

Mapleton and Thorpe (6.8 miles, 11km)

At A Glance

- Distance: 6.8 miles
- Time: 2-3 hours
- Grade: Moderate ●●●○●
- Terrain: Country lanes, trails and field paths
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, steps, stiles and gates
- Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL24

This stunning route takes you along quiet trails and field paths to the lovely village of Mapleton, where there is a pub for refreshments if needed. From there it passes through peaceful meadows alongside the crystal-clear River Dove to the delightful village of Thorpe, before returning on country paths and trails back to the park.

1. Leave the park by the main exit and carefully cross the road to join the lane immediately opposite (Spend Lane), signposted for Thorpe, Dovedale and Ilam. Take care walking along this lane as there are a few short sections with no pavement, but it is usually quiet.



2. After approx 500 metres look out for a large railway bridge across the road. Immediately before the bridge go through the wooden hand gate on the right hand side and take the path that twists up a set of steps and emerges on to the Tissington Trail. Turn left on the Tissington Trail and walk along this peaceful, tree-lined former railway track.

3. After approx 1km you'll see a wide wooden gate across the track. Just before the wooden gate are two public footpaths on the right hand side with steps leading down. Take the second of these two paths, just before the wide gate.

4. Go over the stile and walk uphill across the grass field, heading slightly diagonally right. Cross a further stile to emerge on to a broad grassy path. Continue straight on.

5. The path eventually narrows and tracks between two fences to the side of a large camping field. Cross straight over the road through the camp site and continue on the path directly ahead.

6. The path meets a small gate and emerges into a grassy field, with wonderful views ahead of Mapleton. Cross the field, walking slightly diagonally right, to go through a further gate and squeeze stile beside a tree.



7. Walk straight down along the field edge with a hedge to your right. At a wide gap in the hedge turn right and again follow the hedge line, continuing on the clear path towards the village you can see ahead of you.

8. After going through a gap in a hedge at the side of a large tree, start heading downhill diagonally left, to reach a small wooden hand gate. Follow the short path between houses to emerge on to the road through the pretty village of Mapleton.

9. Turn right and head towards The Okeover Arms. If you're in need of a refreshment break this pub serves great food and drink - muddy boots and paws welcome!



10. Just a short distance beyond the pub it's worth taking a quick detour to look at the unusual church of St Mary. It was built in the mid 18th Century and designed by James Gibbs, a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren.

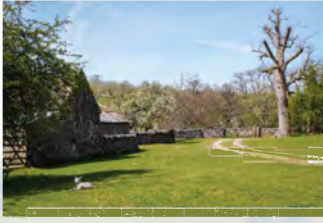
11. Continuing on the walk, take the public footpath signposted to Dovedale that starts directly opposite the pub. Head diagonally right across the grassy field to reach a small wooden gate in the stone wall. Go through the gate, cross straight over the road and take the gate immediately opposite.

12. Follow this well-marked pretty path for almost 2km as it passes through quiet meadows and a succession of gates, with the crystal-clear River Dove always running to your left.



13. Just after a wide wooden gate the path forks. Ignore the footpath to the right signposted for Thorpe and instead continue straight on, keeping the River Dove to your left.

14. After a short distance the path reaches a second wide gate and enters a grassy field. Keep straight on walking to the side of the river, through a further gate and past a collection of pretty farm buildings. The footpath is well marked between the buildings, to the right of a black zinc barn.



15. The path continues past a further pretty barn on the left, through a wide gate and up a slight hill to reach the Limestone Way. A slight diversion to the left here takes you to Coldwall Bridge, built in 1726, from which you can

get a beautiful view along the River Dove.

16. To continue the walk, turn right on the Limestone Way and follow the track heading slightly uphill. There are wonderful views over the valley through which you walked earlier.

17. The track continues through a wide metal gate and enters the very pretty village of Thorpe. Continue into the village on the quiet road, ignoring footpaths off.



18. Where the road forks at the little post box, go straight on along Digmire Lane. Follow the road through the village until you reach a T-junction with Wintercroft Lane opposite a bus stop and a red telephone box.

19. Turn right on Wintercroft Lane and follow the road down the hill. Continue on this road as it bears left signposted towards Tissington, Mapleton and Ashbourne.

20. Very soon afterwards turn right down a narrow lane signed 'Access Only'. Follow this beautiful lane past fields and pretty farms for approx 700 metres.



21. The lane eventually reaches a T-junction with a road. Cross straight over the road and go through the wooden hand gate immediately opposite to enter a grassy field. Walk straight on to the right of fencing and through a further gate in a hedge.

22. Head slightly diagonally left and downhill across the field to reach a gate that joins the Tissington Trail. Turn right on the Trail and follow this peaceful, tree-lined track for approx 2km.



23. Upon reaching the bridge at which you joined the Tissington Trail at point 2, retrace your steps and take the path on the left down to the gate and on to Spend Lane.

24. Turn left on Spend Lane and walk along the road to return to Sandybrook Lodges ahead of you. Take care crossing the road to walk back into the park.

Along the way...

The Tissington Trail

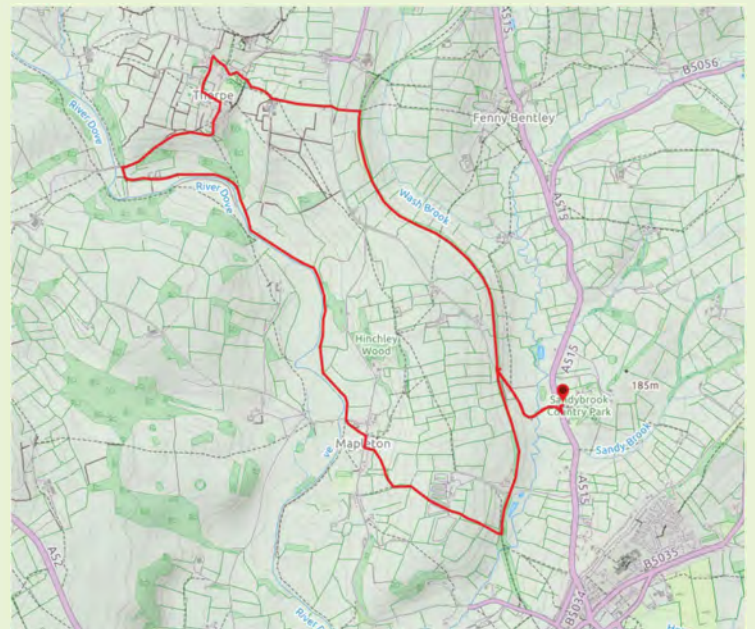
The Tissington Trail is a traffic-free trail that runs for 13 miles from Parsley Hay in the north to Ashbourne in the south. It follows the route of the former railway line between Buxton and Ashbourne, opened in 1899, operated by the London and North Western Railway. It was closed in the 1960s and the land was purchased by the Peak District National Park in 1971 to transform it into a trail for walkers, riders and cyclists.

The River Dove

The crystal-clear River Dove runs for 8 miles from Hartington to Ilam. Its pretty name has nothing to do with birds but comes from the pre-Saxon word 'Dub', meaning black, referring to the river's dark course through the valley. For most of its course it has one bank in Derbyshire and one in Staffordshire, forming the border between the two counties.

Thorpe

The pretty village of Thorpe is the gateway to the very popular beauty spot of Dovedale, one of the most visited natural sites in Britain. It has a beautiful collection of stone cottages on quiet lanes, surrounded by the most stunning countryside. The Norman church of St Leonard's is well worth pausing to admire; the churchyard contains a sundial that's only visible to those on horseback.



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