

Middle Moor, Bottom Moor and Hodgelane Brook (8 miles)

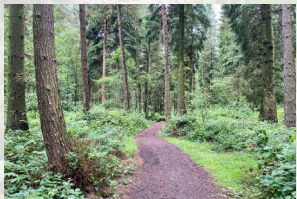
At A Glance

- Distance: 8 miles
- Time: 2-3 hours
- Grade: Moderate ● ● ● ○ ○
- Terrain: Country lanes and field paths
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, stiles, gates

This lovely route takes you on quiet country lanes to cross the fields of Middle Moor, offering wonderful views in every direction, before heading through the woodlands of Bottom Moor. It then follows the course of the pretty Hodgelane Brook, crossed by a wooden footbridge, before returning back to the park on peaceful lanes and field paths, again offering spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. There are plenty of lovely areas for a picnic en-route, plus the option of a short diversion to a village pub if needed.

Directions

1. Starting your walk from the Reception building, cross over the driveway and join the Forest Trail that is located behind the Evolution Health & Fitness building.



2. Head into the forest and follow the path. At a small fork in the path soon after entering the woodland, take the left hand fork. Continue following the path as it bears right after approx 300 metres.

3. Where the path emerges into a broad clearing with a crossroads of paths, turn left and go through a wooden gate beside a wide metal gate to emerge on to Flash Lane. Turn left and walk along the lane. Be aware that there is no pavement but there are wide verges and minimal traffic.

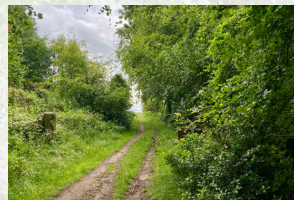
4. After approx 400 metres you'll meet a crossroad of lanes. Continue straight over and on to Jaggers Lane. Again, there is no pavement but it's not usually a busy road. The road forks after approx 400 metres and you should take the left hand fork signposted to Matlock Farm Park, staying on Jaggers Lane.

5. After approx 1.5 km, at an obvious crossroads, look out for a public footpath on the right hand side. Go through a metal gate in a stone wall and head diagonally right across the grass field ahead. This is the start of Middle Moor and there are wonderful open views all around.

6. Go through a further metal gate in a stone wall and turn immediately right, walking with the wall on your right hand side. Go through a third metal gate and this time turn immediately left to go through a wide gateway straight ahead of you. Head diagonally right across the grass fields.



7. Make your way across the fields of Middle Moor through a series of three wooden gates. After the third gate, head towards the far end of the woodland that you will see on your left.



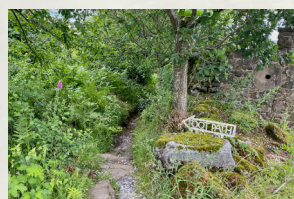
8. As you draw level with the end of the woodland, turn left to follow a marked footpath, walking with the woodland on your left and wonderful views on your right over to the town of Matlock and to Riber Castle on the hill. Continue straight on this footpath for approx 1.5km, through two gates, eventually passing a small cottage on your right. The path widens to become a metalled track (Cuckoostone Lane) at this point. Carry straight on.

9. As you near the end of the woodland on your left, look out for a signed footpath which leads through a gap in the stone wall on your left. Follow this path with a stone wall to your right and woodland to your left.



10. After approx 150 metres the path bears left and passes through an open section of heath land before reaching the dense pine woods of Bottom Moor. Continue straight on across two crossroads of paths, following a clear track for approx 800 metres between tall pine trees on both sides.

11. The track eventually emerges from the trees to reach a road (Wirestone Lane). Cross the road carefully and take the quiet lane immediately opposite (Robriding Road), signed towards Uppertown. There are no pavements along this lane but the verges are wide and it's usually quiet. There are wonderful views over the surrounding open countryside.



12. Where the lane bears left after approx 500 metres, take the track on the right signed to Vernon Lane Farm. Immediately before the wide metal gates and cattle grid to the farm, turn left and take the path downhill. The path narrows and widens at various points, twisting and turning through pretty countryside, often with stone walls on both sides. Do take care as the terrain can be uneven, and be aware that the track is used by mountain bikers and horse riders as well as pedestrians.



