

good walks in leicestershire

Good walks in Leicestershire offer a delightful way to explore the picturesque landscapes, historic sites, and charming villages of this beautiful English county. Whether you're a seasoned hiker, a casual walker, or a family looking for a fun outdoor activity, Leicestershire provides a diverse range of walking routes suitable for all levels. From scenic countryside trails and peaceful woodland walks to historic town strolls, the county's varied terrain ensures there's something for everyone. In this article, we'll guide you through some of the best walks in Leicestershire, highlighting key routes, tips, and what to expect along the way.

Why Choose Leicestershire for Walking?

Leicestershire's rich history, diverse landscapes, and accessible locations make it an ideal destination for walking enthusiasts. The county boasts a mix of rolling hills, lush farmland, ancient woodlands, and historic towns, providing a perfect backdrop for outdoor adventures. Additionally, many walks are well-marked and accessible, with facilities such as cafes, visitor centers, and parking nearby.

Some reasons to explore walking in Leicestershire include:

- Historical heritage: Discover castles, ruins, and historic villages.
- Natural beauty: Enjoy scenic views, wildlife, and tranquil settings.
- Accessibility: Walks suitable for all ages and fitness levels.
- Community spirit: Many routes pass through charming villages and local pubs.

Top Walking Routes in Leicestershire

1. The Leicestershire Round

The Leicestershire Round is a renowned 100-mile circular route that takes walkers through the heart of the county, showcasing its diverse landscapes and historic sites. It is divided into 21 sections, making it manageable for day walks or longer adventures.

Highlights:

- Countryside views
- Historic churches and villages
- Nature reserves

Tips:

- Break the route into sections for easier day walks.
- Use detailed maps and guides available from local tourist information centers.

2. Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Walk

Step back into history on this walk that explores the site of the Battle of Bosworth Field, one of the

decisive battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Route features:

- The battlefield and visitor center
- The Battle of Bosworth Wood
- Historic villages like Sutton Cheney and Market Bosworth

Why walk here:

- Engage with history while enjoying peaceful countryside
- Suitable for history enthusiasts and families

3. Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods

A favorite among locals and visitors alike, Bradgate Park offers a mix of open parkland, ancient woodland, and the ruins of Bradgate House, the birthplace of Lady Jane Grey.

Key attractions:

- The iconic Grey Lady's Ruin
- Deer herds roaming freely
- Swithland Woods, a peaceful woodland walk

Walk details:

- Circular routes ranging from 2 to 6 miles
- Well-maintained paths suitable for all ages
- Opportunities to spot wildlife and enjoy panoramic views

4. The Grand Union Canal Walk

For those who enjoy waterside scenery, walking along the Grand Union Canal provides a flat, leisurely route through Leicester and surrounding areas.

Highlights:

- Historic canal locks and bridges
- Riverside pubs and cafes
- Birdwatching opportunities

Ideal for:

- Family outings
- Casual walkers and cyclists

5. The Wreake Valley Circular Walk

Explore the scenic Wreake Valley, passing through picturesque villages such as Sileby, Mountsorrel, and Rearsby.

Features:

- Countryside views and river walks
- Traditional pubs and tea rooms

- Rich agricultural landscapes

Route tips:

- Combine with a pub lunch
- Wear sturdy footwear for uneven terrain

Walking Tips and Safety in Leicestershire

To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience, consider the following tips:

- **Plan your route:** Check maps, weather forecasts, and trail information before setting out.
- **Wear appropriate footwear:** Sturdy walking shoes or boots are recommended, especially on uneven or muddy paths.
- **Dress accordingly:** Layered clothing and rain gear help adapt to changing weather conditions.
- **Stay hydrated and bring snacks:** Carry enough water and energy-boosting snacks for longer walks.
- **Respect nature and local communities:** Follow Countryside Code guidelines, keep to paths, and dispose of waste responsibly.
- **Inform someone:** Let a friend or family member know your plans and expected return time.

Additional Resources and Guided Walks

For those wanting extra guidance or to join a group, consider the following options:

- Local walking clubs: Many organize regular walks across Leicestershire.
- Guided tours: Check with Leicestershire Tourist Information Centers or local guides for scheduled walks focusing on history, wildlife, or specific themes.
- Online resources: Websites like Walks in England or AllTrails offer detailed routes, maps, and reviews.

