PUBS WORTH THE WALK · SOMERSET · MENDIPS

Wookey Hole Inn Pub Walk

Ebbor Gorge & Wookey Hole – Beyond the Caves

DISTANCE	TIME	ASCENT	DIFFICULTY
4 miles	**2 hours**	**755 ft**	**Moderate**
6.4 km	approx.	230 m	Steep/rocky through gorge

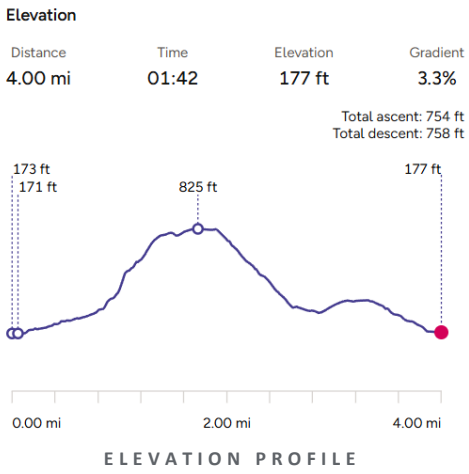
OVERVIEW

At around 4 miles, this is an accessible introduction to one of the Mendips' most memorable walking landscapes. Leaving The Wookey Hole Inn, the route passes the Church of St Mary Magdalene before continuing through the village and past the famous show caves. It's not long before the commercial activity is left behind and the route enters the peaceful surroundings of Ebbor Gorge Nature Reserve.

The gorge is smaller in scale than Cheddar, but has a character all of its own. You climb directly through the gorge itself, following a stony path that rises between its limestone sides. It's a little rocky underfoot in places, but perfectly manageable with care, and there's a real sense of having ventured off the beaten track. Emerging above the gorge, you're rewarded with a superb viewpoint looking back over the route you've just climbed.

Beyond the nature reserve, open fields and rolling farmland provide increasingly expansive views across Wells, the Somerset Levels and towards Glastonbury Tor. Descending towards Lower Milton, the route then crosses the sheep pastures of Model Farm before looping around Milton Hill on the return to Wookey Hole.

START / FINISH	**Wookey Hole Inn, Wookey Hole, BA5 1BP**
PARKING	Opposite pub, or visitor attraction car park.
GRID REF	ST 532 476
WHAT3WORDS	///replayed.puts.flasks
PATHS / TERRAIN	Field/muddy paths; woodland; steep rocky route through gorge mouth.
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	Bus Service 67 from Wedmore/Wells.
TOILETS	At the pub

