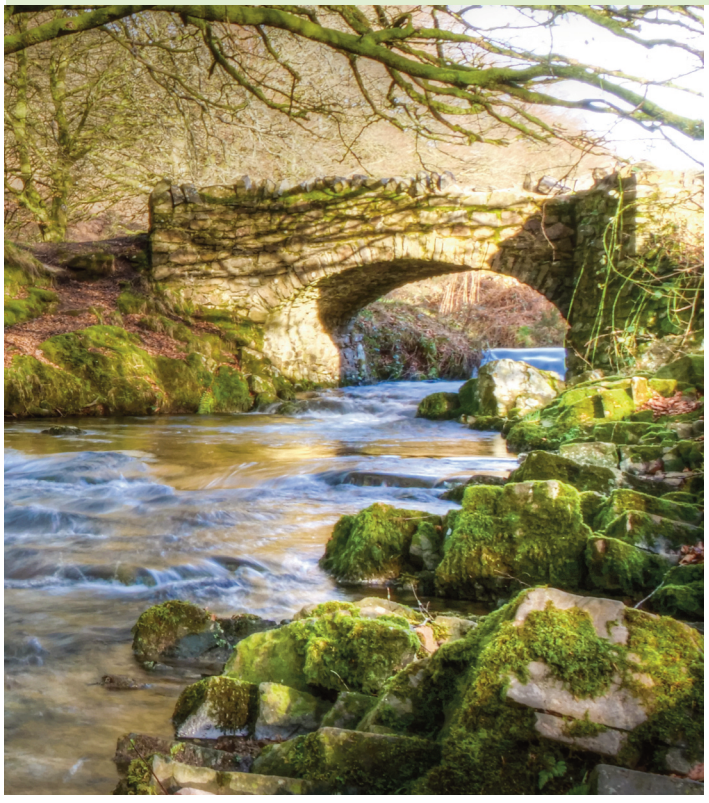
Exmoor Walk

EXMOOR Character Cottages

Lorna Doone
6 miles



All photographs by Julia Amies-Green

When you're travelling around Exmoor, you'll come across mentions of Lorna Doone, the heroine of the 1869 eponymous historical romance by RD Blackmore. The dramatic story races through a love affair, violent gangs, murder and revenge and a wedding. The area of Exmoor in the book quickly became known as Lorna Doone Country, and at its heart is 'Doone Valley' also known as Badgworthy Valley. It's a magical, mystical place and it makes for a lovely walk. It's also considered one of the most romantic places on Exmoor, and we certainly agree with that! The area offers several walking options, the longer to Lorna Doone Valley and a shorter version stopping off at Oare Church.

The Walk 6 miles 3 hours

Directions: Take the turning to Oare from the A39 just east of County Gate. After one mile fork right at Oare and into Malmsmead over the 17th century packhorse bridge. Turn right again at Lorna Doone Farm to the car park beyond the public toilets.

Sat Nav: EX35 6NU

From the car park, walk back to Malmsmead and straight up the hill ahead to access a public bridle path through a field gate on the left, where a sign reads 'Doone Valley 2 miles'. You are looking for a public footpath. If you see a box to pay to cross private land, you are in the wrong place.

Cross fields to the right of Badgworthy Water, dropping down to the river at Cloud Farm. At this point, you could choose to cross the bridge to Oare Church which is a shorter route, otherwise keep the river on your left, and reach the memorial stone to RD Blackmore. Enter a gate to Badgworthy Wood. After half a mile cross the footbridge over Lank Combe Water.

Continue until you reach a footpath sign 'Brendon Common 2.5 miles', where you turn right rising on to open moorland. This is Hoccombe Combe, the site of an ancient settlement. Follow the track uphill, after 1-mile

pass through a gate in a wall, and across open moorland. Continue straight ahead above Lank Combe on the right, then drop down on the obvious path to Lank Combe Ford, cross the stream, and head up the farthest right of the tracks, to the ridge. At the signpost 'Malmsmead 2', turn right, heading northeast, then after three-quarters of a mile head north to join a wider track coming from the left.

This takes you to the Malmsmead Road, where you turn right down the hill back into the village.

For the shorter 3 mile walk, cross Badgworthy Water at Cloud Farm. Follow signs for Oare Church. This walk takes you over a farm so leash your dog here.

From Oare Church follow signs back to the Car Park.

EXMOOR Character Cottages

Lucy Green, owner of Exmoor Character Cottages, researched this and 11 other walks, and her friend and talented photographer Julia Amies-Green supplied all the images. The routes are designed to suit all abilities, from short and easy to longer and more challenging. Most are dog friendly, but please always be ready to leash your dogs and close gates – and follow additional requests from farmers where you see them. Our maps are for guidance, and for more detailed maps we recommend the 1;12,500 versions sold in the Exmoor National Park Centres. Collectively the walks are published in 'The Little Book of Walks' which was created in response to requests from guests at our four luxury holiday cottages in Dunster and Minehead. You can find out more about the Book and holiday cottages here:
www.exmoorcharactercottages.co.uk