

# Offa's Dyke Walk

Hello!

I am going to walk along Offa's Dyke, a saxon earthwork that runs along much of the English-Welsh border, supposedly built by Offa, King of Mercia, in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century to keep the damn Welsh out.

There's a route that runs 177 miles along the surviving sections of the dyke that I plan on doing between 30<sup>th</sup> August and 9<sup>th</sup> September. It's a beautiful walk featuring stunning countryside, good hills, nice towns, plenty of castles, ruined abbeys, picturesque sheep and saxon and mediaeval history.



My plans are pretty much set now (though see the list of potential changes), and I've detailed them below. The goal of this document is to allow YOU to join me! Come walk a section with me! Arrive at one of the waypoints on the date listed and join me for a few hours, a day, or many days, up to you, the more the merrier. I think it will be a lot of fun.

The information is given by day of the walk. It shows:

- The date and distance to be covered
- Where I will start the day
- Where I will end the day and be staying that night (i'm not camping but you're welcome to!)
- How to get to the end point using public transport from either London or Birmingham
- Places you could stay if you want to be in the same place as me that night. I've often booked multi-person BnBs or rooms so the best option to join me might be just to stay with me!
- A little description of the walk, to wet your appetite.

I hope this is enough information to tempt some of you into joining me. If you have any more questions contact me. This document will be hosted on my website and I will update it as plans develop.

See you there!

## *Potentially changes to plans:*

- If the accommodation in Bodfari falls through I plan on staying in Prestatyn on 30<sup>th</sup> August then doing a big 24 mile walk to Ruthin, rather than splitting it over two days.
- I'm not yet certain where I will stay on the 4<sup>th</sup> September, hopefully Newcastle-on-Clun, but if there are no rooms (awaiting reply) I will stay in Knighton.



### **30<sup>th</sup> August, Prestatyn to Bodfari, 12 miles**

I'll get the train into Prestatyn from Worcester in the morning, go for a quick swim in the Irish sea, then spend the afternoon enjoying views over North Wales and the sea on this climb through the low Clwydian Range.

*Where I'm staying:* I'm currently in communication with people in the know in the village of Bodfari and they are sorting me out with a place to stay,

*Where you could stay:* Bodfari is pretty tiny so I just happened to ring a guy who has a neighbour who has a spare room. Let me know if you would like to be booked in there too, there's probably not much space!

*Transport Links:* Getting to Prestatyn at the beginning is easy, there's good rail links. I don't recommend joining me at Bodfari by public transport, buses exist but getting to London using them will take ~6 hrs.

### **31<sup>st</sup> August: Bodfari to Ruthin, 12 miles**

The shortest section of the walk, features a string of iron/bronze age forts that I plan making diversions for (Foel Famau, Moel Arthur, and Penycloddiau). Ruthin is off the trail, so we'll make a descent at the end of the day from the trail to the pretty market town of Ruthin.

*Where I'm staying:* The Castle Hotel Wetherspoon, Ruthin. Stay in my room at this a Wetherspoons (!) for £34.50.

*Where you could stay:* There are a few hotels in Ruthin: the castle, the feathers, or the fancy spa hotel, or a couple of Airbnbs.

*Transport Links:* Buses from Rhuthin head to Wrexham (1hr) from which you can get trains to Birmingham (1 2/3 hrs). They also go to Chester with a change from which trains might be easier.

### **1<sup>st</sup> September: Rhuthin to Llangollen, 16.5 miles**

Some nice North Wales hill walking with plenty of climbing, including a planned diversion to a place know as Crow's Fortress, a set of impressive ruins with good views. Then down into the town of Llangollen.

*Where I'm staying:* I'm staying at an Airbnb with four beds! Come join me for £15.

*Where you could stay:* Llangollen's list of exclusive hotels include Gales of Llangollen, Wild Pheasant Hotel, Hollcrest Guest House, Bridge End Hotel, and Cambrian House, though the Airbnbs look much better value.

*Transport Links:* Buses go to Wrexham or Chester from which you can get onward trains, 4 hours total to London, 2 ½ to Birmingham.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> September: Llangollen to Llanymynech, 21 miles**

This is a fun but long section with a lot going on. Chirck castle is a short diversion away, and there's some leftovers from industrial activity, quarries, kilns, mines and the types. Great views from Moelydd.

*Where I'm staying:* The Cross Keys in Llanymynech, I'm in a twin room, join me for £35!

*Where you could stay:* I think the Cross Keys might be the only hotel in Llanymynech, there are good airbnb places though that I wished I'd checked before I booked the Cross Keys, they look better.

*Transport Links:* Buses can get you to Oswestry from which you can catch trains at nearby Gobowen to Birmingham (3 hours) or London via Birmingham (4 ½ hrs).

## **3<sup>rd</sup> September: Llanymynech to Montgomery, 20 miles**

A long section but mostly flat following some canals and rivers for much of it. You can see the Severn, a lot of dyke, and Rodney's Pillar, a monument much like Nelson's Column but more inconveniently located for Londoners.

*Where I am staying:* A friend of mine (Charlotte) is living in the town of Newport a few miles from Montgomery and has kindly offered to pick up walkers from Montgomery and drop them off the next day! I will stay with her.

*Where you could stay:* Either catch the lift to Newport and stay in a BnB there (e.g. Boutique guest house, gateway hotel, Chepstow House), one of which is on the same property as Charlotte's place (NAME) or stay the night in beautiful Montgomery, inns include dragon hotel and conquer hall.

