

Fenny Bentley & Bank Top (7.3 miles)

At A Glance

- Distance: 7.3 miles
- Time: 2-3 hours
- Grade: Moderate ●●●●○
- Terrain: Trails, field paths and country lanes
- Accessibility: Uneven ground, steps, stiles and gates
- Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 259

This beautiful walk takes you on peaceful trails to the little village of Fenny Bentley, and then follows field paths to the area around Bank Top and Offcote, offering stunning views of the Derbyshire countryside. It returns on country lanes and field paths back to the park via an Ice Cream Farm and a choice of pubs!

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 sections with no pavement, but it is usually quiet.



2. After approx 500 metres look out for a bridge over the road. Immediately before the bridge go through a wooden gate on the right and take the path that twists up a set of steps and joins the Tissington Trail. Turn right on the trail

and walk along this peaceful former railway track for approx 1.2 miles (2 km).

3. Soon after a brick bridge over the trail, look out for a crossroads of paths. Take the path on the right, signposted to Fenny Bentley. Go through a small wooden gate leading into a field and follow the path downhill towards the tree line.

4. At the bottom of the field you will find a narrow bridge across a small stream. Cross the bridge and walk slightly diagonally right across the field ahead, heading uphill toward a prominent ash tree on the horizon.

5. On reaching the top of the field, go through a gate to the right of the tree, and walk straight on across the next field, keeping to the left of a hedge. At the edge of the field, go through a double gate and continue straight on.



6. The path eventually meets up with a hedge on the left, which runs down towards a narrow gate. Go through the gate and follow the short path to a further gate which emerges onto Ashes Lane in Fenny Bentley.

7. Turn left on Ashes Lane and walk into the small village. After approx 100 metres take the public footpath on the right just before the postbox. Follow this narrow path downhill, going straight on at a crossroads of paths and passing the village primary school on your right. On reaching a gate that leads on to the A515, go through and cross the road with care, turning right and heading towards the Coach & Horses pub.

8. Walk on the pavement alongside the A515 for approx 300 metres. Take extra care when crossing a bridge because the pavement is narrow. Turn left on a public footpath immediately after the bridge.

9. Follow this path through a short stretch of woodland and through a gate out into a field. Walk up the hill ahead of you, heading slightly diagonally right towards a further gate in the top right corner of the field. Don't forget to admire the views behind you! Go through the gate and then a metal kissing gate to emerge into the car park of the Bentley Brook Inn.



10. Turn left and walk out of the car park. Cross the quiet road ahead of you and take the driveway to Bank Top Farm immediately opposite. There are fantastic views over the surrounding landscape from here.

11. Where the driveway curves to the right and goes to the farm, take the path straight on through a narrow wooden gate beside a wide metal gate. Follow this path straight on for approx 1 km through a succession of fields, always with a hedge to your right and lovely countryside views to your left.

12. Upon reaching a stile, cross over and walk slightly diagonally right across the field ahead to meet up with a hedge on your left and a wooden gate in the far corner of the field. Go through the gate to a narrow path with trees on both sides. Go straight on, ignoring a footpath off to your left.



13. Go through the gate at the end of the narrow path, cross a small field, and cross the stile straight ahead to emerge onto a driveway beside a farm. Walk straight on along this quiet driveway for approx 750 metres until you reach a road (Green Road).

14. Cross over Green Road with care and take the left driveway of the two immediately opposite you, walking with a field to your left and houses to your right.

15. After approx 250 metres, immediately after passing a stable on your right, take the footpath that goes through a wide metal gate on your right. Walk across the field to a further gate and join a narrow fenced path to a third gate that emerges into a wide field. Turn right as you enter the field and walk along the field edge with the hedge on your right hand side.



16. After approx 300 metres go through a double wooden gate in the hedge to enter a second field and, again, walk along the field edge with the hedge on your right hand side. Go through a further wooden gate in the hedge to enter a third field, this time walking slightly diagonally left across the field towards a wide metal gate.

17. Go through the metal gate into a narrow strip field with a fence to your right and a hedge to your left. Go through a further wide metal gate and then roughly straight on through a succession of fields until you reach a final wide metal gate and emerge beside a house on your left. Walk straight on to reach a quiet lane (Ashbourne Green).



18. Turn right on Ashbourne Green and follow this pretty lane for just over 1 km. There are no pavements but there is little traffic. The views towards Ashbourne and over the surrounding countryside are wonderful.

19. The lane leads down to a bridge over a stream and then rises on a gentle hill. As you reach the brow of the hill, look out for a clear crossroads of footpaths. Take the footpath on the right, immediately before Offcote House Farm. Go through the gate and walk straight on through the field, keeping the hedge on your left.

20. At the end of the field, go through a gate and follow the path that leads around a barn. Ignore the first metal gate on your right as you pass the barn. As you draw level with the farmyard on your left, go through a small metal gate on your right and walk diagonally left across the field ahead towards a gate in the far corner of the field.

21. Go through the gate and walk straight on with the hedge on your right. Continue walking straight on for approx 600 metres through a succession of fields, until you reach a small stile that leads into woodland.

22. Follow the path through the wood, crossing a small footbridge on the way, to emerge at a road (Green Road). Cross the road with care and take the quiet lane (Windmill Lane) immediately opposite. There is no pavement here but there is minimal traffic



23. After approx 500 metres, take the prominently-signed driveway on your right that leads to Coldeaton Jersey Dairy. This is a lovely place to break your walk if you need a rest. The small shop on your left at the bottom of the drive is a self-serve cafe with an honesty system, selling delicious Jersey ice cream, drinks, biscuits and cakes.

24. To continue the walk, cross the stile just beyond the car park, following the footpath signs. Walk through the field to the right of the farmhouse and straight on into the next field via another stile. Follow the path straight on, keeping the hedge on your right.

25. At the bottom of the field cross a small stream by way of a little plank footbridge, and then bear left to emerge through trees into another field. Bear slightly diagonally right as you cross this field to find a stile within the hedge (it's quite well hidden so keep your eyes peeled!).



26. Cross the stile and then turn left to walk down to the bottom corner of the next field. Go through a wooden squeeze stile and then follow a clear path straight on across the next two fields, crossing a further stile en route.

27. Go through a wide metal gate to enter a final field. Walk straight on across this field, to cross a stream via a narrow footbridge and then onwards over a ladder stile to meet the road (A515). Turn right on the road and walk with care along the pavement, to find the park on your right after approx 250 metres.

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.

Fenny Bentley

The little village of Fenny Bentley was recorded as a settlement in the Domesday book of 1086. The pretty church of St Edmund's dates back to 1240 and is well worth exploring. It contains a curious monument to village resident Sir Thomas Beresford (d. 1473) and his 21 children, in which all the figures are depicted with shrouds over their heads.

Offcote and Underwood

The area from point 14 of the walk is known as Offcote and Underwood, a civil parish within the Derbyshire Dales. This rural area has an ancient history; Offcote was mentioned in the Domesday book and Underwood is the site of a deserted Medieval village. The area is made up of mostly farm and pasture land, but in the past it was known for its clay mining.

