

# 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.




Spires & Stiles trail starts here

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

[nationalforest.org](http://nationalforest.org)

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11/25

The National Forest Company  
Charity No. 1166563

National Forest Company, Enterprise  
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THE NATIONAL  
FOREST



Medium  
9 miles  
(14.5km)

## Spires & Stiles

A rural walk through the pleasant farmland of the Mease lowlands.





# 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



### Coton Wood

The woodland was planted by the Woodland Trust in 1995 on former farmland and lies on an historic path. Before the church at Coton was built, the dead from the village were carried to Lullington for burial along this route through the "Devil's Arches", also known as The Coffin Route.



### Rosliston

The village is mentioned in the Domesday Book as Redlauestun meaning "farm of Hrolf". Rosliston Forestry Centre is built on the site of a farm, and was one of the first woodlands planted as part of the National Forest. The land was criss-crossed with footpaths well-trodden by miners on their way to work in local collieries that are now long since gone.

### Coton in the Elms

The village name is derived from "all the cottages in the elms". Sadly, following the outbreak of Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s, few of the elms which gave the village its name remain. Some disease-resistant trees have been planted at the entrances to the village.



### Off route highlight

See the light at the six **Noon Columns** 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. The Mease & Sence Lowlands column is a short walk from the car park at Grangewood.



