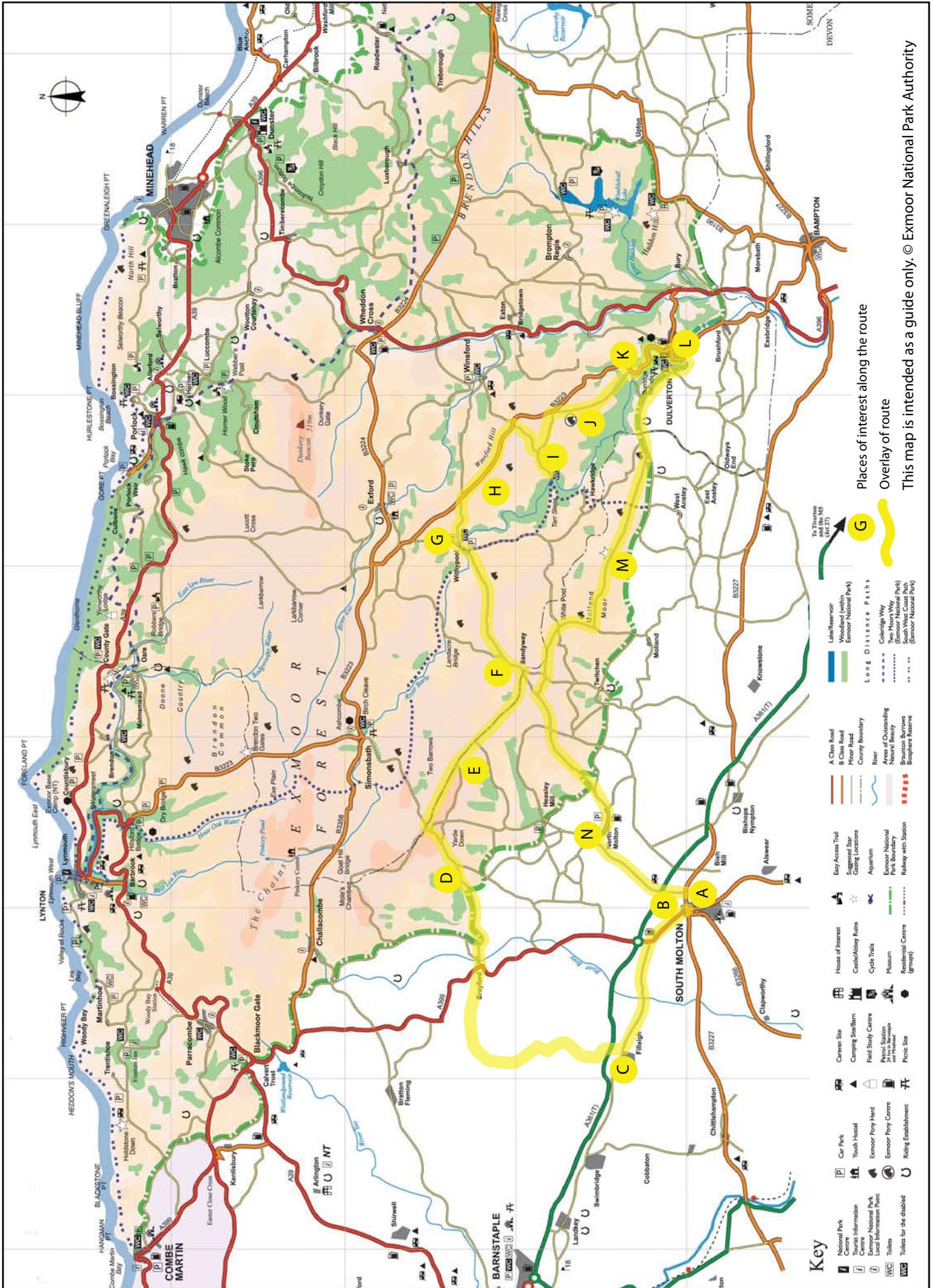


# 'Off-the-Beaten Track' Sightseeing Tour of Southern Exmoor



## Circular drive around the southern side of Exmoor

This drive through the beautiful scenery of Exmoor, is designed to give you a sightseeing tour with plenty to do along the way. It includes small single-track roads which have passing. The information starts at South Molton, but you can pick up the route anywhere along it, depending on where you are staying. Places of interest are listed in the order you reach them going clockwise around the route, which is the recommended direction to follow.

