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.
Weatherman Walking

Porthmadog to Portmeirion

Start: Porthmadog Harbour
Starting ref: SH 568 385
Distance: Approx. 3.7 miles
Grade: Leisurely
Walk time: Allow 3-4 hours to include some time at Portmeirion Village

This coast and country walk tells a tale of industry and architecture as it weaves its way from Porthmadog to Portmeirion. It’s set in stunning surroundings that will leave you feeling that you have travelled the world - from Italy to Japan!

Directions
Parking up in one of the nearby pay and display car parks, make your way to the pretty harbour before heading back to the main road. Once there, turn right and cross the bridge to leave the town and pause briefly at the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway Station.

It’s worth noting the train times before you set off as it’s a joy to walk alongside the steam train as it puts past you during the crossing.
Weatherman Walking

The Cob (SH 576 382)

The Cob is an iconic local landmark, and was built in 1812 by William Alexander Madocks, a wealthy local landowner who invested heavily in the area.

It’s about one mile long and was built to reclaim agricultural land from the sea and helped create Porthmadog harbour, enabling ships to load and transport slate from Blaenau Ffestiniog to the far corners of the world.

In order to reclaim some of the huge cost of construction there was a toll charge of 5p which continued up until 2003.

At the end of the Cob, take great care when descending the steps directly onto the busy road. Cross safely, and turn right to follow the path which takes you behind the back of the old tollhouse with views across the Glaslyn estuary towards Y Cnicht and Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon).

As you join the main road again, cross over and head towards a tarmaced lane which leads off uphill and crosses the railway line. As you cross the railway line look for a gate leading uphill into a small wooded area, signposted Wales Coastal Path. Pass through the gate and veer right, continuing uphill following the signposts and way markers for the Wales Coastal Path.
As the path gently ascends through the wood, you eventually break out into some farmland with lovely views of the Cob, Porthmadog, Borth y Gest and Morfa Bychan to your right.

Continue in a straight line across the field keeping Porthmadog on your right. The path leads through a farm called Penrhyn Isaf.

Take the lane which serves as the main approach to the farm continuing on this path until you reach a T junction.

At the T Junction, turn right as the path starts to head downhill, entering woodlands and passing through the remains of an old walled garden before approaching the boundary fence of Portmeirion and follow the path round.

Cross over the stile and head towards the entrance gate for visitors to Portmeirion. Step into the iconic Italianate village created by the visionary architect, Sir Clough Williams-Ellis.
Portmeirion (SH 590 372)

Portmeirion is the brainchild of the visionary architect Clough Williams Ellis, who acquired the site in 1925 and then spent the next 50 years building this striking and unique village with its colourful and thought-provoking buildings.

The village is still most famous for being the backdrop for the cult 1960s television series “The Prisoner” and more recently, for Festival No 6 – an annual music festival attracting some of the biggest names in modern music.

Clough Williams Ellis (SH 590 372)

Clough Williams Ellis was born in 1883 and died in 1976. Although most famous for creating Portmeirion, he was also passionate about architecture in all its forms, including landscape design and the conservation and preservation of rural life.

He was a tireless campaigner for the environment and helped establish National Parks in England and Wales.

It’s worth allowing time on this walk to explore the village of Portmeirion; but if you’re following in Derek and Meurig’s footsteps then pass through the village keeping left and head downhill towards the waterfront, and the main hotel for some stunning views over the Dwyryd Estuary.

Follow the waterside path that runs below the Portmeirion Hotel, and set off for about ½ mile before you arrive at the rugged headland that forms Y Gwylff – The Wilderness.
Y Gwyllt (The Wilderness) is the name given to the woodland covering the small peninsula beyond Portmeirion, with the Dwyryd Estuary on one side and the Glaslyn Estuary on the other.

Due to its exceptionally mild climate, it’s been possible for pioneering horticulturalists to plant some very exotic plants from around the world, in particular the Rhododendrons, giving the area an oriental feel.

On entering Y Gwyllt, it soon becomes a lot more wild with numerous paths criss-crossing each other. It’s very easy to become disorientated – but half the fun is just following your nose and seeing where you end up! Our route follows the path past Clough’s Lighthouse and then straight ahead before taking the second turn on the left and taking up the challenge of climbing the 49 steps.

After climbing the 49 steps, turn right and continue along the path until you arrive at the tranquil Chinese Lake for a well-earned break.

Clough’s daughter Susan was responsible for the development of the enchanting Chinese Garden. She supervised the landscaping and was responsible for designing and siting the ornate bridge as well as the pagoda and temple. This area is at its best in spring when the rhododendrons are in full bloom.

Cross the lake over the ornate bridge, and turn left, and keep an eye out for a small path heading off uphill on your right.

Take this path and follow until you arrive at the peculiar dogs’ cemetery. Walk directly through the cemetery, pausing to look around and continue on the path ahead, turn left and follow signs for the Ghost Garden.
Dogs’ Cemetery (SH 585 369)

The Dogs’ Cemetery was established by one of Portmeirion’s more eccentric residents. Adelaide Haig, who lived here from 1870 till 1917, preferred the company of dogs to fellow humans and was reputed to have read sermons to her canine companions from behind a screen!

Pass through the Ghost Garden which is essentially the ghost remains of an old garden that used to be there, and begin the uphill climb before you emerge to stunning views over the Dwyryd and Glastyn estuary.

Continue straight on back into the woodland and continue straight ahead, and at the first major fork in the pathway, take the right path.

Keep on this path until you come to the magical tanglewood. A forest of giant rhododendron bushes which transports you to another world! There is also a spectacular ‘Victorian Viewpoint’ there.

Continue on the path through tanglewood and then turn left towards the village. Continue past the Tree Ferns and Haddonstone Temple and in 100 metres take the first right, until you come to the remains of the 12th century castle, Castell Deudraeth on your left, with a spectacular view over the village. Follow the path around and explore the few remains of the castle, before ending the walk at the castle rock pagoda for impressive views over the village.

The most direct route back to the village is down the steep steps below the castle (take care while descending), or if you prefer a more gentle route, the carry on around to the left where there are two paths which will lead you back into the village.

If you want to walk back to the start, we recommend retracing your steps all the way back to Porthmadog.

Alternatively you can walk to the nearby village of Minffordd and catch the number 1B bus back to Porthmadog. These buses run approximately every hour and will take you right back to your starting point.