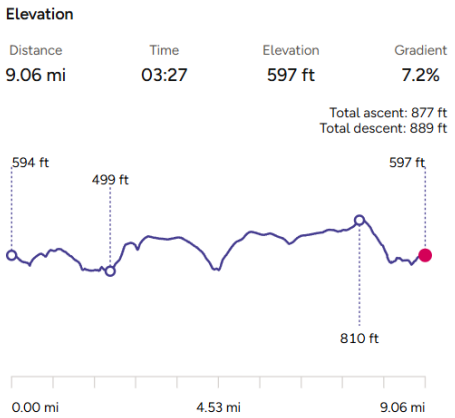
PUBS WORTH THE WALK

The Farmers Arms, Guiting Power Pub Walk

Guiting Power & Naunton Villages , Eyford Park & Barton via the Wardens Way, 9 miles

OVERVIEW

This varied walk gets progressively quieter as it unfolds. Passing the Village Hall, you follow the Wardens Way out of Guiting Power into the upper Windrush valley, eventually reaching Naunton. The first section is the more popular part of the route, and you'll soon understand why: the combination of Cotswold villages, rolling pasture and valley scenery makes this classic walking country.

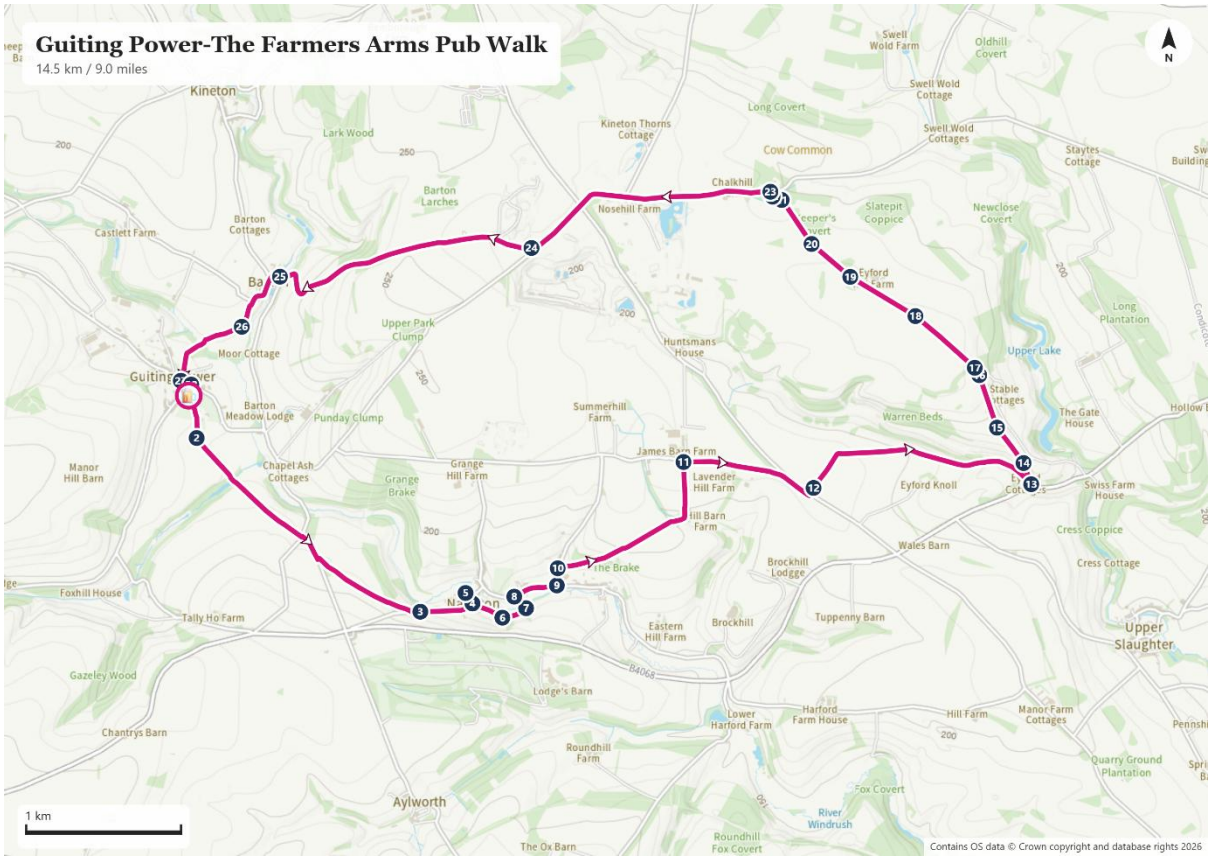


Beyond Naunton, the character changes.

The route heads across fields towards Eyford Park, passing through the beautiful parkland of the estate towards Chalk Hill Farm and Barton. There are some less glamorous stretches — including a little lane walking and a track to a Cotswold stone merchant/quarry — but they are part of what makes this feel like a proper country walk rather than a curated Cotswold experience. The final section through farmland and sheep fields brings you back towards Guiting Power.

Start/Finish	**The Farmers Arms – at heart of the village – GL54 5TZ**
Parking	At The Farmers Arms, or The Village Hall.
Grid Reference	SP 095 246 for the Village Hall.
What3Words	///pinks.ironclad.rounds for the Village Hall.
Distance	9 miles / 14.5 km **Time** 4 hrs **Ascent** 880 ft / 270 m
Paths/Terrain	Signposted paths throughout. Lanes, field tracks, gravel paths, driveways. Numerous gates.
Difficulty	Moderate.
Public Transport	Limited, but investigate the Robin bookable bus service.
Toilets	Public toilet at the rear of Guiting Power church. Black Horse at Naunton. And at the Naunton Dovecot.
