

Walking with THE WANDERER

Ripon & Studley Park Time: 3 hours | Distance: 6 miles

IS THIS WALK FOR ME?

Medium distance, this is a generally easy walk. There are ups and downs, but none are steep. Paths are mainly easy to follow, except the last section through the park, which isn't signed or clear on the ground. There are no stiles. Mud can be expected in winter, especially on the uphill section at Direction Point 4.

GETTING THERE

If driving, the recommended starting point is the west end of Mallorie Park Drive in Ripon, near its junction with Heugh Croft (HG4 2QA), where roadside parking is available. Ripon is 26 miles from York via the A59, A168 and B6265, then following Pateley Bridge signs in Ripon. Buses 82 and 84 run roughly hourly from York (Picadilly and rail station) to Ripon bus station (no Sunday service).

From the bus station to the start is a 15-minute walk via the Market Place, High Skellgate and Skellbank to the far end of Mallorie Park Drive.

REFRESHMENTS

There are numerous options in Ripon. On route, the only place is the Studley Tea Room beside the lake, open 10-4 daily.

WHAT TO SEE

Fountains Abbey can be visited

This varied walk from the edge of Ripon largely avoids the crowds that throng Studley Park and Fountains Abbey. Omitting the Abbey (entry charges apply), although it is easily possible to extend the walk to include it, the route traverses nature reserves, woodland and a deer park.

(for a fee) from Direction Point 6. Approach from this direction through the water gardens to avoid the busier visitor centre route. But, even if Fountains is omitted, there's much to see: Studley Park with its ancient trees, fallow deer and parkland landscape, including the grand avenue aligned with distant Ripon Cathedral. Then, there's Hell Wath and Whitcliffe nature reserves, the rivers Skell and Laver, and the varied countryside.

Directions

1/ Starting from the roadside parking on Mallorie Park Drive near Heugh Cleugh, take this side street and follow it for a short distance. Where it turns sharp left, take the tarmac footpath right, with a wall to the left. Keep left at a path junction to cross the river footbridge, turning right on the other side. At a noticeboard, keep right beside the river, soon ascending steps. Now keep above the river, following the nature trail marker posts.

2/ At a 'Y' junction, go left (at the nature trail post), and cross another path (at a further trail post). At the next trail post, keep ahead into the trees, rather than turning left with the trail. Continue through the trees, ignoring all ways left until you reach a parking area at the end of a lane.

3/ Go left on the lane, but almost immediately, take the unsigned path on the right (far side of Hell Wath Cottage) with a hedge to your right. Continue with a wood to the right, looking for a gate flanked by short walls. Go through this into Whitcliffe Wood, taking the path ahead (right). Continue through the wood, soon with a fence to the right and quarry/bike park to the left. Reaching another wall-flanked gate, exit the wood and turn right on the tarmac lane. Remain on this, passing Whitcliffe Hall farm. About 100 metres beyond the farm, go through a gate to the right (bridleway sign).

4/ Follow the wide grassy path, initially between fences, uphill. Where the fence on the left ends, keep ahead to find a wooden gate on the edge of the woodland. Go through this and follow the

track downhill in the trees. At a track crossroads, go straight across (upslope) with a fence to your right, remaining on the track as it bends left. Now, continue with a wall to the right and trees to the left, until you reach an ornamental arched gateway on the right.

5/ Go through the gate and walk ahead over grass (occasional short marker posts), passing a pond. Reaching a rutted track, follow it as it curves downhill, passing another pond with deer fencing to the right. Go through the tall wooden gate and follow the track, keeping left to reach a bridge at the cascade.

6/ Cross the bridge and walk beside the lake for 25 metres, but then take the faint grass path right leading diagonally up the slope (for refreshments and to enter Fountains Abbey, continue by the lakeside to the obvious building on its far side). Pass a bench, maintaining direction to reach the unfenced road crossing the park. Cross and follow it to the right. About 300 metres from the exit gate ahead, look for a large fallen tree trunk on the left, to the right of a large chestnut tree. Here, head diagonally left up a slope, after which a path over the grass becomes clearer, with a gate soon visible in the wall ahead. (If you miss this turning, continue on the road to the park exit, turning left before it to follow the wall for 200 metres, until you reach the gate). Go through the gate and follow the fenced path, which emerges in Studley Roger village.

7/ Continue straight over the road and take the track between walls, soon reaching a house entrance with a footpath gate to the left. Now walk on the enclosed path, mainly between hedges. Reaching a path crossroads, remain ahead (signed Ripon). Keep going until a gate gives access to a main road. Cross and turn right to join the pavement. Continue over the river bridge. Immediately after this, turn right at the mini roundabout into Mallorie Park Drive to return to the start point.



DISCLAIMER: Walks are undertaken at your own risk. Due care must be taken in following the walk, particularly after poor weather. Whilst every care is taken in compiling the description, changes may have occurred since compilation. Neither the walk author nor Your Local Link can accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.