

Wainstones Walk

The Wainstones

The impressive sandstone crags known as the Wainstones are the largest such group in the North York Moors. The presence of these pillars and buttresses of rock in such an exposed place shows how resistant they are to weathering. Weaknesses and cracks in the rock have been worn away over centuries by wind, ice and rain to leave joints and fissures between the blocks. Listen carefully on a breezy day and you might hear the wind make a wailing sound as it blows between the jumbled outcrops.

The Wainstones have been popular with rock climbers for years. Many come to climb the twin pillars of the steeple and the needle, which you pass on this walk.



Some of the most spectacular views in the whole National Park unfold as you cross the heights of Cold Moor, en route to the magnificent rock crags known as the Wainstones. This 8-mile circuit makes a challenging day out, but you are amply rewarded for your efforts, whether it's watching rock-climbers tackle the crags, sampling one of the most thrilling sections of the Cleveland Way National Trail, or skirting Urra Moor on your return – the latter is the highest point in the North York Moors. This is a fabulous moorland walk, with lots of high points – in every respect!

Shaping the land

Many of the apparently natural features in the landscape have been left by man's activities over the centuries. As you walk, look for the Three Howes, high on Cold Moor. These are the graves of Bronze Age people who lived here over 3,000 years ago. Howes may also have been boundary markers between ancient territories, which is why they are usually found on the moor tops. As you walk along the edge of Urra Moor you follow a long bank and ditch. Its age and use remain a mystery. It may have been an ancient defensive earthwork but is more likely to be a medieval boundary marker.



Did you know?

The Saxon word 'wanian' meant 'to lament' or 'grieve'. Perhaps the Wainstones once had a special significance as a place to mourn the dead.

Great for:

list-tickers, rock-hounds, more than a stroll, big-sky views

Length:

8 miles (13km)

Time:

5 hours 30 minutes

Start/Finish:

Chop Gate Village Hall car park, B1257, 12 miles (19km) north of Helmsley

Grid Reference:

SE 560 993

Map:

OS Explorer OL26

Refreshments:

Chop Gate

Toilets:

Start/Finish of walk



The Buck Inn at Chop Gate is a short walk from the Village Hall car park – you'll pass it on your way back, at the end of the walk. Otherwise, there are plenty of cafés, pubs and restaurants in Helmsley, 12 miles (19km) to the south.

...on the rocks, across the moors...