**Distance:** about 48 miles

**Duration,** including stops: all day

**Please note:** This route is not suitable for larger vehicles.

## Main towns and villages visited

South Molton, Filleigh, East Buckland, Brayford, Withypool, Licombe, Dulverton, Oldways End

## Places of interest along the way

- A. South Molton – Pannier Market, Museum, tea rooms, shops, pubs, church, Heritage trail
- B. Quince Honey Farm, South Molton
- C. Castle Hill, Filleigh – historic house and gardens
- D. Poltimore Arms, old coaching inn
- E. Ridge road with excellent views on a clear day
- F. Sportsman's Inn, old coaching inn
- G. Withypool – old bridge, tea rooms, toilets and pub. Walks and picnic spot
- H. Winsford Hill – Exmoor ponies, ancient barrows and the Caractacus Stone, near Spires Cross
- I. Tarr Steps, an ancient clapper bridge over the River Barle
- J. Exmoor Pony Centre, promoting and protecting this endangered rare-breed
- K. Marsh Bridge, ancient pack-horse bridge next to the more 'modern' iron bridge
- L. Dulverton – shops, tea rooms, church, Guildhall, Heritage and Arts Centre, ancient bridge, Exmoor Information Centre, home to the National Park offices
- M. Ridge Road, offering views across Devon to Dartmoor, chance of seeing red deer and Exmoor ponies
- N. North Molton - shop, pub, church, walks

## Public conveniences along the way:

South Molton; Withypool; Tarr Steps car park; Dulverton.

## Route directions

This route can easily be picked up at any of the towns it passes through. It has been started at South Molton, simply as it needs to be started somewhere. It is common for junctions to be named, usually written down the directions post at the junction. I will refer to these in these directions. The mileages shown are the distance between each direction. As the route can be started anywhere along it, cumulative distances are not given. Always continue ahead unless otherwise directed. The letters refer to the places of interest shown on the map along the route.

1. 0 miles, South Molton. Starting outside the Guildhall in the centre of **South Molton (A)**, on the B3227, follow the road to the right of the Post Office signed to Barnstaple.
2. 0.1 miles. Ignore the turning to the left to Torrington on the B3227, instead continue ahead to pass the **Quince Honey Farm (B)**.
3. 0.5 miles, Industrial Estate roundabout. Bear left at the roundabout on the B3226.
4. 0.9 miles. Turn left to Filleigh, Hill and Swimbridge. Follow this road to Filleigh.
5. 1.6 miles, Sawmills Cross, Filleigh. At Filleigh cross the river bridge and then turn right towards East and West Buckland, following the boundary of **Castle Hill Estate (C)**.
6. 0.5 miles. Follow the road as it goes left.
7. 0.6 miles. Cross the bridge over the A361, North Devon Link Road and then follow it round to the left.

8. 0.2 miles. Bear left on this road, ignoring the road ahead. Now follow this road ignoring all turnings off.
9. 3.8 miles, Kimbland Cross. Turn right towards Brayford and Simonsbath.
10. 1.5 miles, cross roads with A399. Cross straight over to Brayford. Continue ahead on this road.
11. 2.8 miles, Yarde Down Cross. Pass the **Poltimore Arms (D)** and at the T-junction, bear left, towards Simonsbath.
12. 1.2 miles, Kinsford Gate. At this cross-roads, turn right onto a small country road. This **road (E)** offers wonderful panoramic views on your right over to Barnstaple Bay and Hartland Point and Lundy Island in the distance. Follow this road ahead.
13. 4.0 miles, Sandyway Cross. At the T-junction, turn left to pass the **Sportsman's Inn (F)**.
14. 0.7 miles, Withypool Cross. At the Y-junction, bear right keeping on this road to cross moorland.
15. 3.1 miles, Withypool. At **Withypool (G)**, cross the river bridge over the River Barle. There is now a tea rooms, shop and toilets and a pub. Continue along the road.
16. 1.1 miles, Comer's Cross. On reaching the cross-roads, turn right to cross a cattle grid on to **Winsford Hill (H)**. There is a very good chance of seeing Exmoor ponies here.
17. 2.2 miles, Spire Cross. Having crossed the moorland, the road loses height and at the cross-roads, turn right towards Liscombe on a country lane.
18. 0.3 miles, bear left over a cattle grid, ignoring the track ahead.
19. 0.7 miles, Liscombe. At Liscombe, bear right towards Tarr Steps car park.
20. 0.3 miles, **Tarr Steps (I)** car park. Turn left into the car park, where you will find toilets and a walk down to the famous clapper bridge and Tarr Farm where you can get refreshments.
21. 0.3 miles, Liscombe. Having enjoyed Tarr Steps, return along the road to Liscombe and turn right.
22. 1.0 mile, B3223. Turn right onto the main road.
23. 0.1 miles, Mounsey Hill Gate. Turn right before the cattle grid towards Ashwick and the Exmoor Pony Centre.
24. 0.8 miles, **Exmoor Pony Centre (J)**. If you would like to visit these ponies, turn right into their entrance.
25. 1.6 miles, Marsh Bridge. Continue along this small road to reach **Marsh Bridge (K)**. Here bear left, ignoring the iron bridge on the right over the river. Bear right to reach the main road, B3223. Bear right to follow it to Dulverton.
26. 1.1 miles, Dulverton. Follow this sometimes narrow road into **Dulverton (L)**. With the church up to your left, turn right along the High Street on the B3222.
27. 0.2 miles, cross Dulverton Bridge over the River Barle.
28. 0.2 miles, at the next Y-junction on the right, bear right up the hill towards Hawkridge and Oldways End.
29. 0.4 miles, turn right towards Hawkridge.
30. 1.3 miles, Hinam Cross. Bear left onto next road.
31. 0.8 miles, Five Cross Ways, keep straight ahead ignoring all roads off.
32. 2.9 miles, Anstey Gate. Cross the cattle grid and continue ahead across open moorland. Watch out for red deer and Exmoor ponies.
33. 1.7 miles, Ridgway Cross. At the cross-roads, turn right.
34. 0.9 miles, White Post. Turn left here to cross a cattle grid and immediately ignore the road to the left, continuing ahead.
35. 1.2 miles, Mudgate Cross. At this cross-roads, cross straight over.
36. 0.6 miles, Twitchen Ball Corner. Turn left at the T-junction.
37. 3.7 miles, North Molton. Follow the road through the village, ignoring all roads off.
38. 2.4 miles, A361. Cross the main road on this staggered cross-roads to South Molton.
39. 0.8 miles, B3227, South Molton. Turn right at the T-junction.
40. 0.2 miles, South Molton. Follow this road into the main High Street, with the Guildhall on your left. To continue on this route, please go to Direction 1.

