2. Middledown

A good circular walk for a dry and clear day. The walk climbs steadily up on to the hills to the east of Cheddar, through open farmland and nature reserves, descending back to the village with stunning views across to Glastonbury Tor and beyond. At the end of the walk is a pub, restaurant, and tea rooms.

Map
Directions

1. Starting from the mini-roundabout outside the Riverside Inn, start walking towards the Gorge, cross over the River Yeo, and then turn right at the Black Dog bar, heading uphill, up the narrow lane with the cottages on the left. After a couple of hundred yards, turn left into Lynch Lane. Follow this track to the "public bridleway" signpost and bear right (ahead is a private drive).

Follow the bridle path gently up hill. 2. After a few hundred yards there is a gate across the track with pedestrian gate to the side, continue on up, with views to the right over the Cheddar Valley. Further on up is a gated footpath leading off to the right, but keep straight on up, past the "do not feed the horses" sign. Here the path becomes steeper, passing Mascall's Wood Nature Reserve on the right. As the gradient eases keep the wood on your right.

3. After the wood ends there is a gate up ahead, but just before you get to it, go over the stile on the right marked "public footpath". This is a short stretch of path which leads to another stile into a large meadow with big views to the right. These next couple of fields may have livestock in them so take care.

Follow the path straight ahead through the meadow to another stile. Over the stile and the path bears to the right, and you will come to a corner fence post with a sign that says "Farmland, please keep to the path", and various footpath direction signs on it. 4. Turn left here and head straight up hill, with the field boundary on your right. All the way up to the top corner of the field, with great views behind you, go over the double stone and wooden stile into Bubwith Acres Nature Reserve.

Do not go behind the Bubwith Acres sign, but carry on in the same uphill direction into an open field of bracken where the path becomes a little indistinct. Bear round to the right and keep heading uphill (remembering to check behind you for views towards Cheddar Reservoir); you will join another path coming up from the left and you will see another signboard for the Nature Reserve. Head for that, go over the stile and follow the footpath sign bending a little right. 5. Carry on to a gate, and on into the next field, passing a rusty shed and fenced pond on your right, and continue to the nearest gate, in the hedge line, welcoming you to the Wildlife Trust Reserve (Middledown).

Carry on through this field, ahead is an information board telling you what wildlife you might see, however do not go out of the footpath gate here, instead, leave the footpath, bearing right across to the wider farm gate in the corner of the field.
Go through this big gate (may be muddy if wet), this may be locked and you’ll need to climb over, and into a field with blackthorn trees. Carry on straight ahead, gently uphill, and a farm track will cross from left to right, go right. This track crests a rise and bears left, out into a large open meadow which may contain Exmoor ponies. Keep following this track for a few minutes, more or less straight ahead, up another small incline to run alongside a fence topped with barbed wire on your left. This is the summit of the entire walk, it is mainly downhill from now. Keep following this fence line on your left, round a curve and down to a gate at the exit from the Nature Reserve, then out on to Middle Down Drove, and turn right.

Follow this straight track for about 10 minutes and it turns right, you are now on a section of the West Mendip Way which you will follow almost all the way back to Cheddar. Views begin to open up to the left across to Glastonbury Tor and beyond.

As the track bears right again, you will then see Cheddar Village with the reservoir beyond. Descend to a gate, go through and then directly ahead and down shortly coming to another gate. On your left is Carscliff Farm, the source of Cheddar Spring Water, and site of an abandoned medieval village. Continue through the gate into a wooded section of path - all waymarked with blue "West Mendip Way" and/or "Butcombe Trail" signs. Keep following the wooded path downhill for about 10 minutes - may be rocky and muddy in places - and eventually exit the wood via a gate into a wider, open stretch of path. Again, possible livestock presence here. Keep heading gently downhill towards the reservoir for another 10 minutes. Go through another couple of gates and eventually out into the hamlet of Bradley Cross on the outskirts of Cheddar. You will come out at a junction with a tarmac road and a small postbox with village notice board, which is where you leave the West Mendip Way.

Pass the postbox and notice board on your right and follow the tarmac road round the right-hand bend - look out for traffic along this stretch. Carry on into the 30 zone, and after another couple of hundred yards, bear right into The Lippiatt. Again, keep an eye out for traffic in this narrow lane, as the farm further along on the right is used for Gorge visitor parking. After a few minutes you will pass Lynch Lane on your right, continue on down the hill, coming out at the Edelweiss Restaurant. Cross over here and turn left over the River Yeo to return to the mini-roundabout at the Riverside Inn.
If you liked this walk you might be interested in the others we have checked and written up. All of them are downloadable from our website, www.cheddarwalking.org.uk, or for a donation at the National Trust Shop near Cheddar Caves. The full set is:

1 – Historic Cheddar Walk (2.1 miles)
2 – Middledown (4.2 miles)
3 – Cufic Lane Loop Walk (1.1 mile)
4 – Strawberry Line [Bus-Walk] (5.2 miles)
5 – Gorge Circular Walk (3.4 miles)
6 – Black Rock Nature Walk (2.6 miles)
7 – River Yeo Loop Walk 4.9 miles
8 – Reservoir [wheelchair-friendly walk] (2.2 miles, or 4 from village centre)
9 – West Mendip Way from Wells [Bus-Walk] (12.2 miles)
10 – West Mendip Way from Uphill [Bus-Walk] (20 miles) [in two parts]

Cheddar has many businesses supporting us and all ensure ‘Walkers are Welcome’

Restaurants and cafés
- Café Gorge
- Cheddar Fish Bar
- Edelweiss
- Fortes Ice Cream Parlour
- Franks Restaurant
- Holly House Tea Rooms
- Ice Dreams
- Kebab Kitchen
- Lao Thai Restaurant
- Lion Rock Tea Rooms
- Mousehole Café
- Simply Gorgeous Tea Room
- Tucker’s
- The Café

Pubs
- Bath Arms
- Black Dog Saloon
- Galleries Inn
- Gardeners Arms
- Riverside Inn
- White Hart

Accommodation and camping
- Bradley Cross Farm
- Bramblewood B&B
- Bucklegrove Holiday Park
- Gorge View Cottage
- Nyland Manor
- Petruth Paddocks
- Webbington Farm Holiday Cottages

Stores / other
- A Special Occasion
- Cheddar Cycle Store
- Cheddar Library
- Cheddar Sweet Kitchen
- CJ Hole
- Edinburgh Woollen Mill
- Hansford’s Deli and Food Store
- National Trust Shop
- Old Rowlands Gift and Christmas Shop
- Post Office
- The Gorge Outdoors

Cheddar Walking is a voluntary group promoting the wonderful walking to be had in and around Cheddar, Somerset.

Our walks are designed for all types of people from those looking for a short simple walk, through those wanting something a bit more stretching up to the Mendips or out on to the levels. We also have historic walks, bus walks (bus out, walk back) and walks suitable for buggies and wheelchairs.

We have met the strict criteria that allows us to be a certified member of the national Walkers are Welcome association.

We get great ongoing support from several key groups in the area, without which we could not function:
- Mendip Hills AONB
- Sedgemoor District Council
- Cheddar Parish Council

And we partner with other non-profit groups including the National Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Mendip Society and Mendip Ramblers.

www.cheddarwalking.org.uk
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