Route instructions

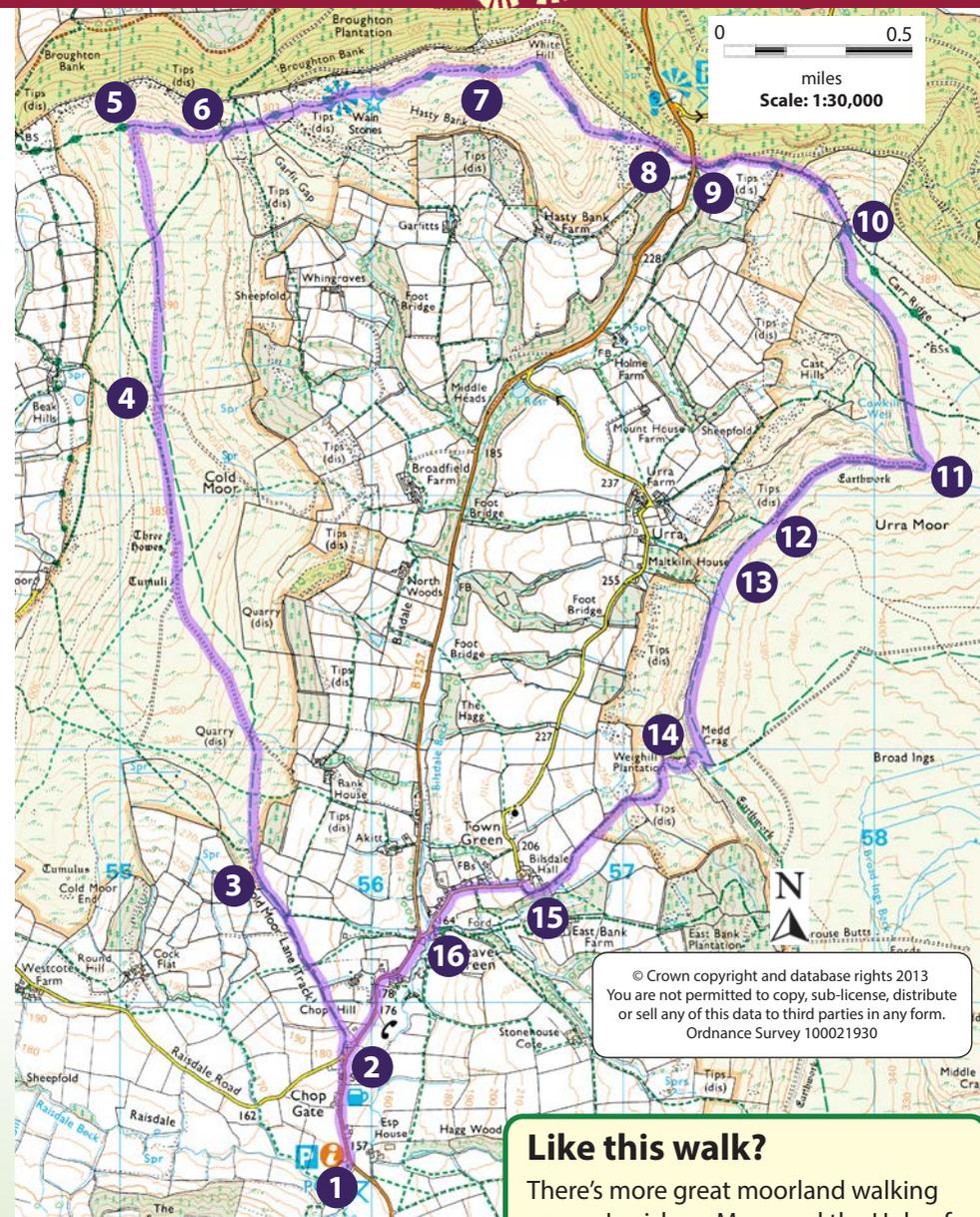
- 1 From the car park, turn left up the road to Chop Gate.
- 2 At Chop Gate, turn left (opposite the war memorial) towards Carlton and then immediately right to walk behind the chapel. Follow the bridleyway signs up the lane.
- 3 Go through the gate and follow the path roughly parallel to the drystone wall and the woodland on your right. Keep on uphill and continue up and along the top of Cold Moor.
- 4 Go through a broken line of wall and continue straight ahead.
- 5 At the escarpment edge, turn right and follow the surfaced path along the Cleveland Way.
- 6 Descend to the gate and then climb up through the fields and through the Wainstones.
- 7 Follow the Cleveland Way over Hasty Bank and down the far side.
- 8 Go through the gate and follow the Cleveland Way down the side of the wall.
- 9 Cross the road and continue along the Cleveland Way.
- 10 Very shortly after the gate at the top of the hill, bear right off the main route along the signposted bridleyway.
- 11 Cross the stream gully and bear right along the path.
- 12 Cross another gully at a bridleyway sign and continue straight ahead along the path.
- 13 Head towards the drystone wall and follow the path alongside it.
- 14 At a junction of tracks, turn right down the path which leads off Urra Moor. Go through the gate and continue down the path.
- 15 Turn left at the road.
- 16 Turn left at the main road, cross over and follow the pavement back to Chop Gate car park.



The route follows clearly defined moorland tracks through the heather on Cold Moor and Urra Moor, and the going can be wet and boggy in parts. Conditions may change quickly, even in summer, and visibility is sometimes poor. The Cleveland Way section of the walk (from points 5 to 10, including the Wainstones) is largely along a stone surfaced track and is well waymarked. There are no stiles en route, but there are steep ascents/descents at the Wainstones and Hasty Bank.



Please keep dogs on a short lead or to heel at all times, and always on a short lead between 1st March and 31st July when birds are nesting on the ground. You may encounter livestock on the lower parts of the walk – please keep your dog on a short lead near farm animals. It's also safest to keep your dog on a lead near cyclists and horseriders.



You will need OS Explorer OL26 map for this walk.

Like this walk?

There's more great moorland walking on our Levisham Moor and the Hole of Horcum walk, and on Howdale Moor and Brow Moor.