



Walks



Map



News



Soci

Walk - Ilfracombe and the Torrs

3.2 miles (5.2 km)

📍 Ilfracombe Quay - EX34 9EQ → Ilfracombe Quay

🔴 Challenging - On pavements, lanes, tracks and a stretch of fairly rugged coastal path, with some steep gradients both up and down.

Once a fishing village, dating from Saxon times, Ilfracombe's particular popularity as a fashionable seaside resort was established in 1874, when the railway arrived.

Although recent innovations such as the Landmark Theatre and Damien Hirst's 'Verity' statue have won it international acclaim, the Victorian flavour remains. Any walk around the town features steep gradients, but the magnificent cliff scenery towering above the picturesque harbour makes it worth the effort. This route travels through a long wooded valley to The Torrs, a rugged area also known as 'The Seven Hills' with tremendous views across the Bristol Channel.

🏠 [Heritage \(/walksdb/tags/heritage/\)](/walksdb/tags/heritage/) [Culture \(/walksdb/tags/culture/\)](/walksdb/tags/culture/)

🌙 Sleep

Chadfield Guest House, Ilfracombe >

Central Ilfracombe, spacious apartment, sleeps 2-4. Ideal for North Devon Coast path and AONB, historic harbour, beaches and High Street.

01271 866622



The Olive Branch, Ilfracombe >

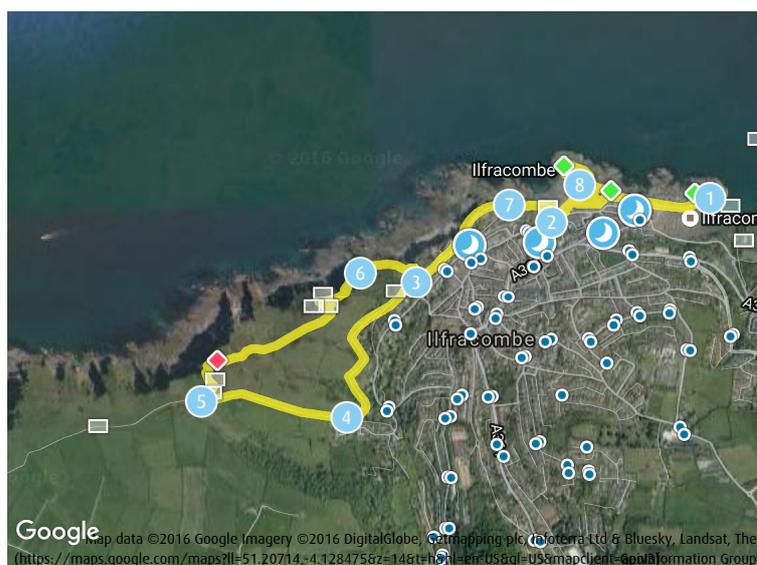
The Olive Branch guest house is a Georgian Grade 2 listed building, completely renovated and refurbished throughout. Each room has been individually decorated. All our double and twin rooms have picturesque sea



Hele Valley Holiday Park, Ilfracombe

Located in the beautiful seaside town of Ilfracombe along the stunningly rugged North Devon coast. The perfect destination for relaxing and for walking the South West Coast Path.

01271 862460

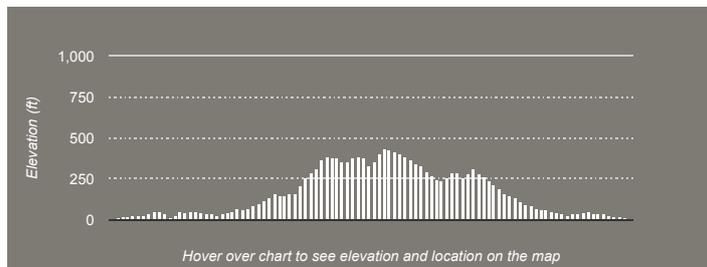


📍 ✓ Easy walks

🍴 ✓ Eat & Drink

📈 Interactive Elevation

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



Route Description

- 1 *Start the walk at the pier beside the harbour. Walk along the Quay towards the town, past the Royal Britannia Hotel. Bear right after the hotel and then immediately left, along Capstone Road. At the end of the road continue ahead along the tarmac path, then bear left down to the broad esplanade at the foot of Capstone Hill. Continue along the top of the beach to the Landmark Theatre.*

On the pier, Damien Hirst's 'Verity' statue is a 'modern allegory of truth and justice', according to its creator. The 66-ft bronze-clad statue, based on Edgar Degas's 'Little Dancer of Fourteen Years', arrived on a 20-year loan to the town in 2012. You pass Hirst's small gallery, flanked by his restaurant, as you walk along the Quay.

