



Oxwich Beach Walk Gower

Description:

A lovely short walk on the sands of Oxwich Bay and the nature reserve behind, great for an evening stroll and then a pint at the Oxwich bay hotel.

Distance covered: 2 miles **Average time:** 1.0 hours **Terrain:** Easy under foot and flat beach walk suitable for pushchairs except at high tide.

Directions:

Park your car at the large beach car park. Follow the beach to the East towards 3 cliffs bay in the distance. The shallow sloping beach is one of the most sheltered in Gower its great for water sports and safe for swimming. Back in 1911, the beach was actually the site of the first aeroplane flight in Wales by Mr E. Sutton in a Bleriot monoplane. In fact the sands continued to attract petrol heads for much of the first half of the 20 th century with many motorbike races speedway and speed trials held on the beach.



After about a mile you will meet a small river, at this point bear left into the sand dune system and follow any of the paths which double back in the direction from which you have come.

History:

The sand dune system you are walking through is managed by the Countryside council for Wales . Prior to the area becoming a national nature reserve the dunes were extremely badly eroded. the northern part of the dunes was actually described by a local botanist as "a sandy waste devoid of life" the poor state was sue in part to extensive use by the American army and RAF for practice

manoeuvres during world war two. Since than careful management as restored the area and its diverse habitats which are now home to over 600 species of flowering plants including a number of rare and endangered species.

The area behind the dunes was originally salt marsh, until in 1770 Thomas Mansel Talbot, the then owner of Penrice estate, built an 8ft high sea wall from the north to the dunes to prevent the sea flooding the marsh. He also constructed the meandering ornamental lakes which run the length of the marsh back to Penrice castle. The habitats which exist as a result of work have given the area one of the most diverse floras and faunas found anywhere on the peninsular.

As you follow the path back you will have the opportunity to bear to the north and explore some of the walkways and bird hides which have been constructed over the marsh and water.

The paths run between the road and the beach so inevitably you will find your way back to the car without any problems.

History:

If you have the time why not explore the village itself, it has a lot to offer up the hill to the west of the cross roads there is Oxwich castle, a beautiful mock-fortified manor built by the Mansel family and open to the public. The village grew up here with and thrived on the industries of farming and quarrying the limestone of Oxwich point which was exported to Devon where it was cooked into agricultural lime. Also consider walking out towards the point to visit Oxwich church (St. Illtyd's) built in the 13 th century occupying the site of an earlier church dating back to the 6 th century,

If you venture inside the church you will find a recess known locally know as 'Doolamur's Hole, in the recess you will discover the effigies of a knight and his lady, there is some dispute over who the effigies represent the most common belief is that they were two members of the De La Mere family who owned Oxwich Castle and tragically drowned in Oxwich Bay in the early 14th century. Others maintain that the stile of the armour is distinctly 15 century and that they are more likely effigies of Sir John Penres and his wife Margaret Fleming, who held the manor of Oxwich during that period.

Oxwich Beach Walking Map:



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