

Weatherman Walking

Great Orme Walk

Approximate distance: 5.5 miles
 For this walk we've included OS grid references should you wish to use them.



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The Weatherman Walking maps are intended as a guide to help you walk the route. We recommend using an OS map of the area in conjunction with this guide. Routes and conditions may have changed since this guide was written. The BBC takes no responsibility for any accident or injury that may occur while following the route. Always wear appropriate clothing and footwear and check weather conditions before heading out.

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Great Orme Walk

Start: Great Orme summit, the pay and display car park or take the tram or cable car.

Starting ref: SH 767 834

Distance: 5.5 miles

Grade: Easy/Moderate

Walk time : Allow 2.5 hours

The beautiful scenery and remote feel of this walk are a wonderful surprise as the Great Orme headland is just a stone's throw away from the busy resort of Llandudno. A limestone headland which reaches out into the Irish Sea, our circular route takes in a 12th century church, a Bronze Age settlement, a 4,000 year old copper mine, a ski slope and some absolutely stunning views across the Irish Sea. The walk starts at the summit of the Orme but you also have the option of a climb up to the summit before starting the route, and of dropping back in to Llandudno town at the end.

Directions

Walk around the back of the Summit complex and follow the wooden waymarker signs down to the left of the cable car building. From there follow the path that runs parallel with the cable car until you can see St Tudno's Church below. There are a number of paths you could take down towards the tarmac road. Take the direct route if you're feeling adventurous or you can pick one of the other paths if you'd prefer a gentler descent.



Derek and the crew at the summit of Great Orme.

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Bryniau Poethion (SH 768 833)

Bryniau Poethion is Welsh for the hot hills and the hollows you see dotted around are the remnants of a copper rush that happened here in the 1800s. In 1849 William and Joseph Jones found copper very close to the surface. News soon got out and a horde of prospectors came here to dig. As the relatively modest copper rush here happened at the same time as the Californian gold rush this area was dubbed "California Cymru" - we can't promise a West Coast climate though!



Walking down towards Bryniau Poethion

Wind around to the left towards the church. Be aware of the traffic as you walk down towards St Tudno's Church on the tarmac road. If you want to explore this beautiful little church use the lych gate in the middle.



St Tudno's Church (SH 769 838)

St Tudno was thought to be one of the sons of Seithenin Frenin and the modern town of Llandudno is named after him. Even though he came to this area as early as the 6th century, the current church dates back to the 12th century and was extended in the 15th century. With its dramatic hillside location and stunning sea views, the church has the very unusual feature of an outdoor pulpit which is still used for services during the summer. The most notable feature inside the church is a wood carving up on the ceiling of the stigmata which represents the five wounds of Christ.



The spectacular location of St Tudno's Church

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Leave the church through the lower gate. Opposite the gate a path is clearly visible across the road and is marked with signs for the Ski Centre and Llandudno. Carry on up the path and enjoy the stunning views of the Irish Sea as you go. Along this path you'll pass Ffynnon Powell before continuing across more open ground towards a farmhouse on the right hand side.

When you get to the farmhouse, carry on straight ahead through the galvanised split gate keeping the farm buildings to your right. At the top of the slope is a kissing gate – go through it and follow the signs for the Ski Centre and Llandudno again which tell you to bear left. The path rises gently and opens out onto moorland and with some more stunning sea views. As the path begins to descend be aware of protruding rocks and some unevenness.

Keeping the next signpost to your right look out for steps cut into the rock and follow these down toward the Ski Centre which should now come into view. Follow the path keeping the stone wall on your left.

Once you've passed the centre walk along the tarmac road for around 100 metres before turning left along a path which borders the Ski Centre's car park before ascending steeply towards the summit of Pen Dinas.



Galvanised metal gate at the farm buildings



Stone steps down towards the dry ski slope



The path from the road up to Pen Dinas

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Pen Dinas (SH 779 829)

Pen Dinas is Welsh for "hill of the fort". The site of an Iron Age hill fort, it was once home to a small community of 60 round huts. The archaeological remains here are so significant that it's been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The view across to the Little Orme and Snowdonia are spectacular from here.