Other Pubs Nearby	**The Black Horse**, Naunton is very close to the route – an excellent village pub. There's a second pub in Guiting Power, **Hollow Bottom**.

DIRECTIONS



1. Turn right away from the Farmers Arms, then left soon after onto a lane next to The Cotswolds Guy farm shop towards the village Hall. You're on the Wardens Way. Pass the church on your left, St Michael & All Angels has Norman origins and stands on the site of an earlier Saxon church. You'll also spy markers for the Diamond Way and Gustav Holst Way, but it's the Wardens Way for us to the village of Naunton.
2. Pass through the wooden footpath gate into the field, and cut across the field on an established path diagonally to the left. As you leave the field you pass a pond on your right, followed by a short, steep uphill slope to another wooden footpath gate in the hedge row.
3. Entering the next field, still signposted for the Warden's Way and Gustav Holst Way, head straight across on another established footpath route clearly visible. Leave the field via another footpath gate to join a 'B-road'. Cross carefully onto the lane opposite, again sign posted for the Wardens Way.
4. After 200 metres, pass through a gate on your left. Continue onto an established path diagonally across the next field, then exit through a hedgerow and a metal footpath gate. You join a grassy track here, offering views to the left of the pretty village and church of Naunton.
5. The footpath exits this grassy track onto a lane. Bear left to make your way downhill into the village. At the bottom of the hill, bear right to follow Wardens Way signs, but take some time to explore St Andrew's Church to the left. The largely 15th-century church incorporates an earlier Saxon site, with a medieval font and stone pulpit among its

features. If you'd like to walk through the village itself, continue left to join the route at the Dovecote.

