

A two mile walk around Lydford



Lydford is an ancient Anglo Saxon settlement which had its own mint. It was fortified against invading Danes in the late 9th Century and you will walk down some paths that date from this time. You will pass by the Castle which never was, cross over the river Lyd twice and go under a disused viaduct. Without stopping it should only take you about an hour to get around. The walk starts at the Castle Inn so park where you like either on the street, behind the pub or in the car park.



Start the walk by walking out of the village and as you pass the church on your right cross over to the pavement on the other side of the road.

At the bottom of the hill you will walk over a bridge. Have a look over the side walls and you will see below the river Lyd in a narrow gorge. *A little further on is the National Trust Lydford Gorge Devils Couldron entrance which is well worth visiting.*

Keep going to reach an old railway bridge.



Walk under the old railway bridge admiring the brickwork as you go. Keep on the left side and then turn left to walk up the lane.



Keep right at the fork



Then a bit further turn left at an easy to miss footpath finger post.



**Walk on down to the river on
this picturesque sunken path**



**Follow the Lich way to Lydford
by going over the bridge.**



**Go past a couple of cottages and
then under Lydford viaduct.**



When you reach a crossroads of tracks go straight on.



Go straight across at the next cross roads and walk up the road signposted to Coryton for about 400m.



Turn left and follow the track around a bend and past a house.



**Just before you reach the
next property turn right.**



**Go past the ancient spring and
keep the hedge on your right and
ignore all left turns**



**When you reach the castle turn left
and walk out to the road passing
the Castle Inn on your left.**

A Medieval Prison and Courthouse

Despite its name, Lydford Castle was never a true castle. It was built as a prison and courthouse, and was always used for this purpose.

The ground floor of this building was probably part of an earlier tower built in 1195 to detain prisoners. Richard, earl of Cornwall, was granted the manor of Lydford and town of Devonport by his brother, King Henry II, in 1220. He added two towers to the tower and heaped earth around it, giving the impression it stood on a natural or mound. A dungeon was created by partially filling the former ground floor with rubble.

Courts were held in the tower to oversee the laws of the royal forest of Dartmoor and those of the Stannaries, the tin-mining areas of Devon. Tin mining was an important industry in medieval times, and its regulations, taxes and rights were closely controlled by the Crown.

The tower continued to serve as a prison and courthouse until the early 15th century, when the courts moved to Princetown, the new capital of Dartmoor.



Lydford Castle earned a reputation for rough justice, as described in a poem from 1460:

I oft have heard of Lydford law
How in the morn they lang and draw
And sit in judgement after

The prison and courthouse as they may have appeared in about 1370. The prison, dungeon was described in 1515 by Richard Strode, an imprisoned MP, as 'one of the most unwholesome, contagious and detestable places within this realm' (Barnard, 1990: 100).

Walls damage to the monument is an offence.
Unauthorized use of metal detectors is prohibited.

Two sides of a seal depicting Richard, earl of Cornwall (1209-72), who rebuilt the tower in the 13th century. He was the richest man in England and even lent money to his brother, King Henry III.

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But before you do have a walk
around the castle that never was.