View of Llandudno from Pen Dinas

Take some time to enjoy the views from Pen Dinas before retracing your tracks down to the road. Turn left down the tarmac road and after about 50 meters turn right onto a path that skirts around the hillside directly below the vertical limestone cliff. This path is stony and uneven – if you'd prefer to avoid it you can carry on up the road instead - turn right at the traffic lights and continue up the hill.

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Kashmir goats

The herd of Kashmir goats have been roaming wild on the Orme for around a century. You're most likely to see them around Pen Dinas. They're descended from pair of goats from the Windsor Royal Herd which were acquired by Major General Sir Savage Mostyn in around 1880. Twenty years later they were released to roam wild on the Orme.



Great Orme goats

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Whichever route you take you will come to a road junction marked Ty'n Y Coed Road. Cross over here and there will be a row of white terraced houses facing you – at the left hand side of the terrace you can see a gently sloping path by two waymarker signs - for the Great Orme and the Summit.



Waymarker signs by the terrace of houses

Carry on up the path using the steps and you will emerge near some houses where you turn right and follow the road. After a short distance the tram station comes into view. Head towards the station until you see a path on the left which takes you towards the copper mine.

5 Bronze Age copper mine (SH 770 830)

These extraordinary prehistoric copper mines date back 4,000 years and are evidence for some of the earliest and most extensive metal mining in Europe. The site almost became a car park in the late 1980s but when the land was being surveyed the extent and importance of this site came to light. There is an entrance fee for visitors.



The approach to the copper mine

When you leave the copper mine you can return to the beginning of the walk by looking out for a short wooden waymarker sign which directs you on to a grassy path which runs parallel with the summit road. This path will take you back towards the summit car park where you can finish your walk. However, if you want to carry on, when you leave the copper mine bear left as the Bishop's Quarry comes into view. Up to the left you'll see an area where people have left their mark by spelling out their names using rocks. Follow the path as it goes past the quarry.

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6 Bishop's Quarry (SH 766 831)

The quarry is part of the land given to the Bishop of Bangor by King Edward II. The limestone rock is formed from the remains of animals which lived during the Carboniferous period between 300 and 350 million years ago when this part of Wales lay beneath a shallow tropical sea. Do take heed that Great Orme is a country park and nature reserve so whilst you can enjoy the spectacle of the fossils you shouldn't try to break them off or remove them.



Bishop's Quarry seen from above

Pass the quarry and continue along the grass path and bear right towards the substantial stone boundary wall. At the corner of the wall turn right and follow the path which runs alongside the wall whilst enjoying the wonderful views of Anglesey, Ynys Seiriol, the Conwy Estuary and the mountains of Snowdonia. As the ground begins to rise, look out for two low waymarker posts which indicate the beginning of the Monk's Path.

7 Monk's Path (SH 758 833)

This path is said to have been used by monks many years ago and legend has it that the grassy path, though well-trodden, is more lush than the surrounding grass due to the holy water the monks spilled along the way. The views from here from here are certainly divine.



Approach to Monk's Path

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Turn left to face Deganwy and Conwy then, with care, head down the steeply descending zig-zag path. The path eventually opens out on to Marine Drive, where you turn left. After approximately 100 meters look out for a sign for a number of houses on a cul de sac. The road runs behind a row of houses before you come to another waymarker sign directing you towards a house called Pen Y Ffordd Coch. The path then goes alongside the house and along the bottom of a steep cliff. The path here is steep and uneven in places.

At the end of the path turn left on to a tarmac footpath which leads you up to path known informally as the Invalids Walk where there are plenty of benches to enjoy south facing views of Conwy and Llandudno's West Shore. The path heads back towards Llandudno and as you pass through a green gate you enter Haulfre Gardens - a peaceful park where Llandudno can be seen through the trees.

Walk past the statues of Tweedledum and Tweedledee - a reminder that Lewis Carroll's Alice is said to have visited the town - then walk down the residential street of Llwynon Gardens until you reach the end. If you turn right you'll get to the Tram Station or alternatively turn left to find the tramlines and take a brisk walk back up to the top!