6. Having turned right at the bottom of the hill, follow the tarmac lane to pass through a metal gate, then onto a grassy track that leads beside a wall on the left. Just before the next wooden gate, turn left through an old metal gate. *Cross the Windrush towards the remarkable Naunton Dovecote. The four-gabled Grade II* building retains 903 open nest holes and is one of the most impressive surviving dovecotes of its type in England.
7. Continue past the Dovecote up a gentle slope to join the road through the village. Bear right and cross the road to the pavement. Continue through the village. You'll soon spot the Black Horse, ahead on the left. Just before it, this route follows a lane on the left gently uphill that starts to lead away from the village (but consider a visit to the pub first)!
8. As you start uphill, pass the 'Naunton' village sign on your right, and just beyond it, take the footpath signposted for the Wardens Way to your right. Pass through a metal gate and follow the established footpath slightly uphill towards woodland.
9. Enter the woodland through a metal gate and continue straight ahead again slightly uphill. Pass into a field beyond the woods, and aim for the top right corner of the field. Pass through a gap in the hedge into the next field, again continuing on the clear paths across arable land.
10. After a few more fields, the path passes back into woodland. Continue to follow the established path, then emerge onto the driveway of Hill Barn. Continue uphill to the top of the drive to a lane. Turn right – but use the dedicated footpath that runs parallel to the road, rather than walking along the lane itself. Follow this route across multiple fields and gates, until you reach a wooden gate onto a busy B- road.
11. Cross straight over the road, still following the Wardens Way, and pass through a metal farm gate to follow a stony farm track. The track eventually cuts to the right to pass to the side of a barn, and then into a field ahead. Continue on these field paths through a series of fields, with some managed planting on your left. Pass a row of stone houses with a large yard behind, on your right, before you reach the road.
12. You'll see that the Wardens Way continues on the other side of the road, but this is where we leave it, to start to head back towards Guiting Power. Do not cross the road. Instead, follow the private tarmac driveway of Eyford Park, which is a public bridleway, uphill to your immediate left. There are glimpses of the house as you near the top of the drive. Eyford Park is an historic landscape, and is traditionally associated with John Milton: he is said to have written part of Paradise Lost here around 1775.
13. Continue ahead along this route as it crosses the grounds of the estate. The parkland was substantially landscaped in the 18th century, although the present Eyford Park house dates from 1910. Pass over cattle grids. The tarmac track becomes a stony farm track as it passes the buildings of Skinner's Hill - continue straight ahead all the way – and onward now on a level track to pass Eyford Hill Farm. Back on a tarmac drive from here, on the other side of the estate, continue ahead to eventually exit onto a road at the end of the drive, at Chalk Hill. Turn left.
14. There's some walking along roads for this next section, on relatively quiet lanes, a mile in all. Continue past Chalkhill Farm, and later, Nosehill Farm, until you reach a crossroads. Cross straight over onto one of the roads to Guiting Power, which is signposted. Take the

dusty gravel drive to the right signposted for 'Cotswold Stone Quarries', an active quarry and retail location. This is a route that leads back to the village, via the hamlet of Barton.

15. As you approach the buildings ahead of you at the top of the drive, continue straight ahead through the parking area to the left of the buildings, to join a gravel farm track.
16. Continue ahead on this route all the way to the hamlet of Barton. At the road, turn right to cross a small bridge to start gently uphill. Bear left beneath Barton House, an impressive historic Cotswold house which had suffered a devastating fire only weeks before this walk. Follow this quiet, narrow lane as it bears right then left between typical Cotswold properties, then spy a small Public Footpath finger-post (it's starting to topple over) pointing down the driveway of Little Windrush Farm.
17. Pass in front of the property on its driveway to pass a gas container on your right, then ahead to enter a field between two outbuildings featuring corrugated iron. The footpath is marked from here, and Guiting Power is visible ahead of you. Continue through the field, over a stile and through a gate, and then take a diagonal path to the right across the next field towards the village. Sheep here. The path soon routes along a hedge on the right - take the gate in the corner to exit the field.
18. A little ahead of you, you'll spot a number of footpath options at a kissing gate. Turn left to follow the lane up into the village.
19. Emerge into the centre of the village. Turn left to arrive at The Farmers Arms. Straight ahead to return to the Village Hall.

