

Walking the Gower coast path

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I was born and brought up near to the Gower and was familiar with most of the beaches along its southern coastline but I'd never walked between them so for our next long distance(ish) walk Jane Hough and I decided, with two friends, to walk the Gower from Mumbles to Llanmadoc over four days. We rented a cottage where my wife could come down and see her relatives and friends and we car shuttled to and from the start/end of the walks as there was no practical public transport.

Day 1 Mumbles to Three Cliffs Bay.

We started at Mumbles pier and walked through the more seasidy part of the Gower, Limeslade, Langland and Caswell. Most of it on tarmac paths. But it still had dramatic views between the beaches. Then we walked on towards Three Cliffs Bay which is generally rated as the prettiest on the Gower. Unfortunately, the sign posts disappeared as we walked through the high sand dunes above the cliffs and we wandered about for a while looking for a not too steep way down to the beach. Climbing sand dunes is hard. We finally found one and then walked along the river to where we had left our car. This was sort of what I expected. Views, cliffs, perhaps not the sand dunes above the cliffs.

Day 2 Three Cliffs Bay to Port Eynon

This section had two big beaches, Oxwich and Port Eynon. We had to walk up from Three Cliffs Bay to the headland above it and then around it until we came across the view to Oxwhich bay. We walked down to the bay and lunch and then up the other side. This was steep. Then a steep down to about 10-20 feet above high tide and all the while we were walking through an almost temperate rainforest. Large ferns, lichen covered trees with waves crashing just below us. Then another headland and another beach. A lovely day and I did not know about the woods. We were slightly embarrassed on the down slope towards Oxwhich when we were left standing by a 60+ woman carrying a chair and provisions on her back while wearing flip-flops.

Day 3 Port Eynon to Rhosilli

This was perhaps more what I was expecting. Walking along the cliff edge with the waves below. Some up and downs but a lot on the top of the cliffs. But the highlight was Worm's head. This is a tidal island that has a causeway between the mainland and it at low tide. The whole trip had been planned so that we would get to the causeway at low tide and we managed to get across (and back) while the tide was out. I have always wanted to do this. But it was much, much harder to cross than I imagined. I thought sand and shingle, but it was wave cut rock and stones.

Day 4 Rhossili to Llanmadoc

This section was again different. We crossed Rhossili beach, which is very long, then rounded a few headlands before we went up and down a large spit, about two miles long and two hundred yards wide, sticking out into the Loughor estuary. The spit has the seaward side as a sandy beach and the river side as a pine forest. Unfortunately, there were a lot of fallen trees and we so we missed a large section of the forest as we had to cross the sandy side for part of it. This was also the longest walk, about 13 miles, as where we had planned to have lunch was closed (never trust the internet) and we had to divert to get something to eat.

All in all a lovely trip with lots of views, climbs, beaches, wild flowers, orchids, sheep, cattle, horses, ice-cream and good weather. The going was difficult in places with very uneven paths but we had plenty of beaches to walk on, And not very busy (except for Worm's head).