

Grosmont



Daisies masquerade as snowfall in fields near Grosmont

This route provides a sample of some of the toughest but also most scenic hiking on the Three Castles Walk. The outward leg, across Graig Syfyrddin, is particularly tough, with the hard work rewarded by excellent views of the Black Mountains. On the return leg, views open out in the opposite direction, along the rolling hills of the Monnow Valley. Towards the end of the walk, there are excellent views across the valley to Grosmont.

Fact file

Distance: 5.9 miles / 9.5 km

Height gain: 458 metres

Start/finish: Small lay-by in front of the Angel Inn in Grosmont (SO 404 243). There is limited on-street parking available elsewhere in the village.

Map: [OS Explorer 189 Hereford & Ross-on-Wye](#)

Viewranger: Click [here](#) for an interactive map.

Refreshments/facilities: Food and drink are available during opening hours from the [Angel Inn](#) in Grosmont.

Grosmont Castle



The footbridge across the moat

[Grosmont Castle](#) is the northernmost of a trilateral of Norman fortresses, the other two being [Skenfrith](#) and [White Castle](#). All three owe their origin to William FitzOsbern's eleventh-century campaign to destroy the Welsh kingdom of Gwent. After William's death in 1071, his followers pushed up the Monnow Valley from Monmouth, building motte-and-bailey castles at Skenfrith and Grosmont, and also one in the hills to the west (later known as White Castle). However, these earth and timber structures were not rebuilt in stone until the thirteenth century, when ownership of the three castles passed to a powerful Marcher lord called Hubert de Burgh. Starting with the rectangular hall block, de Burgh rebuilt Grosmont Castle in its entirety, creating by 1232 the essential characteristics of the castle that can be seen today (later improvements included the addition of a chamber block and a gatehouse extension to incorporate the drawbridge).



The interior of Grosmont Castle

In 1404, the castle was attacked twice by Owain Glyndŵr, and then besieged (unsuccessfully) by Owain's son, Gruffudd, the following year. With Glyndŵr's defeat, the castle lost its importance and was subsequently abandoned. Later bought by the Somerset family, the castle is now state-owned and under the management of Cadw.

The walk

1. Walk down the hill from the Angel Inn and turn left on to the signed public footpath to the castle. After viewing the castle, return to the road and turn left. Almost immediately, turn right down a dead-end lane between a large white house and the church. Shortly, keep ahead past Little Rectory on to a narrow sunken lane heading steeply downhill.

2. At the bottom of the hill, cross a footbridge over Tresenny Brook and keep ahead on to a tarmac lane. Climb steeply to Barns Farm and continue ahead on to an obvious vehicle track. Where the track appears to divide, take the left-hand fork, which continues to climb and passes round a right-hand bend. At an apparent fork soon after, keep to the narrower, right-hand track alongside a fence.

3. As the track levels off, ignore a sign for the Three Castles Walk, which bears off to the right, and keep ahead through a gate on to a rough lane. Follow the lane to a metal barn on the right and turn sharply left down a tarmac access drive to a house. In front of the house, bear right on to a grassy track towards a field gate (this is a permitted route currently unmarked on OS maps).

4. Once through the gateway, turn left and follow the edge of two fields down into a valley. As the fence in the second field turns to the left, bear slightly right towards a line of trees and a stile in the bottom hedge. Cross into woodland and follow a path to the right.

5. On reaching a lane, turn left and descend to a stream (Black Brook). Climb steeply past Brook House, the road then levelling off. About 100 metres after a house on the left, rejoin the Three Castles Walk and turn sharply left over a stile.



An old ambulance lies abandoned in a field near Grosmont

6. Climb along a grassy track, curving right and then left. The track peters out, but continue on a faint path heading straight up the hill. Cross a stile at the top of the field and bear right through trees towards a fence. Bear left here, to continue with the fence on your right.

7. Past the next stile and gate, keep ahead with the fence now to your left. Stay ahead in the next field, picking up the fence again a bit further along. In the field after this, join a rough track to the left of a barn.

8. At a waymark post just beyond the barn, turn sharply right on to a rough track heading diagonally up the hill. Shortly, turn left at a second waymark post on to a fainter, grassy track running on a level. This passes the foundations of an old ruin and enters a field. Bear slightly right when crossing the field to reach a fence on the far side. Follow the fence up the hill to a stile and gate at the top.

9. Cross the stile and follow the fence to the left. Do not cross the fence ahead, but turn right, handrailing it across the field to a stile into woodland. Descend diagonally left across steeply wooded slopes above the Monnow Valley. At the bottom edge of the woods, a short section of sunken path leads to a bench overlooking Grosmont.

10. From the bench, follow the obvious waymarked path downhill through four fields to reach a stile to the left of a bungalow. Drop to a waymark post below trees and turn left. Emerge in a field and keep ahead along the right-hand boundary. Do not continue into the bottom corner of the field, but follow the worn path past a tree on the left to a waymark post. Enter woodland and drop to a footbridge across a ditch.

11. Re-enter fields and follow the right-hand boundary towards Grosmont. Cross a stile and continue with the fence on your left. After the next stile, keep ahead down the field to a stile and gate leading on to the B4347.

12. Turn left along the road, shortly passing Lower Tresenny. Turn left on to a lane between the farm and metal barns and continue as far as a sharp left-hand bend. Turn right here, crossing a footbridge over Tresenny Brook, and retrace your outward route back up the sunken lane to Grosmont.

Walk highlights

Three Castles Walk



Looking down on Grosmont

The Three Castles Walk is a waymarked circular trail linking the three Norman fortresses of Skenfrith, Grosmont and White Castle. Passing through quiet, remote countryside, the 20-mile / 32-km trail offers excellent views and a challenging, undulating route.

Grosmont



St Nicholas Church, Grosmont

In medieval times, the sleepy border village of Grosmont was an important township and one of the three largest settlements in South Wales (the other two were Abergavenny and Carmarthen). The town's former importance is reflected in its substantial parish church, which resembles a cathedral in miniature.