



**Northumberland
Coast
National
Landscape**

Walking the Pilgrim's Way to Holy Island

Ever since 635, when King Oswald gave the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to St. Aidan to establish his monastery, the island has been a place of pilgrimage. The road was not constructed until 1954 and until then the vertical poles were the only indicators of the safe route between the mainland and island. The sight of the poles stretching across the sand and mud is one of the most iconic views in Northumberland and to walk the route away from the road and follow in the footsteps of our medieval ancestors is a wonderful experience, unlike any other walk in Northumberland.

Advice for walking the Pilgrim's Way safely

Most importantly - you must work around the tide times so check the safe crossing times for the road first. The middle of the safe road crossing times gives you the low tide time. www.holyislandcrossingtimes.northumberland.gov.uk/

It takes about two hours to walk to the Island from the Causeway. The Pilgrim's Way route is about three miles long.

Ideally set off two hours before low tide – walking with the outgoing tide rather than the rising tide.

Do not attempt to cross at dusk or in poor weather conditions.

Do not attempt to cross at any other time. It is dangerous as the tide comes in very rapidly.

Ideal footwear – barefoot or walking boots that you don't mind getting very muddy. Wellington boots can be worn, but you might lose one in the mud!

Tides and condition mean that the condition underfoot varies considerably – it can be very slippery in places. A good stick can be useful.

Route – walking from Beal to Holy Island it is best to walk over the road bridge – being careful of the traffic. At the layby on the right-hand side (if you are looking towards the island) head out directly towards the first pole on the east side of the river and follow to the Island.

If you don't feel confident about walking across the sands, you can always walk beside the road but please note it can be very busy and traffic is fast.

Remember people have crossed to and from the island along this route for centuries – if you follow these tips it will be one of the best walking experiences you will ever have.

Guides

If you are not confident about walking the Pilgrim's Way alone there are professional walk leaders who lead guided walks across the mud, such as Shepherd's Walks, Footsteps in Northumberland, and Holy Island Hikes.