

Musbury Castle or megalithic Hill Fort walk

This walk is full of choices according to the time you have, your level of fitness and or distraction by the views.

Describing the view from the top of Musbury Castle in *The Book of the Axe* (1875) George Pulman wrote: "The panoramic view of the Valley of the Axe is one of the best throughout its extent, and the eye ranges far beyond that lovely tract – over hill and dale, with water, timber and all other accessories for a perfect English landscape".

Please remember the Country Code.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

But particularly remember that the fields are the farmers' 'factory floor'. Dogs -are allowed; if there are animals in the fields please keep them on the lead and if they are not under control then keep them on for the whole walk. If a gate is open, leave it open, if a gate is closed please leave it closed and or close it after you. Many of the gates on this walk have 'walkers' gates' which save opening the whole gate or climbing over but these should still be closed after you.

The first thing you will have to decide is whether you will have lunch or tea in the pub, the Golden Hind, as if you are driving you might like to park there and book a table if you can.

If not, and either way you will turn off the A358 here and, drive up the hill to St Michael's Church and School Car Park (A).

Leave your car and exit the car park on foot turning left; if you have time you might go into the church and view the Drake memorial if not – join the East Devon Way going down the (private) lane passing Musbury Barton house on the right; on the left you will see the (private) garden and the lane now turns uphill on the way to Musbury Farm (sign on gate post).

Continue up the hill passing the farm yard on the left and the farm house on the right and over the cattle grid.

As you rise look behind you at the views over the Axe valley.

Soon you will come to a stile on the right (B) climb over and follow the EDW up the hill; as you walk look to your right to see the first view to the S over Seaton and to the sea. Through the next gate; (C) Here the EDW leaves our route through the gate on the right, and the National Trust sign declares that you have entered Musbury Castle.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/shute-barton/features/musbury-hill-fort>

Continue up the hill between the lines of trees (any of the paths will do) until you reach the top – the end of the escarpment which affords views to the E over Dorset and S to the sea and W over the Axe.

Turn north – you are now walking through the hill fort and can see the earth works and with the views the reason why megalithic man chose this as his defensive position. Over a stile walk on and through the gate at (D) the path turns left to the stile and over that it turns right and follows the hedge to the stile at T under the transmitter mast.

You might sit a spell on the seat here under the mast have your lunch and enjoy the views toward Axminster in the N, over the Axe valley to Whitford in the W.

Over this stile follow the path along the hedge until; you see the gate at (E) down the steps and over (or pass) the stile onto the lane.

Turn left downhill; ignore the first path (but you might sit here for a rest with the view) and through the gate at (F) taking the second path to the N until it meets the farm track which you follow down to the lane tee junction at (G).

Turn left into Doatshayne Lane and walk along through the ex council estate back to the church. The village main street is parallel but down the hill a bit (there are two paths if you wish to walk through the village to the pub)

Height increase 45M (max height 75M)

Distance: 3.25KM

Time: 1 hour