Ilfracombe featured in the 1086 Domesday Book as Alfriencoma, 'Alfred's Combe (Valley)', when it was a fishing village. Its harbour was well-established by the fourteenth century. In the twelfth century it was an embarkation point for the Normans in their wars with Ireland, and ships and men were sent from here during the conquest of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Until its tourist boom in the mid-nineteenth century it was an important local naval port, and many skirmishes against the French were recorded offshore here.

With the railway in 1874 came the pleasure steamers, carrying passengers the length of the Bristol Channel, to and from Minehead, Bristol and South Wales. Today the world's last sea-going paddle steamer, the Waverley, still visits and there is also a lively campaign by volunteers to keep her sister ship Balmoral on the water. Lundy Island's supply and passenger ship, the MS Oldenburg, sails from Ilfracombe several times a week in the summer (as well as from Bideford). Other large passenger ships occasionally visit, and there are numerous small pleasure craft, as well as the town's fishing fleet.

The jetty and promenade pier was built in the 1870s at the start of the Victorian tourist boom. The small round hill above is Lantern Hill, named after the light that was kept burning in St Nicholas Chapel, at the top, to warn sailors of the rocks below. The chapel dates from the 1300s, but the present lantern tower was not added until the start of the nineteenth century. It can be reached by means of a small path that winds up behind the harbourmaster's office.

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

Nearby Walks

Easy walks

(3 wal

One of the locals who frequented the bar of the Royal Britannia was author Henry Williamson, who towards the end of his life lived in a cottage on the left-hand side of Capstone Road. Williamson, who also lived and worked in Georgeham, is best known for his novel 'Tarka the Otter', following the journey of an otter through various North Devon rivers. An 180-mile walking and cycle route was later devised, based on the animal's travels, and the Tarka Trail joins the South West Coast Path along this part of the coastline.

- 2 *Carry on past the front of the Landmark Theatre, bearing right afterwards and then immediately left along the tarmac path behind the museum. In the ornamental gardens turn right up the steps and on up the very steep path beyond to the South West Coast Path. Turn left and go through the gate by the five-storey white-brick building with its fine mock-Gothic towers at the start of Granville Road. Bear right past it to continue up the road above the sea.*

The Landmark Theatre - combining pavilion, restaurant and tourist information office as well as a theatre - provoked considerable controversy when it was built in 1997. The two white cones, providing seating for 480 in an auditorium with stunning acoustics, were contemptuously likened to cooling towers, and locals dubbed the theatre 'Madonna's Bra'. The plate-glass windows, with spectacular views over the beach and cliffs below Capstone Hill, are decorated with lines of poetry penned by the late Poet Laureate Ted Hughes, who lived in North Devon. Also on permanent display at the Landmark is The Ilfracombe Tapestry, designed and sewn between June 1996 and April 1999 by ladies, and some gentlemen, of Ilfracombe. It depicts life in Ilfracombe in its Victorian heyday.

On your right as you walk along Granville Road, the Tunnels beaches are reached through tunnels cut by Welsh miners in the 1820s. Immediately below you is the gentlemen's beach, with the ladies beach to the right, beside the tidal pool which was the town swimming's pool until the new pool was built at Hillsborough.

- 3 *When Granville Road drops to the left, a rougher lane continues ahead. Carry on along the latter (Torrs Walk Avenue). When the lane turns left at the top, bear right onto the concrete path, following the Coast Path to a National Trust sign saying 'Torrs Walk'. Leave the Coast Path to continue ahead up the path, climbing along the edge of woodland to arrive at a surfaced lane. Keep going ahead, forking right at the junction to Upper Torrs, still climbing. Ignore the various paths leading up to the Torrs.*

Torrs Park was laid out in the 1880s, with cliff walks and large detached villas. Ilfracombe's imposing many-storeyed terraces were built around this time, their bow windows providing well-heeled gentefolk with magnificent sea views. Every year the town celebrates its nineteenth-century splendour with its 'Victorian Week', held at the beginning of June. Visitors flock here from all over Britain, many of them in period costume for the week, to participate in numerous events recreating the festive atmosphere of the seaside resort in its heyday.

