

7½ miles/12.1km

3-4 hours

moderate

High on the wild side

North Dartmoor is an open part of the moor with few tracks but many signs of ancient settlement. On the east bank of the West Okement river you walk through the highest piece of ancient oak woodland on the moor. The boulders under these intriguingly shaped trees are covered with a thick layer of moss. To discover more about the history of the moor, visit the Museum of Dartmoor Life in Okehampton (tel 01837 52295).

The walk

1 From the car park, walk across the dam at the eastern end of the Meldon Reservoir. Once across, turn right and follow the path around until you come to an obvious track leading off to the left. This track is very clear and climbs gradually up the shoulder of Longstone Hill and around a long corner where you can see the top of Yes Tor.

2 When the steep valley to your left begins to flatten out (at about grid ref 567908) leave the track and walk across the moor towards Yes Tor – you should be able to see the trig point on the top. There is an area of clitter (loose rocks and boulders on a slope) to negotiate on the way up. Enjoy the superb views from the top of the tor, which, on a clear day, stretch over North Devon as far as the coast of North Cornwall.

3 From Yes Tor, walk along a track to the less impressive rock formation of High Willihays, which is actually 6½ft (1.9m) higher than Yes Tor and the highest point on Dartmoor.

4 From High Willihays, make your way down the slope of the hill to the West Okement Valley. If you prefer to make a gentler descent, keep Lints Tor directly in front until you come to a boundary stone, then start to go down.

5 Don't cross the river but follow the valley of the West Okement river downstream. The track alongside is quite easy to follow – however, when walking through the ancient woodland at Black Tor Copses take care not to destroy any of the mosses and lichens growing under the oak trees. Once you reach a stone wall, walk along the moor side of it until you come to a well-defined track. Follow this downhill until you reach a flat grassy area at Vellake Corner.

6 Before the track crosses the river, turn right across the grass to a high footbridge. Climb up and over the bridge, crossing stiles at both ends. The path then climbs a series of concrete steps until it rejoins the lane. Turn right along the lane until you reach a small gate which the path cuts through. This path skirts the north west side of the reservoir and brings you back to the car park.

DETAILS

Country Walking ID
1981
Mag Route 3, June 1999

Region South West
Area Devon
Length of walk 7½ miles/12.1km
Time needed 3-4 hours
Difficulty Moderate

IS THIS WALK FOR YOU?

Terrain Tracks and rough moorland, can be muddy in places and is very uneven over areas of rocky clitter
Stiles A few easy wooden ones
Suitable for children, dogs

PLANNING

Parking Meldon Reservoir
Start grid ref SX567918

Nearest town Okehampton
Refreshments Cafés and pubs in Okehampton

Public toilets None
Public transport The nearest bus runs to Okehampton from Bude and Exeter. For details, call Western National, 01752 222666, and Devon Bus, 01392 382800

MAPS

OS Landranger 191
OS Outdoor Leisure 28

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