

A bit further around Branscombe

A slightly longer 5 mile circular walk including both pubs, a stretch of beach and the opportunity to nose at some lovely houses. Be ready for a steep climb up and then down again to reach the beach. There can be muddy sections after rain.

Branscombe is an unusual village in that for a population of only around 500 people, it takes up a pretty big area. In fact, it is split into three distinct hamlets, as well as the beach, and this walk takes you to them all.



1 If using the Mason's Arms, they have a car park. Otherwise there is often a space in the square opposite, to the left side as you drive in. This hamlet of Branscombe is called Vicarage and the pub is a very good place for a meal or just a drink outside at the front. Start the walk from here and head up the road, curving around to the left at the top. Whilst the first section of this walk may be entirely on the road, please don't be put off. The road is quiet and you get a really good perspective of some of the lovely old cottages in the village.

2 After 10 minutes you will reach the next hamlet of Bridge. Here you will find the village hall with a wishing well in the wall, and also the national trust owned Forge Cottage in front of the Old Bakery tea rooms, as well as the forge itself. These days the blacksmith makes a wide range of items for sale which you can go inside and browse. Next continue up the hill again on the road to soon reach St Winifred's Church. You cannot help but to be impressed by its size for such a small community and is in fact one of the oldest churches in Devon.

3 From the church, another 10 minutes or so along the road will bring you to the hamlet of Street with the excellent Fountainhead pub. This is a really traditional pub, very different from the Mason's Arms, but a cracking place for a beer and it also does good pub grub. Now use the map to find the location of the footpath, signposted Berry Cliff which starts via a gate beside a whitewashed thatch cottage in Street. Head up through here and enter Pit Coppice which in spring will be abundant with wild garlic and bluebells. At the top you will reach a small gate. Go through, and stick to the left to follow the hedge along to a gap into the next field. Ignore a path down to the left, but instead follow the top grassy path as it curves gently to the right offering a great view back down towards Vicarage. This path will very soon reach a more substantial track with a pyramid stone pile to both the left and right.

4 Turn right and walk directly past the stone pile to reach a 5 bar gate. Go through this, following the instruction to close it behind you, to enter a farm track with high hedges. Continue up this for a few minutes to reach a footpath sign on your left into a large field. Follow the track and the sea will come into view before you reach a 4-way finger post.

5 Left and right is the south Devon (or King Charles III) coast path, but the route for this walk is to go straight across, i.e. to head down the cliff. This path gently descends to the left. Initially ignore all paths that may head off to the right as you past various cliff-hanging holiday shacks. Look out for a wooden sign near the entrance to one such property that clearly directs you straight on to the beach, i.e. that you should keep to the main path. This sign is roughly half way to where you do need to leave the main path and head off to the right. This side path is not signposted, but is a triangle of paths and is clearly a more significant path than any side paths you have seen up till now. Head along then down it. You will know if you are right as you quickly will reach some steps which are aided with a scaffold handrail to the left, then a blue rope to the right. Keep going and you will eventually reach the beach.

6 At the beach, turn left and walk a mile or so to Branscombe mouth. You are very likely to have the beach to yourself so take your time and enjoy!

7 When you reach some lodge accommodation, you have arrived at Branscombe Mouth. You can read the exploits of the famous container ship the Napoli that was wrecked here in 2007. The sign is beside its anchor. Also, you can see the beach sauna which we can very much recommend trying out. You may choose refreshments at the Sea Shanty Cafe before heading back along the path to the left of the cafe as you look at it. It takes you along the river, then over a bridge before reaching a finger post in the field you should ignore, but instead curve left and stick to the main path. After crossing a second small bridge, take the path to the right to head back up to the village square at Vicarage.