Conclusion

Leicestershire stands out as a fantastic destination for walkers of all levels, offering a rich tapestry of scenic routes, historic landmarks, and charming villages. Whether you prefer a gentle stroll by the canal, a challenging hike across countryside, or a cultural walk exploring historic sites, the county has something to offer. Remember to plan ahead, dress appropriately, and respect the environment, and you'll be well on your way to discovering the many good walks in Leicestershire. So lace up your walking shoes and embark on an adventure through this captivating part of England.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some popular walking trails in Leicestershire?

Popular walking trails in Leicestershire include the Leicestershire Round, the National Forest Way, and walks around Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill Country Park, offering scenic views and diverse terrain.

Is Bradgate Park suitable for family walks?

Yes, Bradgate Park is ideal for family walks, with wide paths, wildlife spotting opportunities, and the historic Bradgate House ruins, making it a great outdoor destination for all ages.

Are there any dog-friendly walking routes in Leicestershire?

Many walking routes in Leicestershire, including parts of the Leicestershire Round and local country parks, are dog-friendly, allowing pets to enjoy the scenic outdoors alongside their owners.

What are some accessible walking routes in Leicestershire for beginners?

For beginners, gentle walks around Swithland Woods, the Leicester Abbey Gardens, and the River Soar towpaths offer easy and scenic options suitable for all fitness levels.

Can I hike in Leicestershire's countryside during the winter?

Absolutely, many countryside walks in Leicestershire are enjoyable year-round. Just ensure to wear appropriate footwear and check weather conditions before heading out during winter months.

Are there guided walking tours available in Leicestershire?

Yes, several organizations and local guides offer guided walks exploring Leicestershire's history, nature, and wildlife, providing a richer outdoor experience.

What should I bring on a long walk in Leicestershire?

Bring comfortable footwear, water, weather-appropriate clothing, a map or GPS device, and snacks. It's also helpful to carry a small first aid kit for safety.

Are there any walking events or festivals in Leicestershire?

Leicestershire hosts various walking festivals and events throughout the year, such as the Leicestershire Walking Festival, which features guided walks, local history, and outdoor activities.

Additional Resources

Good walks in Leicestershire offer a charming blend of rolling countryside, historic sites, and peaceful woodland paths that appeal to walkers of all levels. Whether you're seeking a gentle stroll through picturesque villages or a more challenging hike across scenic landscapes, Leicestershire provides a diverse range of routes that showcase the county's rich heritage and natural beauty. In this guide, we'll explore some of the most rewarding walks in Leicestershire, complete with practical tips and highlights to help you plan your next outdoor adventure.

Why Walks in Leicestershire Are Perfect for Every Enthusiast

Leicestershire is often overlooked compared to neighboring counties like Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire, but it offers a surprisingly varied tapestry of walking experiences. From historic market towns to expansive country parks, the county boasts routes suitable for families, casual strollers, and seasoned hikers alike. Its central location makes it accessible for day trips, while the diverse terrain ensures that no two walks are the same.

Whether you're interested in discovering medieval ruins, enjoying tranquil woodland, or exploring vibrant countryside, Leicestershire's walks provide a wonderful way to connect with nature and history simultaneously.

Top Walks in Leicestershire: A Detailed Guide

1. The Leicestershire Round

Overview

The Leicestershire Round is a renowned 100-mile circular walking route that encircles much of the county. It's designed for multi-day walks or shorter sections, offering walkers the chance to explore diverse landscapes and charming villages.

Highlights

- Scenic countryside views
- Historic villages like Swithland and Market Bosworth
- Well-marked trails and waymarkers
- Opportunities to visit local pubs and cafes

Suggested Routes

- Section 1: Swithland to Tilton-on-the-Hill – approximately 8 miles, through woodlands and farmland.
- Section 2: Market Bosworth to Shackerstone – about 10 miles, passing historic sites and the Battlefield Line Railway.
- Section 3: Leicester City outskirts – for urban exploration combined with countryside.