# Notes

## General

The woodlands on Exmoor are predominantly native sessile oaks. These were grown to fuel the lime kilns, as they produce excellent steadily burning charcoal and were tolerant of the lighter, more acid, less fertile soil of this area. Sessile means stalkless, referring to its acorns, unlike the Pedunculate Oak, otherwise known as the English Oak, which sprouts its acorns from stalks.

## South Molton

South Molton is an ancient market town, still holding its undercover pannier market each Thursday and Saturday. The town lies just outside the Exmoor boundary on the south side of the moor. The church overlooks the town and is dedicated to St Mary Magdalene which is approached through an avenue of lime trees. On the road out to the north of the town is the Quince Honey Farm telling the story of the honey bee. There are many buildings of interest in the town. An insight into the history of these Medieval, Georgian and Elizabethan buildings and the town itself can be found in the Heritage Trail which you can get from the Tourist Information centre in the Square. It guides you around the town showing you glimpses of past and present with a wealth of interesting information.

## Filleigh

Castle Hill Gardens surround the magnificent Palladian house, seat of the Fortescues since 1454. The house was built in 1730 as the Earl Fortescue's family home in North Devon. Today, Castle Hill is home to his descendants, the Earl and Countess of Arran. It is set in a spectacular 18th century parkland landscape punctuated with statues, follies and temples built by each generation of the Fortescues.

## Withypool

Withypool is surrounded by open moorland and it has a remote and upland character. Here you can see the six arched Withypool Bridge which was built a hundred years ago. There is an opportunity for refreshments here as well as some excellent short and long walks around the village to admire the superb open moorland.

## Winsford Hill

Winsford Hill is a wild expanse of open moorland where Exmoor Ponies roam freely and the observant can spot Exmoor's famous red deer. You can walk freely across the moor or follow any of the footpaths that cross the area. The Caractacus Stone is one of many standing stones on Exmoor. It is not certain whether it is a Neolithic stone or more recent 5th Century standing stone. Its Latin inscription commemorates a Celtic Chieftain who bravely fought against the Romans.

Whilst here, you can visit the Exmoor Pony centre (01398 323093) to learn more about this ancient breed or even take a ride.

## Tarr Steps

Tarr Steps is justly one of the most popular locations within the National Park. It is a prehistoric clapper bridge consisting of large stone slabs spanning the River Barle. According to local legend the stones were placed here by the devil to win a bet. The surrounding area is a National Nature Reserve rich in flora and fauna. Whilst there are numerous footpaths in the area one of the most popular is to cross the bridge and turn right alongside the river until coming to the next bridge and returning on the opposite bank. This takes approximately 1 hour and there is an opportunity for refreshments at the end.

## Dulverton

Dulverton is often referred to as the southern gateway of the Exmoor National Park. It is a popular town lying in the deep, wooded Valley of the River Barle. There are a range of unique shops and plenty of opportunities to taste delicious local products. There is the National Park Centre (01398 323841) should you require any further information. Here you can discover more about what makes Exmoor such a special place and you can pick up maps, guides and seek friendly advice. The Heritage Centre (01398 323818) displays regular exhibitions reflecting local life on Exmoor.



**For more information on Exmoor please visit [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk)**