The long, low building in the centre of the view below as you walk along Upper Torrs is on the site of Ilfracombe's old railway station. The railway line is now a footpath and cycleway and continues up the valley at the foot of the woodland on the far side.

Moderate walks

(4 wal

Challenging walks

(3 wal

Current Conditions

19°

Cloudy skies

Wind 22 mph S



Tomorrow

14° - 19°

Cloudy skies

Wind 23 mph S



Next day

14° - 19°

Patchy rain possible

Wind 24 mph WSW





Know better. Book better. Go better.

South West Coast Path Walk - Ilfracombe and the Torrs
[\(https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g191252-d7277005-Reviews-South_West_Coast_Path_Walk_Ilfracombe_and_the_Ilfracombe_Devon_England.html\)](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g191252-d7277005-Reviews-South_West_Coast_Path_Walk_Ilfracombe_and_the_Ilfracombe_Devon_England.html)

TripAdvisor Traveller Rating

 Based on 91 traveller reviews

TripAdvisor Ranking
#11 of 35 things to do in Ilfracombe

Most Recent Traveller Reviews
 23 Sep 2016: "Stunning views"
 16 Sep 2016: "Lovely walks for dogs"
 13 Sep 2016: "Breathtaking views of this beautiful coastline"
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 3 Sep 2016: "Views"

[Read reviews \(https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g191252-d7277005-Reviews-South_West_Coast_Path_Walk_Ilfracombe_and_the_Torrs_Ilfracombe_Devon_England.html\)](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g191252-d7277005-Reviews-South_West_Coast_Path_Walk_Ilfracombe_and_the_Torrs_Ilfracombe_Devon_England.html)
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- 4 *Stay on the heavily wooded lane at Upper Torrs. It drops and then climbs again, past an 'Unsuitable for Vehicles' sign and onwards, eventually reaching a National Trust sign to the Langleigh Valley.*
- 5 *Go through the gate beside the sign. Ignore the track to the left, instead staying beside the wall on the right, going over a stile to rejoin the Coast Path. Stay on the main path, generally parallel to the coast, ignoring all the smaller paths running away from it as you rise and fall over The Torrs - also known as 'The Seven Hills', and you understand why as you walk back above towering cliffs to the town.*
- 6 *Descending from the hilltop, turn left through a gate to follow the Coast Path steeply down the cliff face in a series of zig zag bends. Carry on at the steps as the Coast Path turns inland, returning to Torrs Walk at 3. From here retrace your steps along the concrete path to the left, and on to the lane at the right, turning left into Torrs Walk Avenue. Carry on back down Granville Road, going through the metal gate at the hairpin bend.*
- 7 *In the ornamental gardens take the path to the left, descending behind the Landmark and down the steps to the seafront.*

The mosaic set in the ground on the seafront celebrates Jonathan Edwards's astonishing men's world triple jump record of 18.29m, set in 1995 and still in place 18 years later in 2013. Edwards lived in Ilfracombe as a teenager, when his father was vicar at 'Pip and Jim's' Church.

- 8 *Following the esplanade away from the beach, take the path up to the left behind the shelter, climbing steeply to the top of Capstone Hill. Descending on the far side, turn left at the bottom to retrace your steps along Capstone Road and back to the Quay.*

The zigzag paths up Capstone Hill were constructed in the 1840s by unemployed labourers. It is said that when the town's men were at sea fighting the French, their womenfolk climbed to the top of Capstone Hill, wearing red petticoats, in order to convince the enemy that there was a brigade of redcoats ready to take them on if they landed.

The Landmark Theatre was built to replace the Pavilion, which once stood at the base of Capstone Hill. In finest Victorian tradition, the old venue ran a programme of music-hall style entertainment throughout the summer season until, already semi-derelict, it was partially burnt down in the 1980s and subsequently demolished.

