

WILTSHIRE

Windmill Hill (The long way round) trail

Experience the joys of going the long way round on this trail that takes in panoramic views of the Wiltshire countryside including the World Heritage Site of Avebury. Discover Bronze Age burial sites and the 4,400-year-old Silbury Hill, the largest artificial prehistoric mound in Europe. Look out for red kites with their distinctive forked tail, skylarks singing in the spring and summer, and visitors could even spot a hare.

! Erosion control

As part of erosion control, some parts of the henge and stone circle may be temporarily fenced off.



Information

Address: National Trust car park, Avebury.

OS map: OS Explorer 157

Activity: Walking

Challenging: Hard tracks, very muddy footpaths, and public footpaths and bridleways across fields with stiles. For further details, please see section marked Terrain.

Dog friendly: Dogs on leads are welcome across the site, apart from the National Trust café and Avebury Manor and Garden.

Full trail: Miles: 8 (km: 12.8)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 4 hours - 4 hours 15 mins

Terrain

This walk follows hard tracks, very muddy footpaths and country lanes as well as public footpaths and bridleways across farmland fields with stiles. This route also crosses a minor road and takes you along minor roads without pavements, so please take care.

Total steps: 14

Start point: National Trust car park, Avebury. Grid reference: SU 09960 69654

1. Park at the main Avebury National Trust car park. Leave the car park via the diagonally opposite corner to the one you drove in through and follow the path to the High Street.
2. Turn left along the High Street, then turn right down the side of the yellow cottage and follow the track as it bends round to the left. Continue over one footbridge with white handrails and then over a second longer one. At the end of the second footbridge turn right following the Cycle Route 403 sign. Walk down this path for a very short way to a stile on the right signposted 'Windmill Hill 1¼ miles', 'Public Footpath' and 'White Horse Trail'. Climb over the stile into the field and follow the grassy path ahead.
3. When you get to a bridge on your right with stiles at both ends, cross over. At the end of the bridge, turn left across the field following the footpath sign and grassy path towards the next stile visible as a gap with a white sign ahead. The grassy paths might not be very obvious depending on the time of year. Climb over the stile, into the next field and continue following the grassy path straight ahead to the next set of two stiles with a small gap in between them. Climb over into the next field and continue straight on the grassy path, which eventually bends round to the left. When you reach the stile, climb over and walk down the short track through the narrow strip of woodland and over a stream, which might be dry. Climb over two more stiles close together and into the next field following the grassy path straight ahead of you.

4. Climb over the stile at the end of the path and onto a stone track. Turn left following the 'Windmill Hill 1 mile' and bridleway signs. Continue straight up the hill along the field boundary with the hedge on your right. Go through the rusty gate halfway up the hill and carry on to the top.
5. At the entrance gate to Windmill Hill there is a small information panel on the right. Go through the gate and climb to the top of the mound for sweeping countryside views and to potentially see hares. From here head for the taller of the two large mounds you can see in front of you (the one on the left) following the grassy path. You will see a patch of woodland in front of you – head for the large tree at the right-hand corner of the wood, following the grassy path. As you start to walk downhill, keeping the woods on your left, you should see a gate at the bottom of the slope. Head through the gate onto the track.
6. Continue straight over the track and through the gate opposite onto a narrow, overgrown path with hedges on either side. Continue along this path, going straight on through a crossroads, until you reach the end of the grassy path, and it joins a hardcore track. Turn right onto this track, basically straight on as you join it. When the track bends round 90 degrees to the right, leave the hardcore track and carry straight on, onto a gravel track, following the public bridleway sign.
7. Eventually you will reach a fingerpost sign where the bridleway turns off to the right. Do not turn here but carry straight on along the path, which is now signposted as a public footpath. The path then bears around to the left between two fields.
8. Eventually you will reach a stile on your right, with a public footpath fingerpost sign. Climb over the stile, along the short bridge and turn left onto a wide grassy ridge. This path is designed and managed especially to attract butterflies. Continue along the path until you spot a bench on your right and the gated entrance to a wildlife pond on your left.
9. Continue on along the main path until you reach a T-junction with a trackway. Turn left and head towards Yatesbury village. The trackway eventually joins a tarmac road, called Back Lane. Turn right onto the road and continue straight. At the T-junction with Avenue Road turn left. The road here has no pavement, so please take care.
10. Continue along the road for about 50 yards before turning right down a track signposted as a byway. When the hedges thin out on the left you should be able to make out two Bronze Age barrows. When you reach a large clump of trees with an archway in the middle that the byway passes through, continue straight on, over the crossroads with the White Horse Trail and follow the byway towards Avebury Trusloe village.
11. You will eventually reach a large barn complex on the right-hand side. Turn right here passing between the two sets of large barns, following the byway sign. Continue straight across the concrete hardstanding onto the grassy but rutted byway as it leaves the farm. Just a bit further along this track are the standing stones known as Adam and Eve. Continue to the track past the stones as it bears round to the left.
12. When you reach the T-junction with the Wessex Ridgeway turn left to continue the walk. A short detour will take you to visit the Longstones Long Barrow. Go to the wooden rails in front of you and pass through the gap on the left-hand side of them before turning right to visit the long barrows, return to the T-junction to continue the walk. Continue along the Wessex Ridgeway, ignoring the bridleway sign pointing right and straight on towards the houses of Avebury Trusloe in the distance. Windmill Hill, where you were earlier in the walk, is on your left-hand side.
13. Just past the cream-coloured house and public footpath sign on the right, there is an unsigned public footpath on the left with a yellow salt/grit box. Turn left here and continue straight on past the play area until you reach the road. Cross the road with care and head towards the fingerpost sign on the opposite side of the road. Turn right following the footpath sign; do not go down the driveway to Manor Farm. Pass through the gate at the end of the field, onto a tarmac footpath, the path then bends round to the left and then to the right before crossing a footbridge with white railings. On your right is a view of Silbury Hill, a 4,400-year-old monument. Carry on along the path, over a second footbridge.
14. When the path bends round to the right, continue straight on down the side of a white house, towards the old-fashioned lamppost ahead. You will emerge in Avebury Village churchyard and from here you can turn left to visit the church, Avebury Manor, the Alexander Keiller Museum and the National Trust café or carry straight on to visit the stone circle, village shops and the Red Lion pub. To return to the car park, turn right

and ahead back down the High Street. Turn left and the main footpath to the car park is slightly further on your right.
End point: National Trust car park, Avebury. Grid reference: SU 09960 69654
