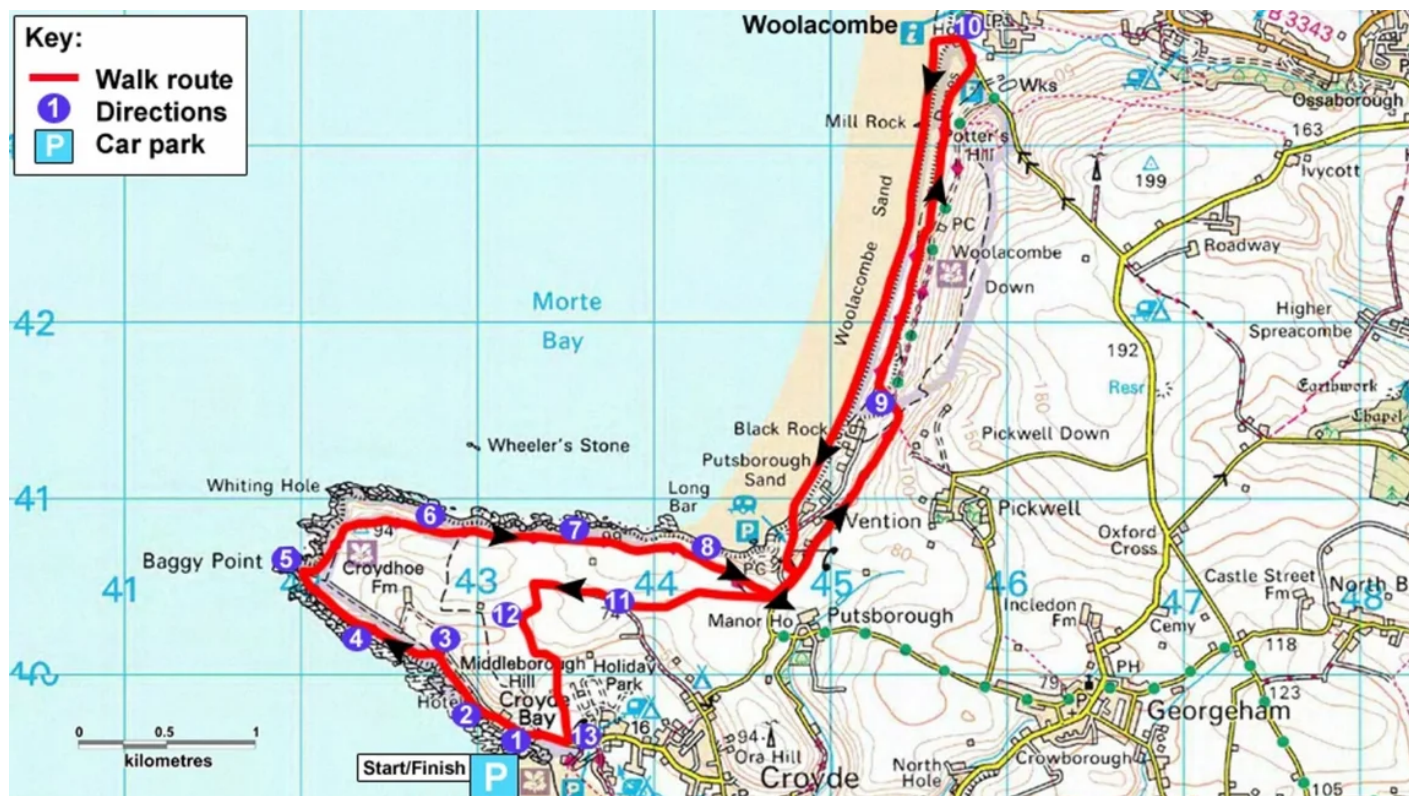


DEVON

Baggy Point to Woolacombe circular walk

Take this circular walk around Baggy Point, the sand dunes of Woolacombe Warren and back along the beach for breathtaking coastal, sea and farmland views. An excellent route for wild flowers and birdwatching, the area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its geological features.



Information

Address: Baggy Point, Moor Lane, Croyde, North Devon, EX33 1PA.

OS map: Landranger 180; Explorer 139

Activity: Walking

Challenging: Long sections through sand dunes and along a beach. For further details, please see section marked Terrain.

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome, but please keep on a lead due to the proximity of the path to the clifftop and livestock in surrounding fields. Please be aware the section of Woolacombe Beach closest to the town is dog-free.

Full trail: Miles: 10 (km: 16)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 4 hours

Terrain

An undulating circular walk with parts that can be slippery when wet. There are long sections through sand dunes and along a beach. No litter bins. Suitable clothing and footwear advised.