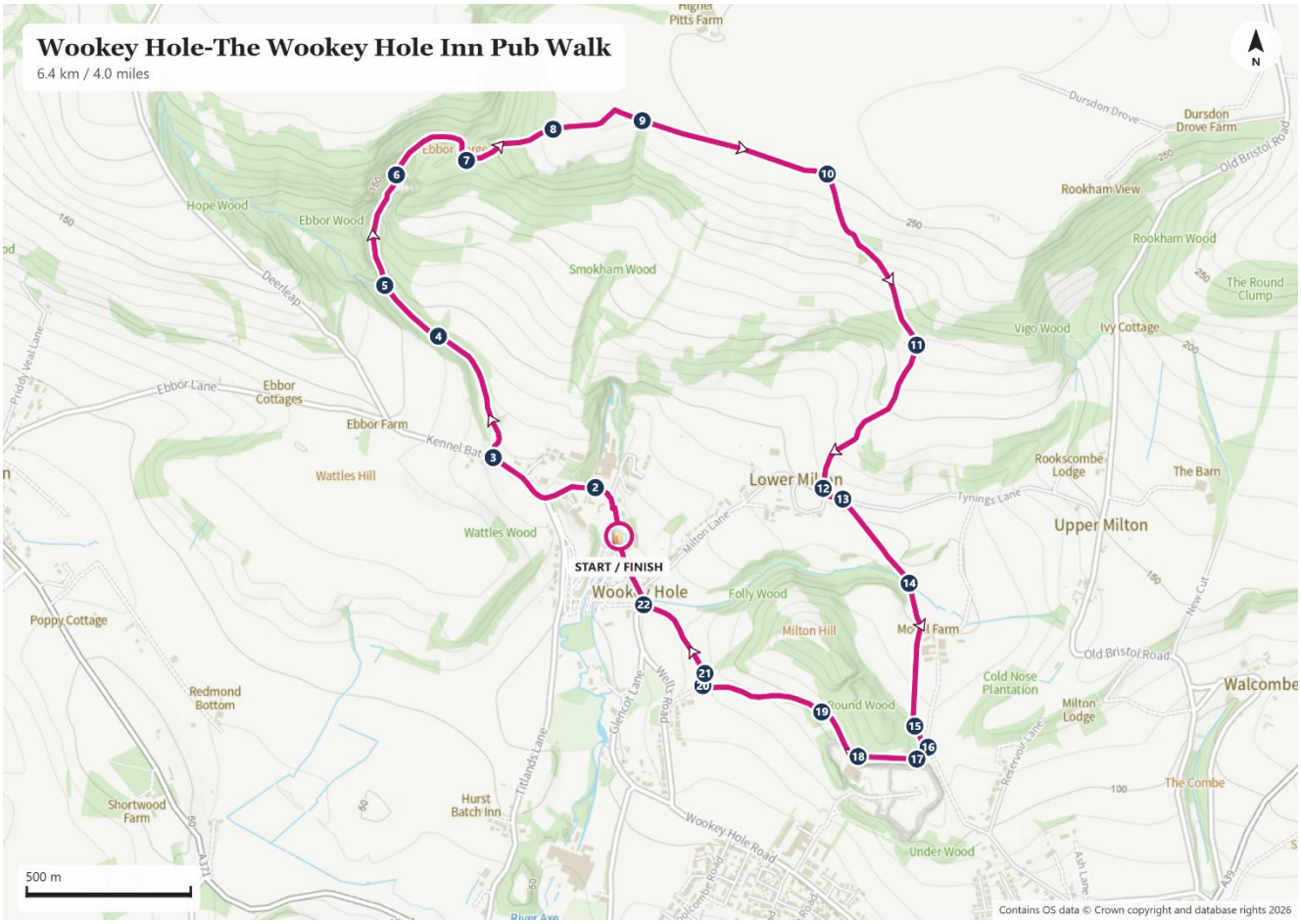


ELEVATION PROFILE

OTHER PUBS NEARBY

Try the **Ring o'Bells** in Wookey, the neighbouring village. In Wells, try the **Sheep & Penguin**. **The Westbury Inn** has re-opened at Westbury-sub-Mendip. Track down the **Hunter's Lodge** near Priddy, a time warp classic!

THE ROUTE



Numbered waymarks on the map match the badges in the directions below. Not every waymark is mentioned in the text.

DIRECTIONS

Part 1 · Wookey Hole Inn to top of Ebbor Gorge *steps 1–5*

1 Facing the pub, go left along the road towards the Wookey Hole visitor attraction and pass its entrance on your right (**grid reference #2**). Continue along the lane gently uphill. At a junction signposted for Easton and Cheddar, keep right.

2 Pass Wookey House and Ebbor House, both hidden by walls and trees. As the pavement ends, look for the footpath sign to the right at a metal gate, a well-used route to Ebbor Gorge. **(#3)** Pass through onto a rough track which soon becomes a field after a bend. The track forks. Stay left on the West Mendip Way (WMW). There may be cattle in this section, but they seem very used to walkers. It's only a short section gently uphill in a narrow field bounded by woodland on either side.

