

Duff House to Bridge of Alvah (approx 5 miles)

Terrain: Relatively flat with some short climbs, the route is on woodland paths but can be muddy in sections

There's more to The Banffshire Coast than seascapes and clifftop trails, so why not head to the countryside and discover some of our hidden inland gems? Don't forget to take your binoculars as our woodland walks offer up the opportunity to spot a huge number of birds from gold crest to kingfisher.

This walk is a circular route which starts out from the impressive Duff House mansion and which skirts around the River Deveron towards Bridge of Alvah and back towards the coast.



1.

Duff House is a stunning Georgian mansion once lived in by one of the area's most powerful families. Dating back to the 1700s, the property now houses a collection of fine artworks owned by the National Galleries of Scotland.

2.

But today we are going to find out more about the land surrounding this great house by walking past the rugby pitch and over to the woodland walks. Take the path which is signed towards the ice house and mausoleum and where the salty sea air gives way to the smell of bark and moss.

3.

Follow the path, taking time to stop off at both buildings to get a sense of just how vast the grounds of the mansion were. As you walk further into the woods, keep an ear out for bird song – the great tit, gold crest, chaffinch, and bull finches are among the species you may find fluttering about overhead in the conifers and birch trees.

4.

As you emerge from the woods the path – which is often quite muddy in places – you will join a farm track and start climbing up the hill. You will still be able to snatch a glimpse of the river, but it's when the track descends that you will get really close to the water. You will come across the stunning sight of the Bridge of Alvah – a magnificent bridge spanning across a wooded gorge. You may be so taken by its beauty that you would be forgiven for forgetting to look out for kingfisher which regular frequent the riverbank.

5.

Cross over the bridge and start to climb up to the Montcoffer Woods. Again, the path can be muddy so take care. Look skywards for the chance to spot buzzard as it soars high above the fields, looking for prey, and on the hedges see if you can spot corn bunting. You will pass Montcoffer House on the right and what remains of a very old doocot – a North-east phrase for dovecot – at the side of the path.

6.

After you have passed a farm on your left, you will come to a cluster of houses. The tarmac road sweeps around to the left and immediately afterwards you should make another left turn and follow the route between two houses. You will then go straight ahead and join a grassy path which will take you back towards the coast.

7.

As you make your way back down to sea level you will pass through an area of woodland and eventually come to a section known locally as the Gaveney Road. This section becomes tarmac and offers a truly stunning panorama of the twin towns of Banff and Macduff.

In the distance you should be able to see the distinctive yellow façade of Banff Castle overlooking Banff Bay, while on the right you will see the Temple of Venus – a monument built above Macduff by the Earls of Fife in the 1700s.



8.

On the way back down the road you will pass through Macduff Distillery and have the River Deveron on your left hand side. As you join the main road, please take care and watch out for traffic.

When you reach the bridge, turn left and follow the road back up to Duff House and your starting place.