Total steps: 12

Start point: Baggy Point car park, grid ref: SS430398

1. Go out of the car park by the kiosk and turn right up the asphalted lane, signed 'Baggy Point (1 mile)'. Be careful as there can be traffic on this section. Go through gate posts to the fingerpost at the fork in the path, then go left here. On your left at this point is the only dog waste bin in this area. Follow the asphalted track past the houses. Watch out for peregrines flying overhead. Follow the track, keeping to your left at the next fork and to your right here is a driveway to a modern house. Go 28yd (25m) along here to stop and look at the whale bones on the right side of the path – remains of a whale washed up on Croyde Beach in 1915. They were preserved here for the benefit of visitors by the Hyde family who gave Baggy Point to the National Trust in 1939.
2. Follow this mostly level, graded track along to the end of the headland; look out to your left across the bays to Hartland in the far distance. In spring and summer the cliff slopes are carpeted in wild flowers, and in autumn you'll see gorse and fungi. As the path curves slightly to your left, look for three steps up to your right where you'll find a pond that's been restored to create a valuable wildlife habitat. It was built by the Hyde family who were keen conservationists and protectors of Baggy Point. The water here is deep so please keep your children and dogs under close supervision. Return to the path, passing through the gorse to the gate.
3. If you go 33yd (30m) past the gate you'll come to a fingerpost. Carry on straight here, signposted 'Baggy Point (½ mile)'. There's a detour off this path that leads down to the rock pools. If you decide to take a look, please be careful as the path and the rocks can be slippery. Look out for grey seals along the shoreline, especially in the summer.
4. When you reach the headland take time to stop and absorb the view. On clear days, and when the seabirds aren't nesting, you may see the many rock climbers that come to Baggy Point to take advantage of the variety of routes it offers. You can also see the headland at Morte Point from here, also cared for by the National Trust. At the

headland the path makes a sharp hairpin turn up to your right to a gate. Go through the gate and take the grassy path immediately to your left, following it along the fence line. It widens out into a grassy track that goes across a field at the top of the cliff past an old coastguard wreck post, once used for training and the only one surviving in North Devon. Please do not go to the edge of the cliff and ensure you keep your dogs on a lead.

5. Follow the grassy track as it passes out onto the eastern side of Baggy Point, where the panoramic vista across Woolacombe Bay comes into view. Stay on the path along the clifftop. In the spring and the summer listen out for the characteristic song of the stonechats, usually found sitting on the tops of the gorse and bramble bushes; in the winter you might hear robins. Go through the next gate and at the fingerpost follow the grassy path to your left.
6. Go over the stile and stay on the grassy track along the top of the cliffs. Cross over the next stile, looking back at the view down Baggy Point. Carrying on, the path winds its way through shoulder-high gorse bushes which, in late summer and autumn, will be ablaze with bright yellow flowers.
7. At the fingerpost, signed 'Woolacombe (3 miles)', continue ahead. Go over the next stile and follow the path down between the dry-stone wall and the gorse. At the next fingerpost, follow the coast path sign along the grassy track off to your right across the field (don't follow the path down into the private campsite). Walk over the field to the fingerpost by the hedgerow. Turn left following the 'South West Coast Path (SWCP)' sign down towards the road, keeping the hedge bank on your right. Go through the gate, turn left along the path and then out onto the road, still walking to the left; beware of traffic. Walk along the road straight ahead of you, following the SWCP, signed 'Public Bridleway'. The road narrows into a level track. Follow the fingerposts, signed 'Coast Path and Bridleway'. Don't take any of the footpaths signed off to your left and right. Carry on until the path widens out slightly, where you'll see a fingerpost on your left. Turn left and follow the path down the steps and up the path to the signpost marker in the dunes.
8. Turn right here and follow this track through the dunes all the way to Woolacombe, passing several fingerposts along the way. Follow the path as it climbs up the dunes, staying on the main path as it bends slightly to your left. As the path nears Woolacombe, you'll pass a National Trust donation box and a dog waste bin on your left. Follow the path along the edge of the wooden fence and down onto the road. Turn left here and follow the road into Woolacombe. Please be aware of traffic as this is a public road.
9. There are many places to eat in Woolacombe and plenty of shops and activities for the whole family to enjoy. To return to Putsborough you can either retrace your steps through the sand dunes, or walk back along the beach. When you arrive back at Putsborough, return onto the road, turn right and retrace your steps to the gate you came through earlier on in your walk. Turn right through the gate and follow the footpath back to the fingerpost in the hedge bank.
10. Carry on straight, following the footpath, keeping the fence and hedge bank to your left. Where the fence turns to your left, follow the yellow footpath arrow diagonally across the field to the hedgerow to the far left corner. There's a sweeping view across Croyde village and its world-famous surf beach. To your right there's a standing stone – one of three found on this part of the north coast that are thought to be of prehistoric origin. The use and significance of these stones is unknown but they're likely to be of ritual significance. Nowadays they serve as ideal rubbing stones for livestock.
11. Go through the gate in the dry-stone wall and follow the narrow path between the hedgerows. You can see the remains of the stepping stones set into the dry-stone wall that, until recently, you had to climb over. When you reach the end of the path take the route signed straight ahead of you along the farm track. Follow the track to the end, where you follow the fingerpost down to your left signed 'Public Footpath'. Go straight ahead, over the stile and down the hill along the narrow path sandwiched between the hedgerows. These hedge banks are filled with wild flowers in the spring and summer. Follow the yellow arrow down the farm track, past the farm on your right and down to the public road.
12. Turn right, cross the road and follow the path back to the car park. Please be aware of traffic and ensure dogs are on leads. On your return to the car park, you'll pass the Sandleigh Tea-room and Garden, a collaborative partnership with our tenants (See the Baggy Point homepage for opening times).

End point: Baggy Point car park, grid ref: SS430398

