

Exploring the National Forest


Located right in the heart of the country, the National Forest embraces 200 square miles of the Midlands. It spans parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, and aims to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood.


After centuries of coal mining and clay extraction, the closure of the pits in the 1980s left a scarred and derelict landscape. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, millions of trees have been planted, breathing life into the landscape and its communities – turning a landscape from black to green. This bold regeneration shows how trees can transform not only the landscape, but also, vitally, people's lives and the local economy.



To find out more about the National Forest and how you can get involved, visit:

nationalforest.org

 @NatForestCo

 @the.national.forest

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The National Forest Company
Charity No. 1166563

National Forest Company, Enterprise
Glade, Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote,
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THE NATIONAL
FOREST

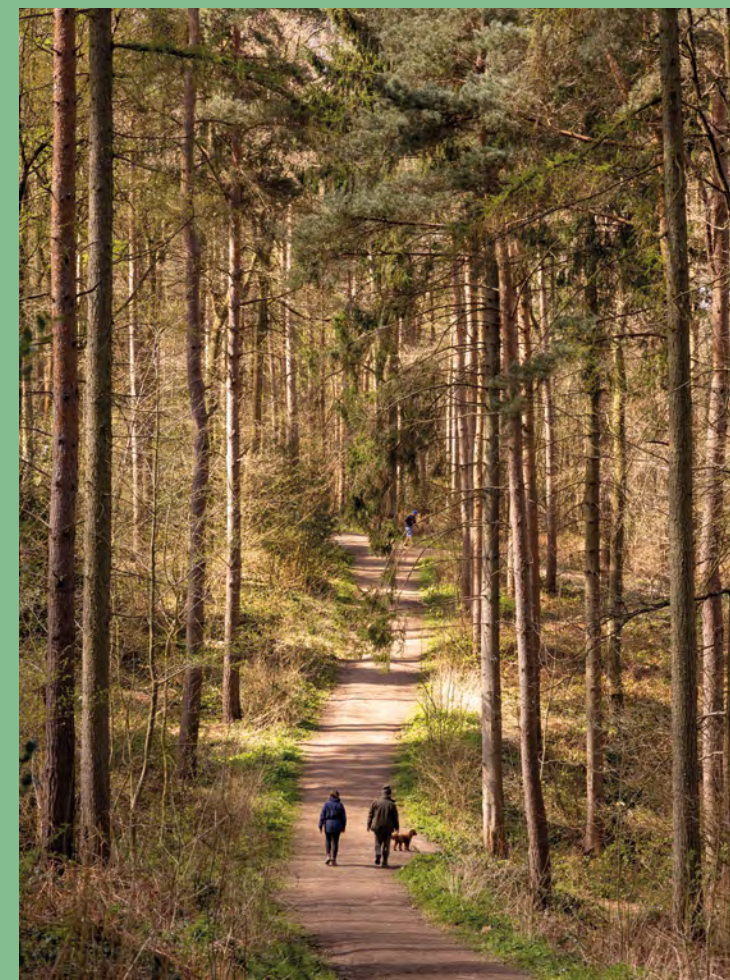

THE NATIONAL
FOREST



Medium
9 miles
(14.5km)

Needwood circular

A gentle walk around the parkland landscape of the Needwood Forest.





Walking in the National Forest

There are hundreds of miles of paths and trails to explore in the National Forest, and plenty of places accessible for all ages and abilities. Grab your walking boots, your trainers or your dog and head out into the woods for a walk or a run, or try your hand at orienteering or geocaching.

Follow gentle trails through vibrant young woodlands and nature-rich ancient forests. Discover more about the area's heritage or just let a canal towpath take you to the nearest pub lunch.



Walking highlights



Jackson's Bank

This 35ha woodland is part of the Duchy of Lancaster's Needwood Estate, and is defined as replanted ancient woodland. Conifers planted here post-war are steadily being removed and replaced with native broadleaf species. This will encourage greater biodiversity and add to the semi-natural flora that already graces the wood, such as bluebell, wood anemone, wild garlic, herb paris and early purple orchid.



Needwood Forest

Until the mid-thirteenth century, Needwood Forest was mostly under the control of the Ferrers family of Tutbury Castle, who used it as a private hunting preserve. The family later forfeited their rights and the forest passed to the Duchy of Lancaster. Needwood has a rural and historic character, with ancient woodland, parklands, rich farmland and estate forestry. The straight roads are a remnant of the old forest drives, and small hamlets and villages are almost hidden in the landscape.

Noon Columnn

See the light at the six Noon Columnns dotted around the Forest. Slots cut into these 3-metre-tall oak sculptures, designed by internationally renowned artist David Nash, allow rays of sunlight through at true noon each day. Visit the Needwood Noon Columnn, beyond the car park at Jackson's Bank.



Off route highlight

Byrkley Park contains old parkland with some very old, veteran trees. Byrkley Lodge, now demolished, was one of the few dwellings in the ancient Needwood Forest, before the Enclosures Act in 1801. It was the country house of Michael Arthur Bass, son of Michael Thomas Bass, the founder of Bass Brewery. The name "byrkley" may come from a clearing "ley" in the birch "byrk" trees. Byrkley Park is now home to the National Football Centre, St George's Park.

