

WALES

# St David's Head coastal walk

Explore Pembrokeshire's most dramatic coastal headland on this rugged circular walk just a few miles away from St David's, Wales's smallest city. Look out towards an island-dotted seascape as you walk across a wild landscape full of rocky outcrops, prehistoric monuments and a fantastic array of coastal wildlife.

## ⚠ Be aware of cliff edges

Be very careful close to cliff edges. As you descend towards the coast, remain on the marked footpath. There is no need to cross any wall or fence boundary not indicated.



## Information

Address: Whitesands, near St David's, Pembrokeshire, Wales

OS map: Explorer OL35; Landranger 157

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Rugged, rocky paths with slopes and steps. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs welcome, but please keep them on leads where livestock are grazing and take dog mess home.

Full trail: Miles: 3.75 (km: 6)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 1 hour 15 mins

## Terrain

Clear route on rugged coastal paths, with some rocky bits, slopes and 70 steps.

## Total steps: 7

Start point: Whitesands car park, grid ref: SM734272

1. From Whitesands car park, go through a gap in the wall on passing the site of St Patrick's Chapel. Climb a sandy slope up on to the cliff path. After about ½ mile (0.8km) you reach a kissing gate and National Trust sign. Continue to the crest of the hill.
2. From here, you'll see Coetan Arthur, the remains of a Neolithic burial chamber silhouetted against the sky. The main trail route sticks to the coast, descending into the valley ahead via broad steps to a spring above the tiny cove of Porth Melgan. An alternative route heads gently uphill round the back of Carn Llidi with fine views to the east, or adventurous souls can scramble to the summit of this peak.
3. Cross the stream by a bridge and turn right (north-east) to walk up this valley. This area can be slippery and muddy in winter.
4. To your right is a marshy area with the typical 'dinosaur egg' shapes of purple moor grass or 'rhos pasture'. This is green in summer and earthy coloured in winter. Higher up, on the flanks of Carn Llidi, you can see ancient field patterns.
5. At the highest point here, the peak of Pen Beri and the expanse of Cardigan Bay appears in the distance. Two headlands away is the winking lighthouse of Strumble Head with the peak of Garn Fawr above it. Descend to rejoin the coast path and turn left towards St David's Head.

6. On the plateau a remarkable rockscape opens up. Jagged erratic rocks are mirrored by the rugged profile of Ramsey Island out to sea. North of Ramsey are the little islets called 'Bishops and Clerks', one of which is home to a big lighthouse. Offshore, you might be lucky enough to spot some porpoises or dolphins playing in the waves.
  7. The route eventually passes Coetan Arthur and descends to an Iron Age coastal fort at the end of the peninsula. Continue on the coast path, returning to Porth Melgan.  
Retrace your route from here back to Whitesands beach.
- End point: Whitesands car park, grid ref: SM734272
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