13. After approx 1km you will cross the waters of Hodgelane Brook by way of a pretty wooden footbridge. Cross the footbridge and continue straight on. When you reach a second wooden footbridge, you can

either walk across and continue straight on to the village of Kelstedge if you want to break your walk with refreshments at the local pub (The Kelstedge Inn, 01246 590448), or continue the walk by going through the metal kissing gate on the left just before the footbridge. Follow this path for approx 300m as it winds up steps and through trees before reaching a quiet lane.

14. Turn left on the quiet lane (Eaton Lane) which passes through beautiful countryside. Keep following the lane as it bears left at a junction, signed to Uppertown. Again, there are no pavements along this lane but the verges are wide and it's usually quiet.

15. After passing a collection of houses on the left, look out for a public footpath on the left after the last house. It runs with a hedge to your left and a stone wall and field to your right. Where the stone wall ends, turn sharp right and go through a wooden gate into a field.



16. Walk straight on through the field with a hedge to your left. In the corner of the field, cross a stile with a wide metal gate beside it. Continue following the path, passing a barn on your right, to emerge into another field via another stile. As you enter this field turn right and walk with a hedge on your right, following the signs to Overend.

17. In the corner of the field, go through a small wooden gate with a squeeze stile and further gate almost immediately beyond. Continue straight on through the next field, again walking with a hedge to your right. On reaching the end of the field, go through a wooden gate on the right. Continue straight on through a further field, with allotments to your right and houses to your left. Walk through a wooden gate to emerge back on to Eaton Lane.

18. Turn left and continue walking along the quiet country lane. Where the lane forks, take the left hand fork, walking past houses on the left. Where the lane bears left and becomes Whitefield Lane, take the footpath that leads straight on, walking to the side of a house called Prestedge Barn.

19. Follow this track for approx 150m. Where it bears left over a small cattle grid towards a house, take instead the footpath through a gate on the right. Turn left immediately after going through the gate to walk with the hedge to your left.

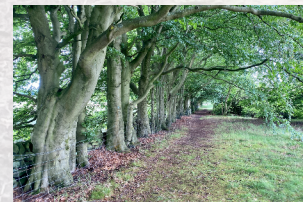


20. Follow the clear path through a wide meadow, heading roughly straight on. Go through a squeeze stile and then through a further gate beside a farm to emerge onto a quiet lane (Hodge Lane).

21. Turn left on Hodge Lane. Follow this lane for approx 1.5km through beautiful countryside and past pretty collections of houses.

22. On reaching a crossroads with a main road (Darley Road), cross the road with care and take the footpath immediately opposite. Head diagonally left across the field, pausing to admire the wonderful views behind you, to reach a gate in a stone wall leading to a lane (Screetham Lane). Again, cross the lane with care and continue through a squeeze stile opposite to follow a footpath straight ahead through a field.

23. Go through a further gate and head diagonally right following the path towards a wide gap in a stone wall. Go through the wide gap and turn immediately left, walking with the wall to your left.



24. At the bottom of the field, go through a gate and continue straight ahead. After approx 150m go through a gate in the stone wall on the left and follow the path that leads you back into Darwin Forest Park. Where the path reaches a stone track, turn left to return back to the Reception building.

Along the way...

Upper, Middle and Bottom Moor are part of a large area of moorland and mixed woodland known as Matlock Forest, which covers almost 500 hectares (1,240 acres). Situated on Matlock Moor, a plateau above the valley of the River Derwent on the southern edge of the Peak District National Park, the area is dominated by mature stands of conifers, interspersed with areas of wet woodland, heather moorland and acidic grassland. It provides a vital habitat for plant life and wildlife, including rare Nightjars, nocturnal ground-nesting birds.

The pretty Hodgelane Brook is one of two streams, the other being Smalley Brook, which combine to form the River Amber less than a kilometre from where this route crosses it. The River Amber goes on to join the River Derwent, flowing on into the River Trent before reaching the North Sea at Spurn Head.

