

# THE PERFECT WALK

**L**ike dipping a chocolate Hobnob into a piping hot mug of tea whilst having your feet massaged and watching your favourite sitcom, this walk is one long perfect moment. Starting and ending in the absurdly picturesque town of Arundel, it wanders by whispering reeds, wooded glades, a fine village cricket field, two country pubs and a riverside tea garden at the end for cream teas. What's more, there aren't even any hills; it's all flat and beautiful, like Morrissey's singing. This is a walk for popping the big question to your loved one, taking a visitor from the Colonies for the pleasure of nonchalantly saying 'oh look a castle' when the stunning Arundel Castle hoves into view, or for simply being reminded how stunning the English countryside can be when it's not bucketing down. And as the walk ends in Arundel, you can spend the rest of the day perusing the shops and castle, visiting the Wildfowl Centre to enjoy a good duck or even hire a motorboat to head off down the River Arun in search of mischief.

**DISTANCE:** 8 miles

**TIME:** 4 hours

**STARTS AND ENDS:** Arundel railway station

**GETTING THERE:** Train: from Brighton or Hove to Arundel, changing at Barnham or Ford (depending on the service). Car: park at train station car park.

**BINOCULARS:** kingfishers, dormice, castle, meadows & a glimpse of the rare boss-eyed Dusseldorf goose at the Arundel Wildfowl Centre

**RISK ASSESSMENT:** death by cream-tea related heart attack **8%**

**BIKE-FRIENDLY** No

## THE WALK

**1.** Walk towards the town centre along the Causeway, which becomes Queen Street. Immediately before the bridge turn right at the sign for Monarch's Way and Jubilee Garden. This shortly turns left and leads you onto the east bank of the River Arun, where you turn right. The path continues along the bank for around a mile, past Arundel Boat Yard.

*Despite being a few miles inland, Arundel was once a significant port able to accommodate 200 ton tall ships packed to the gunwales with tea towels, knitwear and jam, ready for export. This was due to the Arun's big tidal range; the river can be full to the brim or appear three quarters empty at times; it is also very fast flowing, so don't even think about going for a paddle. Like wild animals and celebrities it is best admired from a distance.*

**2.** The path eventually veers right, away from the river, through a kissing gate, towards a white house and the railway line. Cross the line then, after the white house, turn left *immediately* (the path initially looks like it belongs to the house; don't worry, you won't end up in someone's kitchen having to pretend you've come to fix the Aga.)

**3.** The path soon passes through a wooded area after which there is a gate. Ignoring the stile, continue on the main path, which is bordered by trees on the left and a fence on the right. Where the fence and trees run out, go over the stile and head diagonally right across the field. Cross the small bridge and after around 50 yards go left over the stile and walk the 200 yards or so to the riverbank, where you turn right.

**4.** The path continues along the bank for a while, over some stiles then heads right towards a wooded area, immediately before which is a stile. Cross the stile and follow the stepped path, which leads up through the trees. At the top follow the path left, which after a couple of hundred yards brings you to Burpham village cricket field. Skirt its edge past the pavilion, just after which is **The George and Dragon** pub and the village centre.

*There can be few pleasanter experiences in life than spending a hot summer Sunday afternoon watching the village team knocking up the runs, while you gently nod off. Even better however is a slap-up pub lunch, and although popular, the fact that **The George and Dragon** is on a winding road to just about nowhere means it's seldom overrun. It was also voted 'Number 1 Pub to Walk To', by Daily Telegraph readers which is a little baffling as we all know that they only ever travel by horse or Range Rover. There's plenty of good beer, including real ales from the Arundel Brewery and an excellent wine list. Meals are served in both the bar and the formal but unfussy restaurant.*

5. After the pub continue straight ahead into the churchyard. Pass to the left of the church and through the metal gate out of the yard onto the road, where you turn right. Continue along the road until you reach Peppering Farm then continue straight ahead along the track signposted 'Public Bridleway' passing to the right of the barn. The path gradually descends, eventually passing through trees. Go left over the second stile, which is opposite a small chalk cliff.

6. The path skirts the edge of the field, to the right of a drainage ditch. At the end of the field cross the next stile over some water. The path forks here; head right through the trees which after about a mile end at a stile, where you turn left along a track. The path eventually rises towards a gate, where it meets a road. Turn left down the road (ignoring the descending right fork) and walk the few hundred yards down towards the hamlet of North Stoke.

7. Immediately before entering North Stoke, take the public footpath that is signposted to the left (if you pass the phone box, you have gone too far). The path descends across a field, through a kissing gate, into a wooded area and across an unusual wooden suspension bridge. Continue through the trees for a few hundred yards, then through the kissing gate and up to the riverbank, where you turn left towards the bridge.

*After the bridge, look out for the carved tree seat. It's customary to sit here, munch on a packet of prawn cocktail crisps and make a wish. We have no idea what the letters AMMHNA stand for though we like to think it is probably A Man May Hear Neddies Arse-upwards, an old Sussex saw about how warble flies make a funny noise when they're upside down - a frequent source of amusement in the nineteenth century.*

8. Cross the bridge then turn left down the riverbank. The path continues along the bank for around two miles, eventually providing great views of Arundel Castle.

*So perfectly do the castle and town conform to fantasy stereotype that you could easily believe yourself to be approaching an American theme park called Englandland. The castle is indeed too good to be true; its present day facade is largely the late 19<sup>th</sup> century creation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Duke of Norfolk, who'd obviously watched one too many Disney films. The current Duke, the 18<sup>th</sup>, also has the titles 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Arundel, 19<sup>th</sup> Earl of Surrey, 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Norfolk, 13<sup>th</sup> Baron Beaumont, 26<sup>th</sup> Baron Maltravers, 16<sup>th</sup> Baron FitzAlan, 16<sup>th</sup> Baron Clun, 16<sup>th</sup> Baron Oswaldestre, 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Howard of Glossop, Earl Marshal, Hereditary Marshal of England and, best of all, Chief Butler of England. But his friends just call him Ken.*

9. Eventually the path veers right, away from the river, over a stile, then left through trees and into the car park of **The Black Rabbit** for your second pub lunch.

*The Black Rabbit's idyllic riverside location does make it immensely popular. Fortunately it's geared up to cope, with loads of outdoor tables and a generally well-organized food ordering system. Inevitably this efficiency comes at the cost of intimacy but, outside of peak hours, a table by the river can still feel like heaven. You might wish to take a detour at this point in the walk to the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust which is just down the road. As well as endless species of wildfowl it's home to a growing population of dormice! These are great in a bread roll if you're still feeling peckish.*

10. After the pub the riverside path resumes and follows the meandering Arun for a further two and a half miles back to the tea gardens in Arundel town centre.

*Riverside Tea Gardens has another great waterfront location. Sure, you could have a sandwich but this place was made for cream teas. Once you've clogged your arteries and wolfed down your third meal of the afternoon, why not spend your final moments on earth on a motorboat? Four and six seaters can be hired from the office next door or you could take a three hour cruise further up the river.*

[www.riveraruncruises.com](http://www.riveraruncruises.com)  
01903 882609

[www.hall-woodhouse.co.uk/pubs/pubwalks/blackrabbit](http://www.hall-woodhouse.co.uk/pubs/pubwalks/blackrabbit)  
01903 882828

[www.georgeanddragoninnburpham.com](http://www.georgeanddragoninnburpham.com) 01903 883131

[www.wwt.org.uk/visit-us/arundel](http://www.wwt.org.uk/visit-us/arundel)

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