



Walking in Llanrhidian and Gower

Complex geology gives a wide variety of scenery in a relatively small area. It ranges from the south coast's superb carboniferous limestone cliffs and beaches, between the Mumbles to Worms Head, to the dune systems and wide beaches of the West and salt-marshes in the north. Inland, the most prominent features are the large areas of common, dominated by sandstone heath ridges including the soaring sweep of Cefn Bryn. Secluded valleys have rich deciduous woodland and the traditional agricultural landscape is a patchwork of fields characterised by walls, stone-faced banks and hedgerows.

The public rights of way network is extensive covering 431 km (268 miles) and is widely used by both visitors and local people as it offers a wide variety of experiences reflecting the diversity of the peninsula. The footpaths are generally not very taxing and you don't have to be an experienced ramber to enjoy the magnificent scenery.

A number of the footpaths run through Llanrhidian and you can start your walk from Hill House's door step.

The round Britain coastal footpath runs along the lane around Hill House and this forms the first part of a fairly short 5 to 6 km circular walk to the fortified manor house known as Weobley Castle. There is an entrance fee to enter the castle and dogs are not allowed inside.

Follow the lane round to the right. After the bend in the lane you will see a signpost showing the way to Weobley Castle (2 km). Continue along to the end of the lane and follow the footpath through the fields and woods to the Castle. There is a climb up to the castle and the return path takes you along the B road, over styles and through fields to the hamlet of Leason. From Leason follow the lane and B roads to Old Walls and if you time it right you can have a meal and refreshments in the Greyhound Public house. Cross the road just after the Greyhound and follow the footpath through the fields that bring you to Penrallt Farm. The footpath passes through the farmyard and brings you out at the top of Llanrhidian hill. The footpath then runs along the top of the hill and brings you out at the Village Hall. There is a path down the hill, just in front of the viewing platform outside, the hall that brings you back to Hill House.

For a more adventurous walk, rather than returning from the Castle you can continue on to Landimore, Cheriton, Llanmadoc, Llangennith, etc.

Gower has been settled since prehistoric times and has a high concentration of ancient Neolithic and Bronze Age sites. The iron age hill fort of Cilifor overlooks the village of Llanrhidian (2 km from Hill House). Turn right going out of Hill House's gate, walk up the lane, turn left behind the two houses opposite Hill House and follow the footpath that leads you through the Church yard.

Leave the Church via the main gate and cross the village green and climb the hill to the "Old Post Office" on the left hand side of the road. Take the footpath behind the Old Post Office (signposted) that leads you through fields to the main road at Cilifor Farm. Cross the road and follow the side road that goes between the house and the farm buildings and at the top take the side road on the left signposted Welsh Moor. Rejoin the footpath on the left a little way up the minor road and follow it through the fields to the top of the hill (Cilifor). You can retrace your steps back to Hill House or you can follow another footpath that takes you down the steep side of the hill back to the main road. From this point you will have to walk along the main road either back to the footpath opposite Cilifor Farm or continue on towards the caravan park. Just before the caravan park take the minor road on the left that takes you down to the Marsh Road. Turn left onto the marsh road and this will take you back to Llanrhidian.

The marsh road takes you from Llanrhidian to Llanmorlais and Crofty. It leads you along the edge of the salt marsh and you can explore the abundant flora and fauna. There are several farms, the hamlet of Wernffrwd, cockle factories and a children's play area at Crofty. It's a 4 to 5 km single track lane that is used by vehicles but they are generally few and far between. It is ideal for walking and cycling as it is very flat and at various points you can walk along on the salt marsh.

If you have plenty of time you can continue on to Penclawdd and perhaps have a snack in the café, supermarket (all day breakfast) or the chip shop. If you are lucky enough to visit Hill House when there are high tides (Spring and Autumn) it is well worth travelling to Penclawdd to see the wide expanse of water that fills the estuary.

Check the bus timetables before you leave and you can arrange to return to Llanrhidian by bus. The bus stops at various points along the main road between Penclawdd and Llanmorlais cross. Copies of the bus time table are kept with other tourist literature in Hill House.

The marsh road is liable to flood at high tide where you cross the cattle grid at the edge of Llanrhidian village.

Do not venture far out onto the marsh if the tide is coming in. The water runs up the little rivulets (pills) and you can be cut off.

You can walk out onto Cefn Bryn from the lane that runs alongside the North Gower Hotel. There are many footpaths and one runs parallel to the main road and brings you out at the Greyhound Public House in Old Walls.

A very interesting walk is through Llethryd valley where there are a number of well preserved ancient burial mounds that are accessible to the public. The valley runs from the small bridge on the B2471 (Llethryd), a mile or so past Cilibion Garage, to Parkmill. You can enter the valley at either point and there is a parking area at Parkmill.

Other areas to explore are the common land between Llanrhidian, Three Crosses and Penclawdd, Llanmadoc Hill, Whitford Burrows, Rhossili Downs and the cliff paths of south Gower from Mumbles to Rhossili. Most of these places are only a short distance (10 to 12 km) from Llanrhidian and can be reached by bus from Llanrhidian cross.

At Llanmadoc you can park at Cwm Ivy (honesty box) and walk out through Whitford burrows (sand dunes and pine woods) to see the lighthouse in the estuary. This is one of the two remaining cast iron Victorian lighthouses (no longer in use) in the UK. The lighthouse can also be reached by footpath from the Britannia Inn.