

Walking from Oxwich

Welcome to Gower – Britain's first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Spend just a short time here and you will quickly appreciate the reasons for this. Within a small geographical area you will find a huge contrast in unspoiled scenery and habitats. The amazing diversity you will encounter during a single day's walk will ensure that this special area appeals to all tastes and interests.

Another feature on which many of visitors comment, is the wealth of footpaths, bridle ways, farm tracks and public rights of way that create an intricate web of walking possibilities and enable us to explore the entire area on foot, usually away from traffic and often out of sight of any sign of human activity. In short, Walkers' Bliss!

We strongly recommend you purchase **Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 164** and use the following suggested walks as a starting point from which to extend your exploration of Gower. **The Gower Society and West Glamorgan Ramblers have published many excellent booklets describing walks in all areas of the peninsula** – available from Shepherds Store in Parkmill; Three Cliffs Coffee Shop in Southgate; National Trust Shop in Rhosilli;

By referring to OS Explorer Map 164, you will see that we are very fortunate to have a coastal footpath around the entire peninsula of Gower which is well marked and easy to follow. **The 22 miles from Mumbles to Rhosilli** can be walked in a day and will stun you with breathtaking views all the way. Pick up any section of the route, walk in either direction and you will not be disappointed.

Please follow the Countryside Code:

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
Leave gates and property as you find them
Protect plants and animals
Take your litter home
Keep dogs under close control at all times
Consider other people

PLEASE BE AWARE that these walks are undertaken AT YOUR OWN RISK and that you are responsible for your own safety at all times.

Circular walks

Please use the following notes in conjunction with OS Explorer Map 164.

(1) SHORT WALKS

(1) (a)

Hotel – beach – stream – dunes – hotel.

Enjoy this easy stroll after dinner or perhaps before breakfast!

About 2 miles

Head along the beach from the hotel until you meet the small stream – Nicholaston Pill. Turn left in-land and return via the back of the dune system, following pathways heading in the general direction of Oxwich. This area is rich in flora and fauna, especially butterflies during the summer. The route through the dunes will take rather longer than the beach walk, but you can easily return to the beach by heading left, over the dune ridge and onto the beach itself.

(1) (b)

Hotel – village – Oxwich Green – Oxwich Castle – hotel

This pleasant walk is along quiet but narrow country lanes – please be aware of occasional approaching traffic.

Just under 2 miles

Return to the cross roads in the village and continue straight ahead, through the village, passing thatched cottages (including “The Nook” where the preacher, John Wesley stayed in 1769). Continue up the lane to the T junction (house called Badger’s Hole on left). Turn left up the steep lane which soon levels out. At the junction (with Greenways caravan and camp site on the right) in Oxwich Green, turn left down the hill to return to the cross roads in Oxwich village, passing Oxwich Castle (worth a visit) on the right hand side.

If you have time, you can add twenty minutes to your return journey. Nearing the bottom of the hill, turn right through the wooden gate into the woods and follow the path gently up hill. At a junction, follow the sign left to Oxwich Church, which brings you down via steep steps to the church at the end of the lane beyond the hotel.

(1) (c)

Hotel – church – steps – woods – hotel

Less than a mile

Leave the hotel car park and turn right along the lane towards St Illtyd’s church. Continue on the path between the church and the rocks above the beach and soon turn right up a long flight of steps.

At the top of the steps, bear right and right again to follow a gently sloping path down through the woods to join the road. Turn right on the road and return to the cross roads in Oxwich village. Turn right to return to the hotel.

(2) LONGER WALKS

(2) (a)

Hotel – village - Penrice Green & church – woods – fields - Oxwich village - hotel

About 3 miles

Return to the cross roads in the village and continue straight ahead, through the village, passing thatched cottages (including “The Nook” where the preacher, John Wesley stayed in 1769). Continue up the lane to the T junction (house called Badger’s Hole on left). At the junction, turn right along the lane to Penrice, passing Pitt Farm, Bysouth and Pittsogs Cottage. At Penrice Green, with its pretty church and old estate workers’ cottages, turn right along the track before the church and follow the way-marked route down and across the fields towards the stile in the fence around the woodland at the bottom (just to the right of the pond). (Mud warning from this point on!) Cross the stile and bear left down through the woods. At the T-junction at the bottom of the wood, turn right and leave the wood over a stile into open fields. Continue through the fields, keeping the fence (and the marsh) to your left. Eventually, after several gates/stiles and a narrow path between two properties you will find yourself back on the road in Oxwich village. Turn left to return to the hotel.

(2) (b)

Hotel – village - sunken lane - Hangman’s Cross – Penrice – woods – fields - Oxwich village – hotel

About 4 miles

Return to the cross roads in the village and continue straight ahead, through the village, passing thatched cottages (including “The Nook” where the preacher, John Wesley stayed in 1769). Continue up the lane to the T junction with “Badger’s Hole” on the left, go straight ahead up a narrow, sunken bridleway that eventually comes out on the lane to Horton at Hangman’s Cross (site of village gibbet). Turn right here along the lane to Penrice Green, with its pretty church and old estate workers’ cottages, turn right along the track before the church and follow the way-marked route down and across the fields towards the stile in the fence around the woodland at the bottom (just to the right of the pond). (Mud warning from this point on!) Cross the stile and bear left down through the woods. At the T-junction at the bottom of the wood, turn right and leave the wood over a stile into open fields. Continue through the fields, keeping the fence (and the marsh) to your left. Eventually, after several gates/stiles and a narrow path between two properties you will find yourself back on the road in Oxwich village. Turn left to return to the hotel.