NOTES

Guiting Power is an intriguing name for an intriguing village.

Pronounced “Gitting”, the name is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon *getinge*, meaning rushing, probably referring to the watercourses of the Windrush valley. “Power” comes from the medieval le Poher family, who were Lords of the Manor. There has been a settlement here since at least Saxon times, but it is the village you encounter today that makes Guiting Power particularly interesting.

It feels different from many of the Cotswolds' better-known villages. It has the honey-coloured stone, attractive cottages and beautiful setting you would expect, but it doesn't feel as though it has been arranged for visitors. There are no coach parties, rows of gift shops or concentration of attractions; instead, there is a genuine sense of a village that is still being lived in. The Square is a particularly good example: the Old Post Office is now a much-loved café and retains a Post Office service for the community, while The Cotswold Guy operates a farm shop on Church Lane. Add two pubs, two churches, a village hall, nursery and other local facilities and you have an unusually buoyant little community for somewhere tucked away from the Cotswold honeypots. The village's own information lists around 320 residents and 137 households, with the Farmers Arms and Hollow Bottom sitting at opposite ends of the settlement.

There is a fascinating story behind that apparent good fortune. Guiting Power suffered badly during the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century and, by the early twentieth century, many of its houses had fallen into disrepair. Moya Davidson began buying properties in the 1930s to keep them available to local people, and Raymond Cochrane continued the restoration after acquiring the estate in 1958. The Guiting Manor Amenity Trust was established in 1976 to protect the village's land, houses, environment, character and community; it now owns around half of the village's residential properties and lets them to local people.

That history perhaps explains why Guiting Power feels so complete without feeling over-curated. Its appearance is certainly carefully preserved, but it remains a functioning village. The Old Post Office, The Cotswold Guy and the two pubs aren't simply attractions added for visitors — they are businesses that contribute to the life of the place. The Farmers Arms itself describes the pub as a much-loved community hub, while its current owners, Luke and Kelsie, have spoken about their aim of keeping it at the heart of village life.

Naunton provides an excellent contrast.

Just a couple of miles away, it too has escaped the more commercialised side of Cotswold tourism, but its character is quite different. Rather than gathering around a village green, Naunton stretches along the upper Windrush valley, with the church and extraordinary dovecote providing its landmarks. The dovecote is the showpiece: a four-gabled Grade II* listed building containing 903 surviving open nest holes, probably dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. Its scale reflects both the importance of the estate and the value once placed on pigeons as a source of meat and manure. It was subsequently rescued and restored through local efforts and remains free to visit during daylight hours.

And then there is the Black Horse. It would have made a perfectly good choice as the pub for this walk — a traditional village pub with its own strong sense of place. In fact, having walked into Naunton and experienced it for myself, the choice between the two pubs wasn't as straightforward as it might appear on paper. But the Farmers Arms gives this particular walk a

slightly different starting and finishing point: it places you in the heart of Guiting Power, a village whose survival and continuing community life are as much a part of the story as its looks.

Beyond Naunton, the walk also provides **an unexpected historical diversion at Eyford Park**. The present house dates from 1910 and was designed by Sir Guy Dawber, while the park itself has much older origins, having been landscaped in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most intriguing for the walker is the long-standing tradition that **John Milton wrote part of *Paradise Lost*** in the grounds at Eyford around 1775. It is a claim Historic England records as "said to have" happened rather than established fact — but it adds a wonderful literary dimension to an otherwise very rural section of the walk.

Together, Guiting Power and Naunton make this a particularly rewarding corner of the Cotswolds. They are close to Bourton-on-the-Water, Stow and the Slaughters, yet feel a world away from the crowds. One has a village green, two pubs and a remarkable story of preservation; the other stretches quietly along the Windrush with a medieval church, an extraordinary dovecote and another proper village pub. Add Eyford Park, farmland and the quieter tracks back to Guiting Power, and this becomes much more than a walk between two pretty villages.