Be a responsible visitor to the National Forest



To get the most out of your visit, please follow some simple rules:

Respect other people · Consider other people enjoying the outdoors · Leave gates and property as you find them and follow marked paths

Protect the natural environment · Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home · Keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors · Plan ahead and be prepared · Follow advice and local signs

Needwood circular

 **Medium length**

Distance: 9 miles (14.5km)

Time: Allow 4 hours.

Path type: Unsurfaced paths, tracks, farmland and tarmacked sections. Stiles. Sturdy footwear recommended.

Use with map OS Explorer 245 The National Forest

Start at: Jackson's Bank car park, Brakenhurst Road, Hoar Cross, Staffordshire, DE13 8RF.

OS Grid Ref: SK139232

Latitude: 52.806190

Longitude: -1.7940295

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Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Parking
	Bridleway		Bus stop
	Permissive path		Pub
	Road		Café
	Woodlands		Shop
	Rivers and ponds		Restaurant
	Buildings		Accommodation
	Waypoint		Gym/Spa



1 Walk from Jacksons Bank car park towards the picnic area with the Noon Column on your left. Keep to the right of the picnic area, going through a gate and then straight on into the woods. Follow the **National Forest Way** as it weaves its way through the woods, taking the right hand path at about 350m, and keep ahead for a further 500m. At the junction with the public footpath, turn right and pass through a gate into a field. Walk along the edge of the field, keeping the hedge on your left, until you reach the A515. (*Dogs on a lead here please, as hens frequently run loose*).

2 Cross the busy road with care. Go through the hand gate to the left of the former church into **Crossplain Wood** and follow the path for approx. 2km through a narrow belt of trees and then mature woodland skirting the airfield, passing a WW2 air raid shelter on your left. Continue straight on ignoring the right turn for the **National Forest Way** and walk to the end of the wood. Leave the wood near the end of the airfield, turn right into a field and follow the path with the wood on your right. (*You will have views of St. George's Park at this point*). Upon reaching the field boundary, turn immediately left in the next field keeping the hedge on your left. Follow the footpath to the road.

3 Cross the road with care and pass through a metal gate. Follow the bridleway past some paddocks and Page's Poultry (*keep an eye out for emus!*) to reach the B5017. Cross the road and go straight on along the drive that passes Hanbury Park Gate Farm and leads to Hanbury Park Farm. (*Dogs on a lead along this section please*).

4 Go straight on through the farmyard, then fork left through two metal hand gates in quick succession. Walk diagonally across the field to a third hand gate. Walk diagonally across the next field to a metal gate and then turn right to follow the hedge; keeping the hedge on your right until you reach the corner of the field. Cross a ditch stile and bear left to follow the path around the field as far as a second ditch stile. Go straight on through Sycamore Farm to the road.

5 Turn left on the road and, after about 50m, turn right at the junction. After the two cottages to your right there is a footpath; follow this to a T-junction of paths and then turn left, crossing a stile. Keep ahead through the fields and when you reach a farm track, turn right and through a metal gate into the farmyard. Keep straight, go through the metal field gate and follow the footpath up the field, hedge on your left, to a fence ditch and stile. Hanbury water tower and church are ahead of you.

6 Follow the field edge round to your left where you will see a signpost. Go straight on, through a gate by a water butt, keeping the hedge to your left, over a ditch stile and onto the road. Turn right, then left along Wood Lane for approx. 1km until reaching a wooden gate on your left into **Bolingbroke Wood**, shortly after Hanbury Grange Farm.

7 Go through the gate into the plantation and follow the footpath straight ahead along its edge. Turn left, staying on the edge of the woodland until you reach a hand gate onto a farm track. Keep ahead, ignoring all paths to the left, until you reach the B5017. Cross over the road, through a gate and along the field to a narrow overgrown gap in the hedge by a reed bed into the next field and onto the A515.

8 Cross the road with extreme care and you are on the edge of **Eland Wood**. Enter the wood and follow the footpath which forks to the left. After 200m, cross a stile into a field and follow the footpath past Elton Covert Farm and continue on to Newborough. *The village celebrates a well dressing festival each May*. Walk down Elton Close and on to Chapel Close. *Refreshments are available at The Red Lion Newborough on the main road 50m to the right*.

9 Bear left onto the main road and, after 50m, cross over a stile on your right to join the public footpath after the end of the village. Cross the field and follow the path half left over two fields. After 200m, there is a crossing of paths. Turn right along the hedge then left to take the path over the brow of the hill. On the top of the hill at the path fork bear right and follow the path down to the corner of the field and onto the lane.

10 Turn left and follow the lane to the T-junction (ignore Brickhill Lane). Turn right and, after 100m, turn left over a bridge onto a farm track. Follow this past the farm back into **Jackson's Bank**. Take the right hand track and follow this back to the car park.