(2) (c)

**Hotel – village - sunken lane - Hangman’s Cross – Brynsil – Millwood - Penrice Estate -
Oxwich Towers - Crawley Woods – beach – hotel**

About 6 miles

Return to the cross roads in the village and continue straight ahead, through the village, passing thatched cottages (including “The Nook” where the preacher, John Wesley stayed in 1769). Continue up the lane to the T junction with “Badger’s Hole” on the left, go straight ahead up a narrow, sunken bridleway that eventually comes out on the lane to Horton at Hangman’s Cross (site of village gibbet).

Cross the lane and continue on the old farm track (can be muddy) to the ruins of Brynsil cottage. As the track veers left, go right into the field and follow the line of the hedge on your left. Halfway down, head to the right a little and aim for the stile that leads in Millwood.

Cross the stile into the wood and take the path ahead, ignoring any side paths. If the path near the rhododendron bushes is too wet, it can be avoided by a detour to the left. Both the detour and the original path emerge onto a broad gravel path. Turn right and right again to follow the track downhill to reach a large pond.

Follow gravel track right, down hill to meet and cross the road at the entrance to Penrice Estate. Enter the grounds of Penrice Estate over the stone stile in the wall to the right of the gates. Keeping to the driveway (and observing the rules on the sign), pass the entrance to the house and soon after, bear left onto an estate road and then follow the way-marked route right, beyond the old red brick coach houses. The permitted route goes up hill and then slightly left across the field to a stile in the stone wall, onto the main road. (BEWARE traffic on this short section of road.)

Turn right along the road to Oxwich Towers; right down the hill towards Oxwich. About half-way down the hill, turn left and over a stone stile on the left of the access gate on the well marked track into Oxwich Nature Reserve at Crawley Woods. Keep on the main track, ignoring paths to the left, until you reach a small weir, draining the marsh into Nicholaston Pill. Cross right over the weir, immediately left, and follow the path as it soon turns right over a wooden bridge into the dune system.

To return to the hotel, either turn right and follow the many tracks and paths through the dunes back to Oxwich, or turn left and then right onto the beach and walk along the tide line to the hotel.

If you have access to **OS Explorer Map 164**, then you will see that the above walks can be **further extended** to include routes via, for example:

- (i) Penny Hitch, Cefn Bryn, Nicholaston, Crawley Woods and Oxwich Beach; or
- (ii) Eynon's Ford, Reynoldston, Berry, Merrysun, Horton, Slade, Oxwich Green and Oxwich.

(2) (d)

Hotel – church – steps – Oxwich Point – Coast – Slade – Oxwich Green – village – Hotel
About 4.5 miles

Leave the hotel car park and turn right along the lane towards St Illtyd's church. Continue on the path between the church and the rocks above the beach and soon turn right up a long flight of steps. Just before the top, turn left and follow the main path through woodland to Oxwich Point which is eventually reached soon after emerging from the trees.

Walk along the path along the low cliffs heading west towards Horton and Port Eynon. Shortly before you reach Port Eynon Bay, at the horse-shoe of sand at Slade, turn right up a narrow path between fields. Turn left at the top of the fields and follow the track up the narrow Slade valley. Turn right after the kissing gate onto a metalled road with a few houses/cottages on either side.

Continue uphill and turn right at the T junction; continue on the lane, passing Eastern Slade Farm to reach Oxwich Green. Return to the hotel down the hill past Oxwich Castle.

(2) (e)

Hotel – church – Oxwich Point – Horton – Port Eynon – Rhossilli
About 12 miles

The previous walk can be extended to a full day by continuing from Slade along the coast path to Horton and Port Eynon and from there eventually to Rhossilli.

(You will need to have parked a car at Rhossilli for the return.)

From the beach at Slade, you need to continue to Horton. A diversion may still be in place because the path at the head of Slade is unsafe. You can either follow the diversion (via Slade, Western Slade Farm and The Dell) or simply cross the beach (access is gained via a short path onto the rocks on the eastern side of the bay) and re-join the path by climbing over the rocks on the western side of the bay and skirting the base of the low, earthy cliff for a short distance.

In Horton, cross the green on your left and go through the dunes onto the beach. Go along the beach towards Port Eynon (shops, toilets) and continue along the beach to the first building (the old lifeboat house, now a Youth Hostel). Ahead is the ruin of the Salt House. Turn right beside the Youth Hostel, between hedges to meet another path at right angles.

Turn left, and follow this path, turning steeply right up to the headland, passing over debris from old limestone quarries to reach the granite monolith on the top. (Memorial to two founder members of the Gower Society.)

From the memorial continue along the cliffs for about 250 yards before bearing left down to another path which skirts around the small rocky bay ahead, Overton Mere. On the far side, continue around the first headland until the path forks and then bear right uphill to a rough road.

Turn left here and follow the cliff path for the next six miles, heading west to reach Worms Head and Rhossilli.