

I. Chipping Campden

This delightful short walk leads you from the charmingly English market town of Chipping Campden, through shaded woodlands and past breathtaking views. A wonderful introduction to the Cotswolds, and a perfect start to the Cotswold Way.

Distance:

4½ miles (Shorter: 3 miles)

Duration:

2½-3 hrs (Shorter: 1½-2½ hrs)

Difficulty:

Moderate, some steep sections
(Shorter: Easy, avoids climbs)

Public transport:

No. 22 bus (See Cotswold Way public transport leaflet, or call Traveline on 0871 200 2233)

Start/Finish:

Grid reference SPI51392
(OS Explorer sheet OL45)
Postcode GL55 6HB

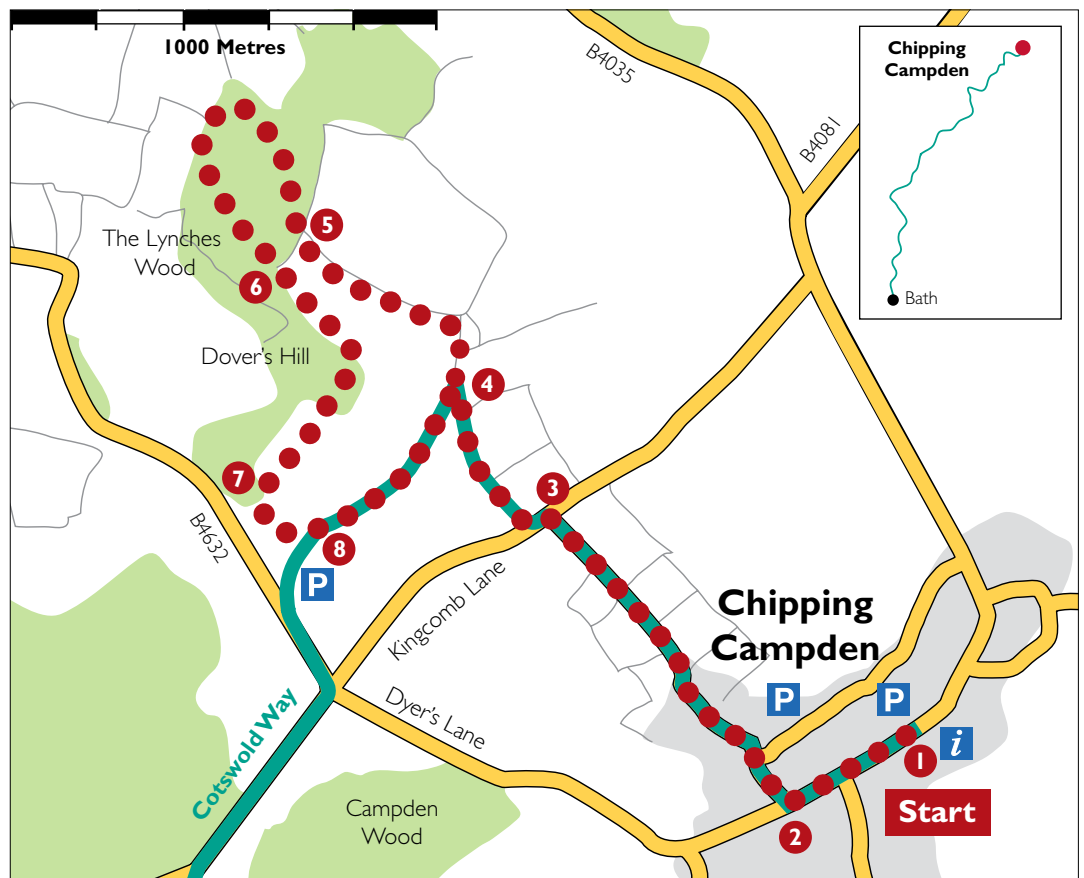
Refreshments:

Numerous cafes/pubs in Chipping Campden. Public Toilets in Sheep Street.

1 Start opposite the tourist information centre at the Market Hall, the official start/ end point of the Cotswold Way. Take a minute to look upwards at the fascinating roof structure and go back in time to when it was built in 1627.

Continue down onto the narrow footpath, past the war memorial on your right. Veer to the right of the red phone box to continue along the Cotswold Way.

2 Turn right just after the Catholic Church of St Catherine and continue straight on, past the first of many oaken signposts along the Cotswold Way, and continue left up Hoo Lane. Stay on this road after it becomes an un-made track, and after half a mile, go through the gate at the top onto Kingcomb Lane.



3 Watching for traffic, turn left and walk along the lay-by for 100 metres, then turn right opposite a Cotswold Way signpost to cross the road. Continue along this foot path until you reach a kissing gate leading onto Dover's Hill (owned and managed by The National Trust), and a taste of the spectacular views to come.

4 After the kissing gate, leave the Cotswold Way to follow the bridleway on the right. *To take the shorter route and avoid the steep sections, turn left here and follow the bridleway to the viewpoint at the end (point 8). Just breathing in the incredible views and freshest of winds is unforgettable enough!*

Follow the fenceline until you reach a gate on your right. Enter the small windswept woodland, taking the left-hand path. At the end of the wood, turn left downhill towards

a kissing gate. Leaving the trees behind for the time being, emerge onto the hillside and follow the waymarked path straight on, keeping the fence on your right. Continue downhill towards the woods at the bottom.

5 Pass through the kissing gate into the leafy calm of Lynches wood, with the area's finest show of bluebells in May. Take the waymarked trail to your left, ignoring the footpath to the right and watching out for muddy sections after wet weather. Towards the bottom of the woods, curve to the left and carry on uphill taking the long flight of steps. At the top of the steps, turn right and follow the path until you reach a kissing gate.

6 Pass through the gate and emerge back into the fields. Follow the rough track straight uphill,

bending round to the right towards the large oak tree and waymarker post. Follow the direction of the arrow along the occasionally muddy track through the middle of the field and continue straight on, passing a pond on your left. When you reach another signpost towards the end of the field, turn left and climb up towards the stone topograph on Dover's Hill.

7 Take a few minutes to catch your breath and enjoy the stunning views. If you were here in spring, you might witness the annual 'Olimpick Games' which have been played on the hill since 1610, and involve painful-sounding sports such as 'shin-kicking' and 'pike-tumbling'. Finally, follow the edge of the hill back to point 4, and retrace your steps back to Chipping Campden for a well-earned rest.

Congratulations, you have just started the Cotswold Way!