Tips

- Carry a detailed map or a GPS device.
- Break the walk into manageable sections across multiple days.
- Wear sturdy footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.

2. Bradgate Park and Swithland Woods

Overview

A must-visit for lovers of ancient woodland and historic ruins, Bradgate Park is a 850-acre deer park featuring rugged landscape, iconic ruins, and diverse wildlife. It's ideal for a family day out or a peaceful walk amidst nature.

Highlights

- The ruins of Bradgate House, birthplace of Lady Jane Grey
- Herds of free-roaming red and fallow deer
- Elevated views from Old John Tower
- Swithland Wood, a tranquil woodland area adjoining the park

Suggested Walk

- Main circuit around Bradgate Park – approximately 4 miles, taking in the ruins, deer herds, and panoramic views.
- Extend your walk into Swithland Woods for additional woodland trails.

Tips

- Visit early in the morning or late afternoon for wildlife viewing.
- Bring binoculars for birdwatching.
- Take a picnic to enjoy in designated areas.

3. The Grand Union Canal Walks

Overview

Leicestershire's section of the Grand Union Canal offers flat, accessible walks perfect for all ages and abilities. The canal paths are lined with wildlife and historic engineering features, making them both scenic and educational.

Highlights

- Miles of tranquil waterway scenery
- Lock gates and historic bridges
- Opportunities to spot kingfishers, herons, and other waterfowl
- Riverside pubs and cafes for refreshment

Suggested Routes

- Leicester to Narborough – 8 miles, passing through Leicester's suburbs and countryside.
- Birstall to Whetstone – approximately 6 miles, with opportunities for birdwatching and picnics.

Tips

- Suitable for cycling as well as walking.
- Wear comfortable shoes and carry water.
- Be mindful of narrowboats and other canal users.

4. The Fosse Way and Roman History Trails

Overview

Leicestershire's rich Roman history can be explored via a series of historic walking routes along the Fosse Way and other ancient roads. These walks combine scenic rural views with archaeological intrigue.

Highlights

- Roman roads and relics
- Historic villages such as Croft and Goadby Marwood
- Sites like the Leicester Cathedral, which houses Roman artifacts

Suggested Walk

- Goadby Marwood to Harlaxton – about 5 miles, through charming villages and farmland.
- Extend your walk to visit Harlaxton Manor, a striking Victorian country house.

Tips

- Carry a guidebook on Roman Britain.
- Take time to visit local museums and historic sites.
- Use a detailed map to navigate rural paths.

Practical Tips for Enjoying Your Walks in Leicestershire

- Plan Ahead: Research routes beforehand, noting distances, terrain, and facilities available along the way.
- Dress Appropriately: Wear sturdy walking shoes, layered clothing, and prepare for changing weather conditions.
- Pack Essentials: Carry water, snacks, a map, a fully charged phone, and a small first aid kit.
- Respect Nature: Stick to designated paths, avoid disturbing wildlife, and leave no trace.
- Check Weather Conditions: Some routes can become muddy or challenging after rain; plan your walk accordingly.
- Start Early: To enjoy cooler temperatures and avoid crowds, especially in popular spots like Bradgate Park.

Additional Recommendations for Walkers in Leicestershire

- Join Local Walking Groups: Many communities organize guided walks or group outings, which are great for socializing and exploring new routes.
- Combine Walks with Local Attractions: Follow scenic routes with visits to historic sites, museums, or local markets to enrich your experience.
- Seasonal Considerations: Spring and autumn offer particularly scenic views with blooming flora and colorful foliage, respectively. Summer is ideal for longer daylight hours, while winter walks can be brisk and atmospheric.

Final Thoughts

Leicestershire's diverse landscapes, rich history, and accessible trails make it a fantastic destination for walkers of all ages and abilities. Whether you're seeking a leisurely stroll through ancient woodlands, a scenic countryside hike, or a historical exploration along Roman routes, the county delivers with authenticity and charm. With careful planning and an adventurous spirit, your walks in Leicestershire can become memorable journeys through some of the most beautiful and culturally significant parts of central England.

Embark on your next walking adventure in Leicestershire today — the countryside awaits!

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