As you walk along the Quay with the harbour on your right, the Lifeboat Station can be seen at the head of the slipway. The first lifeboat was stationed in the town in 1828 and the present station was opened in 1996. The first motor lifeboat at Ilfracombe was placed on station in March 1936. This was a 32 feet Surf lifeboat, a type that was designed for work close inshore. It was replaced in 1945, which allowed the Surf boat to be sent to the Netherlands where there was an acute shortage of lifeboats at the end of World War II. Today the station operates an all weather boat and an inshore lifeboat.

Places of interest

[Ilfracombe Tourist Information Centre \(http://www.visitilfracombe.co.uk/\)](http://www.visitilfracombe.co.uk/)

(<http://www.visitilfracombe.co.uk/> target=)For further local information, there is a National Trust Leaflet on walks between Ilfracombe and Croyde, available from normal Trust outlets including the Ilfracombe Tourist Information Centre, price £0.75. The Centre also has leaflets describing Ilfracombe Town Trails and half day walks from the town.

For information on the wider network of walking trails in Devon visit the website [VisitDevon \(http://www.visitdevon.co.uk\)](http://www.visitdevon.co.uk/).

[Ilfracombe Lifeboat \(http://ilfracombelifeboat.org.uk/\)](http://ilfracombelifeboat.org.uk/)

Nearby refreshments

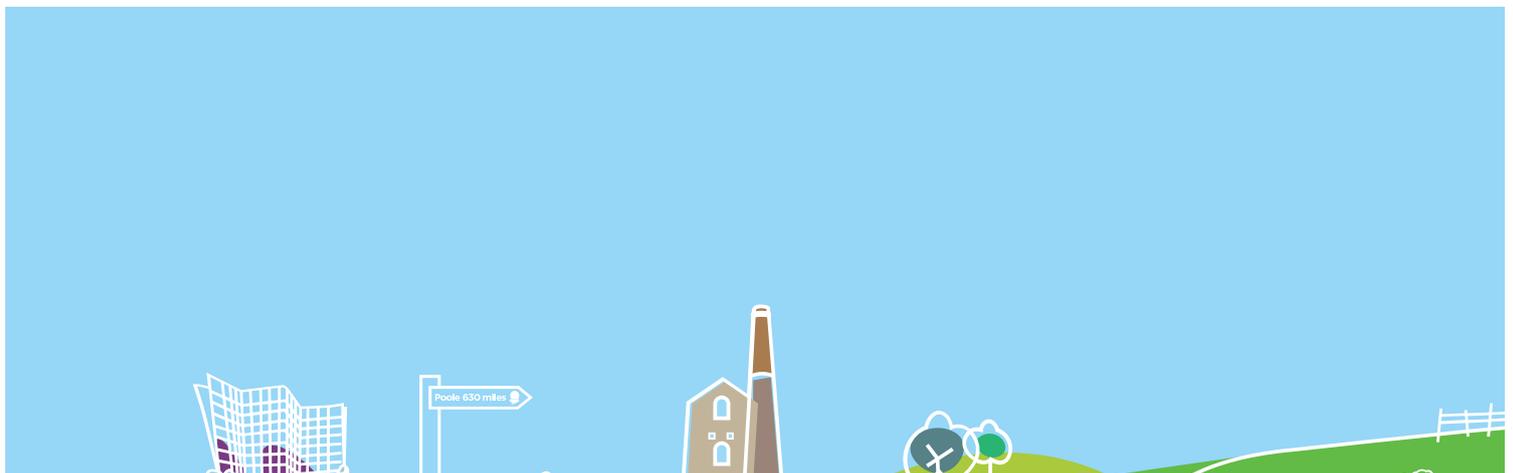
Ilfracombe has all facilities; there are none on the walk outside the town.

Public transport

Ilfracombe has a good and regular bus service from Barnstaple. For timetable information, zoom in on the interactive map and click on the bus stops, visit [Traveline \(http://www.travelinesw.com\)](http://www.travelinesw.com) or phone 0871 200 22 33.

Parking

There are numerous car parks signposted from the edge of Ilfracombe (Postcode for Sat Navs: EX34 9EQ).





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>)



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