



Walks



Map



News



Soci

Walk - Croyde & Saunton Down

4.5 miles (7.2 km)

📍 National Trust Baggy Point Car Park - EX33 1FF → Baggy Point Car Park

📌 Moderate - The paths are narrow and stony and there is plenty of ascent and descent, some of it steep, with steps as well.

A bracing walk to blow away the cobwebs, weaving your way through a network of old lanes to climb to a vantage point high above three miles of golden sand at Saunton, with breathtaking views right across Bideford Bay and the Taw and Torridge estuary. On the far side of the hill you follow a grassy path bordered with wildflowers to pick up the old coastguard path around the low cliffs at Down End, returning across Croyde Beach. A lovely walk in spring, when the gorse is blazing and the thorn bushes are covered in blossom and home to songbirds; also in autumn, when the heathland is bright with heather and small birds feed in the fields and hedges.

This walk is part of our "Summer Strolls". Use the walk (or part of it) to visit either Saunton Sands or Croyde beach.

While Croyde beach is not dog friendly this walk starts in the car park and heads to Saunton, which is dog friendly with miles of golden sands for playful pooches! Have a look at our [Top Dog Walks on the South West Coast Path \(/top-dog/\)](#) for more dog friendly beaches and pubs.

🏠 [Heritage \(/walksdb/tags/heritage/\)](#) [Wildlife \(/walksdb/tags/wildlife/\)](#)

[Autumn \(/walksdb/tags/autumn/\)](#)

🌙 Sleep

[The Whiteleaf, Croyde >](#)

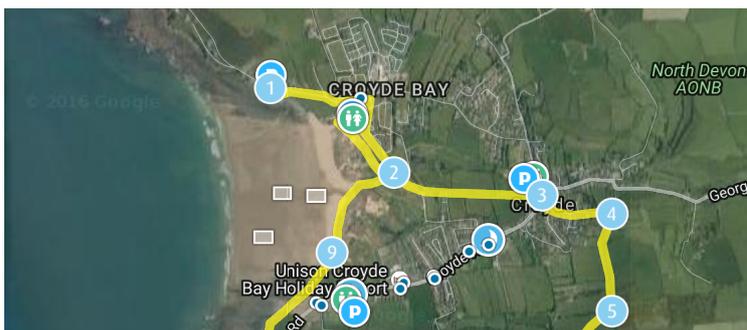
The Whiteleaf is an AA 4 Star Gold Award B&B with a licensed restaurant in the village of Croyde.



🧑 Do

[Slow Adventure Company, Braunton](#)

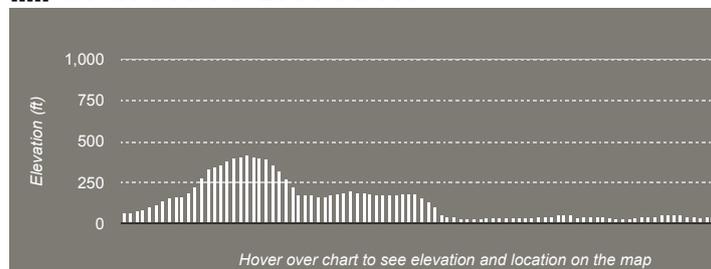
Slow Adventure Company craft self-guided, slow-paced, human-powered adventures along the South West Coast.





- ✓ Easy walks
- ✓ Moderate walks
- ✓ Challenging walks
- ✓ Eat & Drink
- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Do
- ✓ Bus stop
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Car park
- ✓ Toilet
- ✓ Place of interest
- ✓ Route change

Interactive Elevation



Route Description

1 Coming out of the National Trust Baggly Point car park turn left on Moor Lane and walk to the holiday park, turning right here to take the small road opposite, towards Croyde Burrows. At the crossroads carry straight on ahead and follow the drive through the southern half of Ruda Holiday Park.

Here you are following the Tarka Trail as well as the South West Coast Path. The Tarka Trail is a 180-mile walking and cycling route linking locations featured in the novel 'Tarka the Otter', written by local author Henry Williamson. Williamson lived in nearby Georgeham, and his novel featured the exploits of an otter as it swam through North Devon's waterways (see the [Baggy Point Walk \(/walksdb/26/\)](#)).

2 When the drive turns sharply to the left, carry on along the path ahead, bearing left when it forks. Reaching the hedge, bear left to walk past it and then carry on ahead in an easterly direction along Sandy Lane.

3 On the main road turn right to take Cloutman's Lane on the left beyond, walking between two thatched cottages and carrying on past smaller roads to left and right until the road turns sharply left and a track heads off to the right.

4 Turn right onto the track, bearing right a moment later when it forks, to continue ahead along Down Lane. Ignore the tracks leading away on either side, until you come to the end of the lane.

