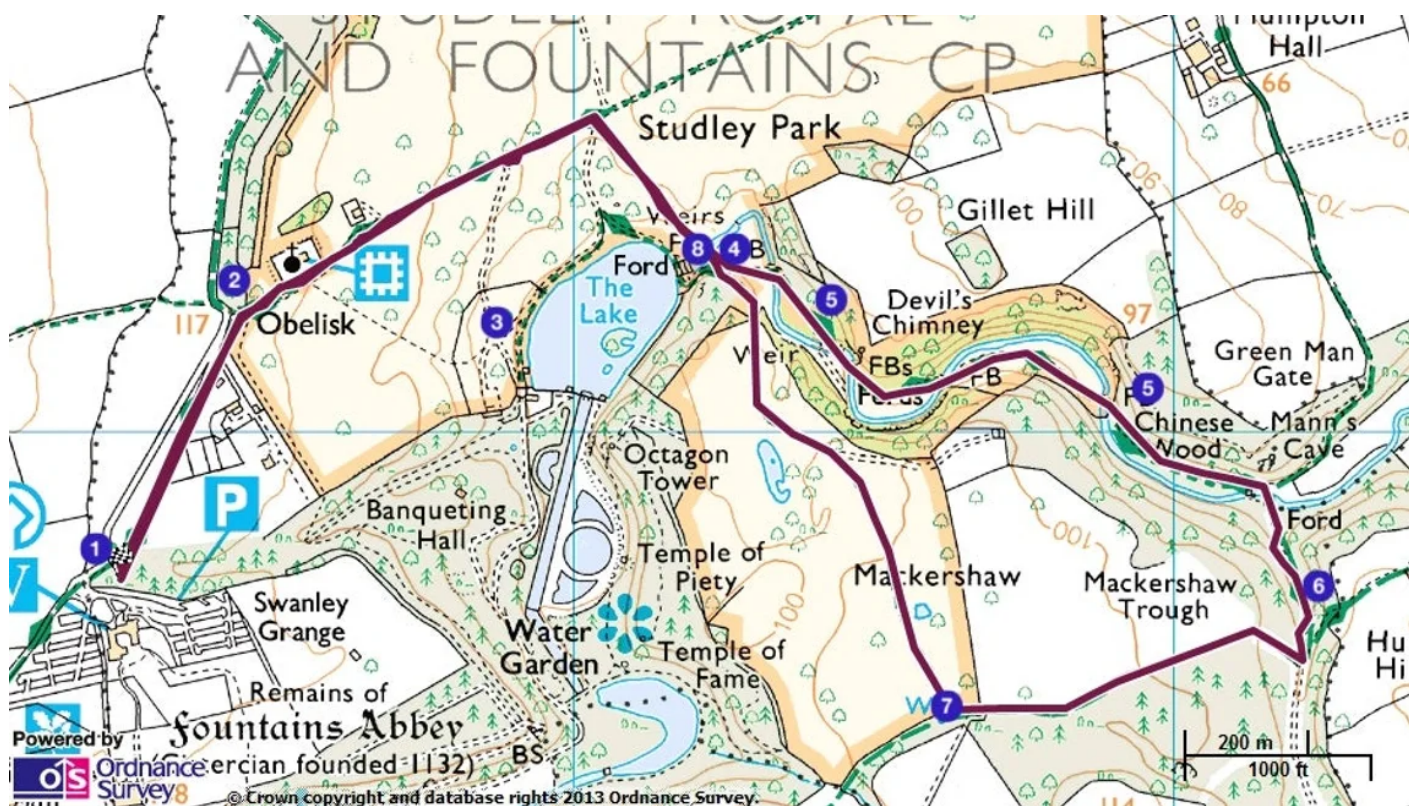


YORKSHIRE

The Seven Bridges Valley walk

Take this circular walk to see a more rustic and beautiful side of the estate. Starting at the Lake outfall, this walk follows the meandering Skell river along the steep-sided valley via a series of delightful arched bridges, of which only five remain.



Information

Address: Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden, Ripon, HG4 3DY

OS map: Explorer 299, 298; Landranger 99

Activity: Walking

Easy: Mostly easy with a few moderate hills. For further details, see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs 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: 3.8 (km: 6.08)

Duration: 1 hour 30 mins - 2 hours

Terrain

This walk follows bridleways, footpaths and roadways through the estate. The terrain is fairly easy walking, although there are a few moderate hills. Sensible shoes are recommended as the ground can be muddy in inclement weather. There are narrow gates and kissing gates on this walk.

Total steps: 8

Start point: Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre, grid ref: SE272687

1. Leave the visitor centre and follow signs towards St Mary's Church. Follow the signs for 'Footpath to St Mary's Church, Deer Park and Water Garden'.
2. Follow the well-defined bridlepath that runs parallel to the main drive, until you reach the large gates on your right that give access to St Mary's Church and the Deer Park. Go through the pedestrian gate, and proceed down the roadway. Carry on down this avenue until you reach a crossroads. At this junction, take a right-hand turn and follow this road down to the lake.
3. Cross the footbridge over the lake flanked by Sphinx statues either side, and you have arrived in the seven bridges valley.
4. Follow the path around to the left, heading for the first of five stone arched bridges. On your left you might notice a red brick wall on the far side of the river, where it takes the first sharp right-hand bend. Here lay the remnants of a Hydro-electric generator installed by the Marquis of Ripon in 1891. Follow the path over the bridge, and onwards.
5. Walk over the second and third bridges. At the third bridge, look up the left side of the valley. At the top of a clearly defined scramble you'll see The Roman Monument. Continue following the path. Observe the bridges that you cross. Once over the fourth bridge, continue along the path. As you come within sight of the fifth and last bridge in the valley, you will notice on the far side of the river a brilliant white section of limestone cliff. On top of this are the remains of the Chinese Pavilion, which was once visible from Octagon Tower.
6. Advance over the final bridge, and come to the gates which lead out of the estate. You are now entering into what were formerly The Chinese Gardens. Carry on following the path until you come to a long and narrow green footbridge on your right. Cross this bridge and follow the path up a very steep hill. You may notice the smell of wild garlic; the plant grows prolifically in this area. At the top of the hill, turn right. Follow the

bridle path through the woods, keeping to the stone wall on the right-hand side at all times. After about ten minutes you will arrive at a stone building with an archway on your right. This is Mackershaw Lodge.

7. Proceed through Mackershaw Lodge, via two sets of pedestrian gates on the left-hand side of the building. You are now in Mackershaw Deer Park. Follow this path straight ahead through the park, joining onto some vehicle tracks on the last sloping descent. At the end of this descent you will come to a gate. Go through the gate and carry on forwards. At the bottom of the hill you will find yourself next to the footbridge at the lake, where you began. Cross the bridge over the lake and proceed on the path until you come off of the track and onto the road.
8. To get back to the main visitor centre, turn right and follow the road until you reach the crossroads that you passed earlier on in the Deer Park. Turn left and follow the avenue up towards St Mary's church. Advance further until you come to a gate. Go through the gate, and turn left onto the bridle path. Proceed further down this path until you reach a roundabout. Follow the signs that take you back to the main visitor centre and car parks.

End point: Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre, grid ref: SE272687
