



Three Cliffs Bay and Pennard Castle Walk – Gower

Description:

Probably my favourite walk, at a brisk pace you can complete the loop in one and a half hours but if you have the time you can lose a day to the route exploring the headlands, beaches and castles. The paths are easy under foot and you can stop for an ice cream at Shepherds shop or food at the Gower Heritage Centre before walking the last leg home. **For those of you not staying with us you are welcome to use this walk but as there are no rights of way through the grounds, please see the note and the diversion map on the walks page to help you circumnavigate.**

Distance covered: 3.3 miles

Average time: 1.5 hours

Terrain: Generally easy, one short

good climb up to the castle.

Directions:

Walk out of the front door of the house and turn right, walk past the end of the house and up the corral (fenced in area).

Follow the track through the corral and along the old Church path, you will pass the trout ponds on your right and valley gardens on your left immediately after this there is a cross roads – take the track straight on across the fields and through the woods.



At the woodlands end you will cross a stile next to a gate, here the track will bear left taking you past a small pink cottage end on to the road and then through a grassy car park.

When you reach the tarmac village lane turn left over the cattle grid. Look out for Penmaen Church on your right.

Now cross the main road and continue for 100yds down the lane, take the first and only right turn. Follow the road until you find yourself at the lookout above Three Cliffs Bay.

Follow the track down to the river and cross the stepping stones. I'm sure at this point you will be wanting to do some exploring of your own but when you've finished you will need to cross to the far side of the valley (east) and make your way towards Pennard Castle

History of Pennard Castle

Pennard Castle, originally a possession of Henry de Beaumont, was established in the 12th century probably as a ringwork castle, the stone castle we see today was likely constructed in the late 13th or early 14th century and the work of the de Breose's. The castle and surrounding village were abandoned by 1400 though the church (St. Marys) continued in use until 1532 when it finally succumbed to the encroaching sand, the sand blew in from the beaches and choked the agricultural land, records note that tithes (taxes) were lowered to help the struggling farmers survive.



With regard to the be-sanding, though a geographer may have an alternative explanation, the truth is that many hundreds of years ago There was warlike chieftain called Prince Rhys ap Iestyn who once lived in the castle. He had won the hand of a Prince's daughter as reward for his battle exploits. A great feast was prepared to celebrate the forthcoming marriage. However the celebrations were disturbed by strange noises coming from magical lights dancing at a grassy area on the other side of the valley. Rhys ordered some of his men to discover the cause of the commotion. The men returned and said "Sire, 'tis the Tylwyth Teg (the fairies of welsh folk lore), feasting and dancing, Rhys was so annoyed that the Tylwyth Teg would interfering with his celebrations summoned his men. Everybody begged him not to as they knew the Tylwyth Teg were not to be medaled with, but Rhys, too drunk to think rationally and bragged, "I have nouthing to fear from the little people!" The chieftain summoned his men to arms and ran down to the grassy area and attacked the Tylwyth Teg who as everyone konws can only be seen but not touched, none the less they were not vary pleased that the chieftain had spoiled their innocent fun and so cursed the chieftain sending a storm of unimagivable proportions to bury the castle under the deep sands.

Follow the valley floor over the river walkway and cross the small stream which emerges from holy well beneath the castle, its said to have curative properties!

The path will follow the river into the woods and eventually you will find a bridge to cross the river next to Maes-yr-Haf Restaurant. Cross the road Shepherds shop a traditional ice cream stop and about perfect place to rest before the last mile home.

When you've finished your ice cream take the lane which leads to the Gower Heritage Centre and cross the foot bridge by the ford, follow the lane back up to Parc-Le-Breos house.

Map of Three Cliffs Bay Walk:

