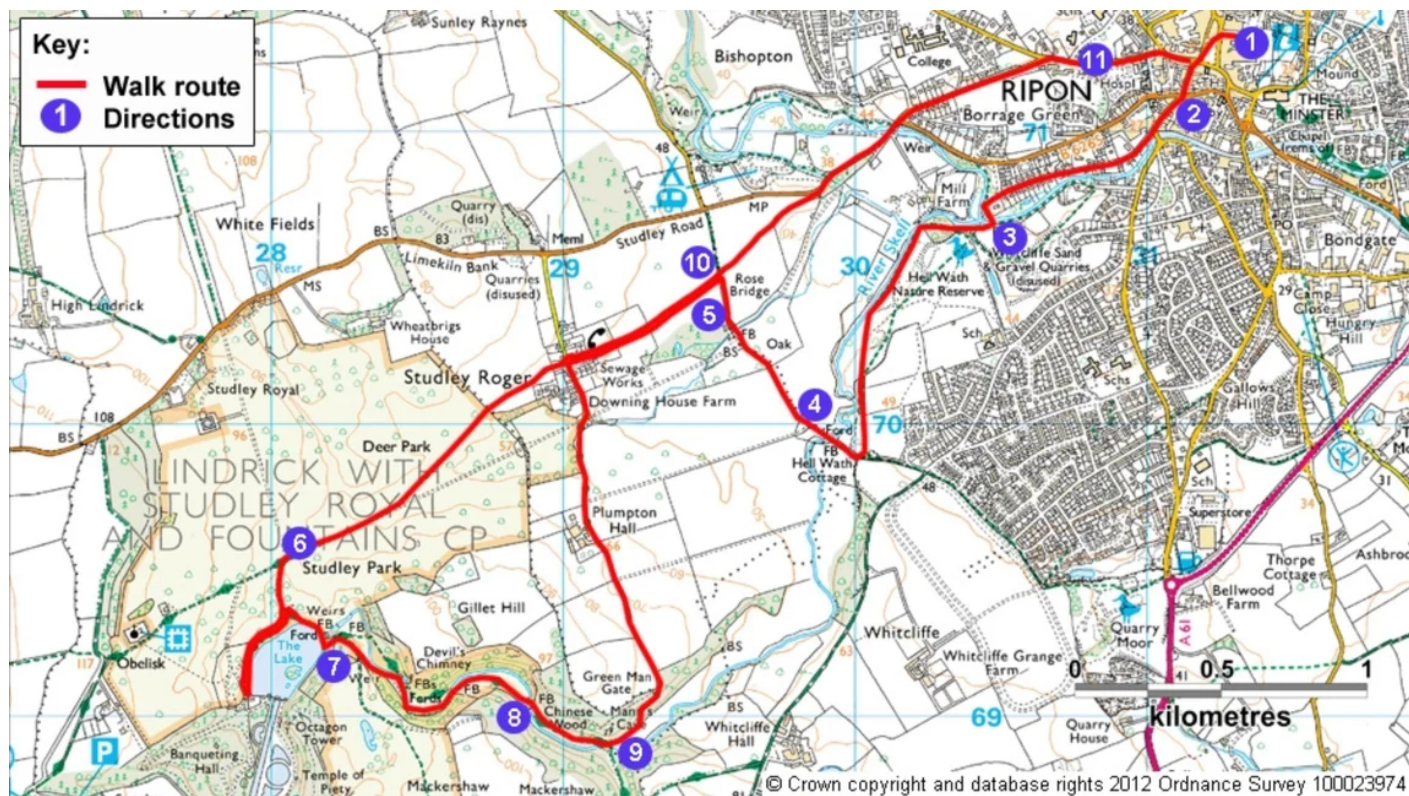


YORKSHIRE

Ripon to Fountains Abbey walk

A rewarding way to arrive at Fountains Abbey on foot, via rural paths from Ripon and the stately lime avenue through Studley Royal Deer Park. After taking in views of the water garden and Ripon Cathedral, the return stretch of this circular walk takes you through the Seven Bridges Valley.



Information

Address: Market Place, Ripon, Yorkshire, HG4 1BP

OS map: Explorer 299

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Fairly easy walking, with a few moderate hills. For further details, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Although dogs are welcome, they must be kept on a lead at all times. A short lead is required when walking dogs in the deer park as there is livestock nearby.

Full trail: Miles: 8 (km: 12.8)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 4 hours

Terrain

This walk takes you along bridleways, footpaths, roadside pavements and tracks from Ripon. The terrain is fairly easy walking, although there are a few moderate hills. We recommend walking boots as the ground can be muddy in poor weather.

Total steps: 11

Start point: Ripon Market Place, grid ref: SE313713

1. Leave Ripon bus station/the Cathedral car park, heading west towards Queen Street, then bear left to Market Place. Cross the square diagonally to the south-west corner and bear left via pedestrian crossings, past the end of Westgate and down the hill along High Skellgate. Continue down to the traffic-light-controlled junction.
2. Go straight on at the junction, across the pedestrian crossing into Low Skellgate, taking care on the narrow footpath. Go past the service garage on the right, bear right and follow Borrage Lane.
3. Towards the end of Borrage Lane, take the footpath bearing left, crossing the River Skell by the footbridge. Turn right and follow the footpath at the side of the river, passing the junction with the River Laver, to climb concrete steps.
4. Follow the path through scrubland, mostly keeping the river in view on your right. Emerge onto a road at Hell Wath Cottage. There are many paths here – keep to the right as far as possible. Turn right at the junction and immediately cross over the stile next to an information board. Cross over the River Skell via a footbridge. Follow this well-defined and hedged path, passing a large house on the left to a junction of a similar path at right angles to it.
5. At the junction of the paths, turn left and continue to the village of Studley Roger, crossing the main street to follow the footpath opposite for Studley Royal. Pass into the deer park and follow the grass path ahead to join the main vehicle drive in the park. On a clear day, you'll see St Mary's church ahead. Turning around, you'll see Ripon Cathedral in the distance.
6. Follow the drive up towards a junction and turn left towards Studley Lake. At this point you can divert to visit the abbey ruins, water garden and lakeside tea-room. To continue your walk, as the drive bends right take the track on your left, crossing the footbridge with the lake on your right.

7. After crossing the footbridge, follow the well-defined footpath ahead, down the Valley of the Seven Bridges and the course of the River Skell. The river can disappear into swallow holes in the limestone rock during dry weather.
8. After you've crossed five bridges (there were originally seven), exit the land in our care via a metal gate, following the track beside the river.
9. At the track junction, bear left and continue up the hill to open views over Ripon and past Plumpton Hall farmhouse, returning to Studley Roger village, passing the entrance to the estate on your left. In the village, turn right to retrace your earlier steps along the footpath to Ripon.
10. At the cross-paths, continue straight ahead to reach the B6265. Take care crossing the road. Turn right towards Ripon, crossing the River Laver. At the mini roundabout continue straight ahead, passing cricket and rugby grounds on the right, to the junction with Clotherholme Road.
11. Continue past the Ripon Spa Hotel and Gardens on your right, crossing the end of Blossomgate via the pedestrian crossing. Take Westgate straight ahead to return to the Market Place and your starting point.

End point: Ripon Market Place, grid ref: SE313713