5 Follow the footpath through the field on the right, climbing gently uphill to go through the hedge into the next field. Cross this field to walk along the hedge in the next, going over the brow of the hill to the stile in the far hedge. Bear left as you start to drop downhill, passing to the right of the small fields by the derelict Coronation Cottages.

[Print OS \(Ordnance Survey\) M](#)

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[> A-Z 1:25,000 map book: North Devon & Somerset \(http://shop.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/p/405.htm\)](#)

Nearby Walks

Croyde village dates back to Saxon times. The fields you can see below you as you climb towards Saunton Down still bear traces of the strip farming methods used in those days (see the Braunton Burrows Walk (/walksdb/666/)). People working the land owned narrow strips within a larger enclosure. If a farmer owned several of these strips he might enclose them within a hedge, leading to narrow fields such as those below. There are ancient cultivation strips in terraces by the track on beside Coronation Cottages, also thought to date from the same period.

6 *Here you join the South West Coast Path, arriving from Braunton and heading steeply downhill towards Saunton Sands. Turn right onto the Coast Path to follow it down towards the main road.*

Despite its popularity in the summer, it is easy to get away from the crowds on Saunton Sands if you head away across the beach. The long flat stretch of golden sand facing west across the Atlantic makes it an idyllic place for wildlife as well as for people. It is a good place for spotting waders, including sanderlings, dunlins and ringed plovers. The sandhoppers sweeping up along the tideline attract wagtails, pipits and even swallows. Oystercatchers patrol the edge of the sea and cormorants are often seen on the rocks between here and Down End. The rocky plateau between the two beaches provides an excellent scramble on a falling tide, and the rock pools teem with anemones and crabs. The rocks that are submerged at high tide are encrusted with barnacles and limpets, while along the shoreline the sea deposits cuttlefish, razor shells, whelks, cockles, sea urchins, and sometimes even jellyfish.

To the left of the beach as you descend towards it, Braunton Burrows is England's largest dune system and is particularly noted for its wildlife, with an enormous range of wildflowers and 14 species of plants and animals on the UK list of species which are under threat (see the Braunton Burrows Walk (/walksdb/666/)). Across the estuary, on the far side of the beach, is Appledore, a picturesque fishing village dating back to Saxon times with a rich maritime history.

Saunton is one of the most important Pleistocene (Ice Age) sites in southern England, being especially noted for the massive erratic boulders sitting on its wavecut platforms. These rocks were carried here on huge sheets of ice, and the most famous is known as the Saunton Pink Granite. This is thought to have been swept down from Guinard Bay in northern Scotland, and it is embedded in the cliff face, buried beneath bands of crumbly sandy cliffs known as raised beach deposits.

7 *Before you reach the gate to the road at the bottom of the path, turn right with the Coast Path and follow it through the heathland above Saunton Sands to where it drops down a few steps to the main road opposite the layby before Chesil Cliff House.*

8 *Keeping a careful eye on the traffic as it rounds the blind corner to your right, cross the road and walk a short distance to the right to carry on along the Coast Path as it drops steeply downhill by the old coastguard lookout and carries on around the low cliffs at Down End.*

Down End is a favoured location among the area's top surfers, who are often to be seen catching the waves here long before the rest of the world clambers out of bed. Both Croyde and Saunton are exceptionally popular surfing areas, and enthusiasts from all over the country regularly travel down the M5 on a Friday night to spend the

Easy walks

(3 wal

Moderate walks

(8 wal

Challenging walks

(0 wal

Current Conditions

19°

Overcast skies

Wind 22 mph S



Tomorrow

14° - 19°

Overcast skies

Wind 23 mph S



Next day

13° - 15°

Patchy rain possible

Wind 23 mph WSW



weekend in the water. Down End is particularly highly rated among the experts for its powerful hollow low-tide breakers, which are reckoned to be among the best in the world. It regularly hosts international competitions. Some of the world's top surfers cut their teeth in the very lively surf club here. It is not recommended as a place for the novice, though, as its strong rip currents make it hazardous for anyone starting out. Saunton Sands is a much kinder beach for the less experienced surfer, and it is considered to be the UK's best beach for longboard surfing.

- 9 *When the path forks above Croyde Beach, take the steps down onto the sand and walk straight across the beach to the rocks and buildings on the far side. Pick up the path heading up to Croyde Bay here, turning left on Moor Lane to return to the Baggy Point car park.*

Public transport

Bus Service 308 from Barnstaple and Braunton to Croyde. For timetable information, zoom in on the interactive map and click on the bus stops, visit Traveline (<http://www.travelinesw.com/>) or phone 0871 200 22 33.

Parking

Croyde Village Car Park (pay and display) (Postcode for Sat Navs: EX33 1LZ).





Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department>

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Europe investing in rural areas for-environment-food-rural-affairs)



(<https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/ccf>)

(<http://www.southwestwater.co.uk/>)



SOUTH WEST WATER



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