## 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

# Spires & Stiles

 **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:** Coton Wood, Lullington Road, Coton-in-the-Elms, DE12 8EP.

**OS Grid Ref:** SK245148

**Latitude:** 52.731025

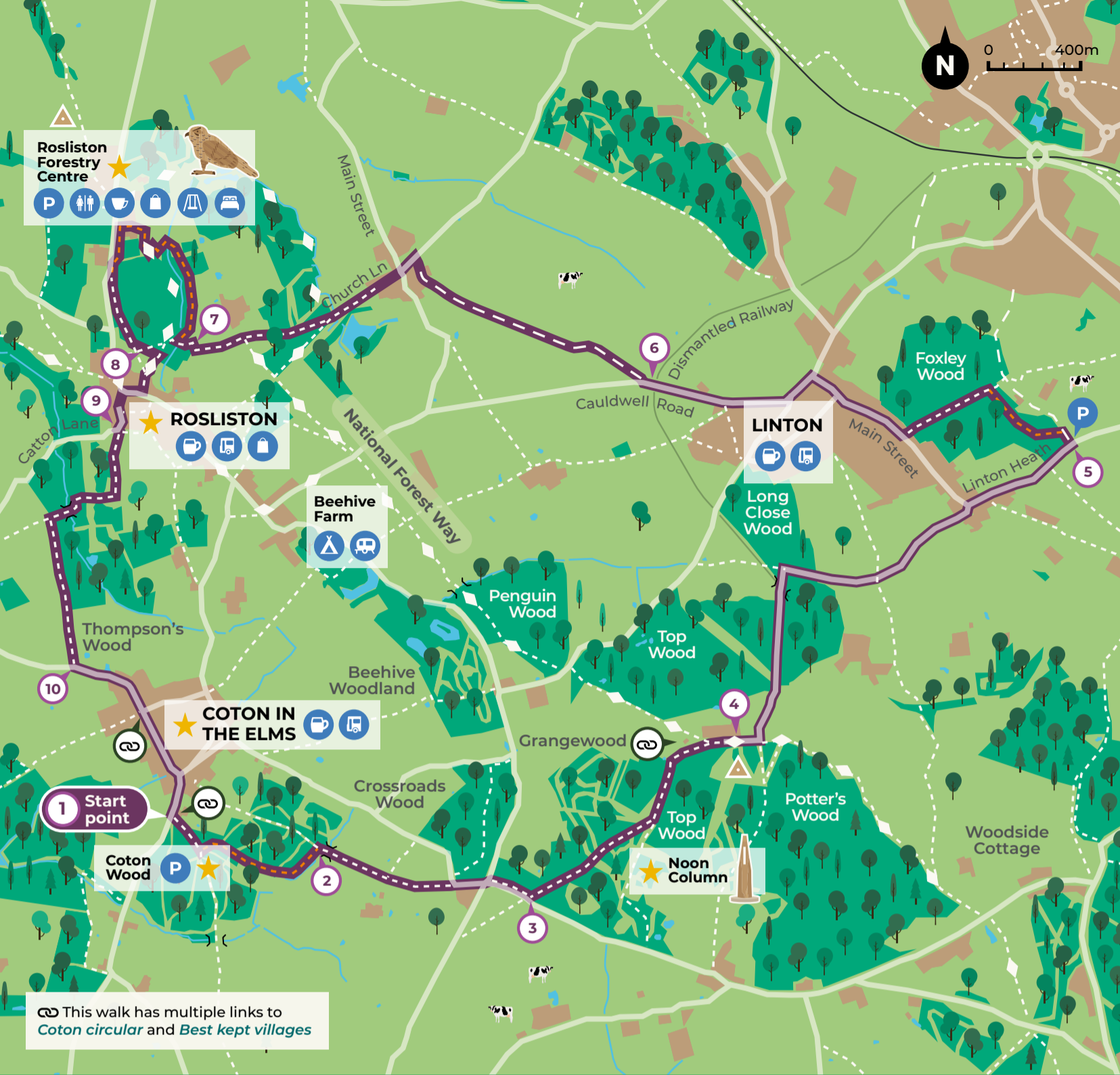
**Longitude:** -1.6385923


**what3words:**

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## Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Parking
	Bridleway		Bus stop
	Permissive path		Public toilets
	Road		Camping
	Woodlands		Pub
	Rivers and ponds		Shop
	Buildings		Cafe
	Trig point		Play area
	Waypoint		Accommodation



 This walk has multiple links to *Coton circular* and *Best kept villages*

**1** Starting at **Coton Wood**, take the gate opposite the car park entrance and walk straight ahead along the broad, well-defined central path. Where the path divides, keep left. Ignore the next track on the left and walk on to the T-junction, where you turn left. After 20m, turn right where the tracks cross and follow this path around the perimeter of the wood, keeping the hedge on your right.

**2** When you come to a stile and plank bridge, cross and follow the footpath over the field to a stile in the middle of the hedge. Cross a farm track and another stile to continue on the footpath. Where the footpath meets a road, follow the road ahead to the crossroads. On the corner of the roads to Botany Bay and Grangewood go through the entrance in the hedge, marked by a footpath finger post, into the **Grangewood** woodland.

**3** Follow the footpath along the inside of the hedge, turning left after 200m onto a wide grass track signposted 'footpath'. Continue along the footpath and through a gap in a hedge. Continue on for 350m until you reach some mature trees at the corner of an older plantation to your right. Pass through a gap in the hedge to enter **Top Wood** (marked by a Woodland Trust sign). Take the footpath uphill alongside the hedge and cross the stile. Follow the edge of the wood, over stiles and through paddocks until you meet a farm track by Park Farm, joining the **National Forest Way** for a short while. Turn right up the track then onto the footpath past a barn conversion.

**4** Climb the stile and, after 100m, turn left to leave the **National Forest Way** through a gate. Head down a line of poplar trees leading through the main part of **Top Wood** to a dismantled railway bridge. After 100m turn right, walking parallel to an old pipeline, over two stiles onto a lane leading to Main Street in Linton. Turn right here and, after 400m, left into Waterfalls Lane and the small car park of **Foxley Wood**.

**5** Follow markers on permissive paths through **Foxley Wood** and exit by the gate back onto Linton Main Street. Turn right and follow the road through the village to the junction with Cauldwell Road. Turn left and walk along the road for 900m to a bridleway on the right (after a wall and security gate).

**6** Just past the line of a dismantled railway, go through a metal gate and follow the bridleway to Caldwell Manor Farm. Keep the farm buildings on your left to reach the road. Turn left and cross Main Street to enter Church Lane. At the end of the lane, go over the stile and down the field to enter the plantations of **Rosliston Forestry Centre**. Go straight on the public footpath and cross the tarmac track by the farm. Keep on the public footpath along the field edge to enter the Forestry Centre.

**7** Turn right and follow the surfaced path until a path joins from the left. Take this and zig zag uphill, following the path to the visitor centre (stop here for refreshments and toilets if needed). Turn left before the buildings and go down the drive, then turn left down the track signed to the Memorial Wood. After 100m take the footpath off to the right, and follow it round to Snowdrop wood, until you reach a junction of paths, and rejoin the **National Forest Way**.

**8** Just before the path turns sharp left, go through the gate and take the footpath along the field edge that leads past the church, turning left to take the footpath between two houses onto Main Street. Turn right, walk along the road to the junction with Catton Lane and turn left.

**9** Walk down the road, past Vicarage Walk and take the footpath on the left at the edge of the village. Go through gap and turn right to follow the footpath through a wooden gate into **Betts Wood**. Turn left after the gate, past a wooden sign, and follow the path along the edge of the wood. The path veers right through a gap in the hedge (before an overhead power line). Take the path in front of you, to the left-hand side of the hedge, parallel with the power line. Keep straight ahead, ignoring paths to either side, and follow the path as it bends left then right, to a wooden gate. Go through the gate, over the footbridge and continue along the path, crossing a second footbridge into a field.

**10** Turn left and follow the path along the field edge and continue ahead as the path becomes a grass track between hedges. Continue out into another field and walk straight ahead to meet the road. Turn left and walk down into Coton in the Elms village along the road – **take care, no footway**. As you enter the village there is a pavement on one then the other side so you may need to keep crossing the road. Walk down the hill past the church to the road junction and bus stop. Keep ahead, taking the road signposted Lullington and Edingale. Continue on, leaving the village and Coton Wood car park will be on your left, just before the 'national speed limit' road signs.