3 Exit the field via a stile to enter the nature reserve of Ebbor Gorge, and follow the clear woodland track straight ahead. **(#4)**

4 The area is well signposted. Proceed straight past the (WMW route) steps up to the right to another right-hand turn 25 metres ahead, signposted for the Gorge. **(#5)**

5 This route takes you through the mouth of the gorge on an increasingly steep and rocky route, slippery when wet, but perfectly safe with care. (The earlier WMW route up the steps takes you above the gorge on an easier, but steep path. The routes re-combine at the top). As you near the top, emerge onto a woodland path and continue straight ahead. **(#6)**

Part 2 · Ebbor Gorge to Little Milton *steps 6–12*

6 At the next signpost bear right, heading uphill with the woodland starting to thin out a little. Turn right at a path junction. We'll return here shortly, but this detour is to a fabulous natural viewing area above Ebbor Gorge. **(#7)**

7 Walk back to the junction but now continue straight ahead using the route you're on, still gently uphill, and continue to a wooden gate. Pass through and eventually exit the woodland onto open ground with fields ahead. **(#8)**

8 Exit the nature reserve through a kissing gate into a field, where electric fences separate walkers from cattle. Continue straight ahead then round a bend in the field, and continue to follow the field boundary, ignoring routes off to the left. *On a clear day, fine views open up here towards Wells, Glastonbury and the Somerset Levels*. Follow the field into a dip to cross a stile into the next field and continue ahead. **(#9)**

9 In the next field, again continue ahead ignoring the Monarch's Way sign. Cross a stile into the next field and follow a path diagonally down the field to your right towards what looks like a small wooded area. **(#10)**

10 Exit the field at a metal farm gate/stile, and continue downhill on a woodland path. The path emerges from the trees at the top boundary of a field. Continue along this boundary to pass through a metal gate into another short woodland section.

11 Exit the woodland via another gate, into a field. There are two path options. **(#11)**. Stay to the right to follow the hedge boundary downhill. Look for the route of an old tractor track in the field, curving downhill into a dip. It leads to a gate into the next field.

12 Continue ahead along the hedge line. The route is obvious as it approaches the houses and farms of the hamlet of Lower Milton. Continue straight ahead after, and a few more gates reached the road. **(#12)**

Part 3 · Little Milton to Wookey Hole *steps 13–20*

13 Turn left along the road, and after 50 metres, cross a stile hidden in the hedge, on the Monarch's Way. **(#13)**. Follow the path diagonally left across the field to a clear gap/gate in the hedge opposite. Continue on this line as you enter the next field, over a crest and to the right-hand boundary drop downhill slightly to a metal kissing gate at a stone wall. **(#14)**

14 Immediately cross the stream here. With Model Farm across the field in front of you, go diagonally right up to a metal gate in the wall. (The OS Maps seem to guide you directly towards the farm itself, but this route breaks to the right of it through the next field).

15 Cross this next sheep field diagonally to the left, passing farm buildings off to your left. Exit the sheep field through a metal gate at the top end of the field. **(#15)**

16 Continue straight ahead on a clear path for 50 metres, turn right at a metal gate onto a (traffic free) tarmac drive which starts gently uphill to curve to the right around Milton Hill **(#16)** & **(#17)**.

17 Eventually the route forks to the right, but continue straight ahead on Lime Kiln Lane. **(#19)** Across the fields to the left are the new housing developments around Wells, and the much older chimney of the old St Cuthberts Paper Mill at Lower Wookey. It's been producing paper since 1736.

18 Continue along the lane to a point where boulders have been placed to restrict access, turn right to follow a public footpath through a wooden gate to the side of a field, back on the WMW heading towards Wookey Hole **(#20)**.

19 Pass through a gate into a field **(#21)** and follow the left-hand boundary as the field drops towards the road at Coombe Brook. **(#22)**.

20 Turn right to follow the road back towards The Wookey Hole Inn.

Don't walk past, go in....before it's not there anymore.

More pubs worth the walk across England and Wales, with a GPX download and OS Maps link for every route, at

pubsworththewalk.co.uk