*Transport Links:* We pass very near (30 mins walk) Welshpool on this day, which has rail links to Birmingham (1.5 hrs) or London via Birmingham (3 hrs). There are also buses from Montgomery to Welshpool (15 mins).

ALTERNATIVELY: Newtown, which is where I will be staying that night, has direct rail links, so is a great place to join. 3.5 hrs to London via Birmingham and just 1.5 hours to Birmingham.

## **4<sup>th</sup> September: Montgomery to Newcastle-on-Clun or Knighton, 12 miles + 7 if Knighton**

The hardest, most secluded, and most exciting sections of the walk! A couple of incredibly secluded villages along the way but basically just fairly steep hills with good dyke action. Knighton's Welsh name (tref-y-clawdd) even means dyke.

*Where I am staying:* hopefully the Crown Inn, Newcastle-on-Clun but they haven't replied to my email yet. Otherwise there's loads of places in Knighton.

*Where you could stay:* Either with me in the Crown Inn, or if that doesn't work there's loads of good looking places in Knighton

*Transport Links:* There's basically no links to Newcastle. There's actually trains to Knighton from London (3.5 hrs via Crewe) and Birmingham (2 1/3 hrs via Shrewsbury). I do not know how convenient the train timings are, there's also bus links that may be more regular.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> September: Newcastle-on-Clun or Knighton to Kington, 20 miles – 7 if Knighton**

Fairly nice hilly section featuring great views and a Battlefield of Owain Glyndwr, famous welsh partriot and freedom fighter, the William Wallace equivalent with no Mel Gibson film.

*Where I am staying:* Royal Oak, Kington, I think I've got a twin room, so be my twin for £40!

*Where you could stay:* Kington has plenty of places; Burton Hotel, Swan Hotel, & Royal Oak all looked fine.

*Transport Links:* Buses run from Kington to Hereford (1hr) from which you can get onward trains (1 ½ hrs Birmingham, 3hrs London).

#### **6<sup>th</sup> September: Kington to Hay-on-Wye, 14.75 miles**

There is a nice climb out of Kington with views all the way to Worcestershire on a good day (what more could you want?). Then pleasant rolling Powys countryside into the cooky town of Hay-on-Wye, complete with billions of book shops.

*Where I'm staying:* I've booked an Airbnb room with a double bed. For only £35 I will let you sleep in the other half of the double bed! My small size makes sharing a double bed with me very easy.

*Where you could stay:* There's plenty of hotels or airbnb rooms in Hay-on-Wye

*Transport Links:* There's fairly regular buses to Hereford (1 hour long), from there you can get trains onwards (1 ½ hrs Birmingham, 3hrs London, or just enjoy Hereford?)

#### **7<sup>th</sup> September: Hay-on-Wye to Pandy, 17.5 miles**

Walk along Hay bluff, beautiful section with plenty of hills, could be tough going. A lot of cool sounding ruins of Norman castles and priorys, but excellent walking expected.

*Where I'm staying:* Treveddw Farm Cabin, Pandy

*Where you can stay:* I booked a place with four beds, so for only £22 you can stay with me in a pretty nice looking farm right in Pandy.

I booked such a big place because there aren't that many other options, there might be a couple of nearby cabins (one called the lodge, lower Trefedw, Pandy)

However the best alternatives are probably in Abergavenny, 20 mins by bus and plenty of spots there. But I think you should stay with me in Pandy, it will be fun.

*Transport Links:* It is easy to get to nearby Abergavenny train station (2hrs Birmingham, 2 ¾ hours London), and there are regular buses from Abergavenny to Pandy (20 mins).

### **8<sup>th</sup> September: Pandy to Monmouth, 16.75 miles**

Some good climbing and views out of Pandy then rolling Monmouthshire fields. Unfortunately no dyke here, but some ruined castles and abbeys.

*Where I'm staying:* Riverside Hotel, Monmouth

*Where you could stay:* I've booked a twin room, so get the once in a lifetime opportunity to sleep in my room for only £35.50!

Else: Plenty of Airbnbs, Riverside Hotel, or Punch House, and Queen's head also looked good

*Transport links:* Buses to Hereford or Newport, then trains onwards are possible, shortest journeys = 3 hours to London via Newport, 2 ¾ hrs to Birmingham via Hereford.

### **9<sup>th</sup> September: Monmouth to Sedbury Hills, 17.5 miles**

The final section of the walk following the river Wye, passes the oldest surviving Roman fortifications in Britain (Chepstow Castle), and the hauntingly beautiful Tintern Abbey. The finish point is just beyond the town of Chepstow, so we will go to the finish point then back to stay the night in Chepstow.

*Where I'm staying:* Coach and Horses Inn, Chepstow

*Where you could stay:* I booked a twin room in the Coach and Horses Inn, so for the reasonable price of £27 you get to sleep in the same room as me, lucky you!

Otherwise: There are many BnBs/Inns/Hotels in Chepstow, either the Coach and Horses or the Beaufort hotel looked good to me.

*Transport links:* Chepstow has a train station, e.g. 2.5 hour trains to London, 1.5 to Birmingham

### **10<sup>th</sup> September: Dispersal from Bristol (or Chepstow, your choice)**

I'm going to head into Bristol (1.5 hours on buses), have a look around, maybe see a friend who lives there, then join my parents who have kindly offered to pick me up from there some time in the early afternoon.

*Transport links:* Bristol has great links everywhere. e.g. 1.5 hr train to London, 1.5 to Birmingham