

EAST TARBET TO PORTANKIL

Circular coastal and countryside walk

4km/2½ miles

Allow 2 hours

Grass path, grass track and minor road.
Stiles and gates.

Moderate to strenuous

Stout shoes or boots recommended

PARKING Head for the Mull of Galloway, passing the Mull of Galloway farm. Just after you cross a cattle grid, look out for a road down to your left, leading to a parking area in East Tarbet bay. The road is rough and uneven in places. During winter, when animals are being grazed in the bay, carefully park at the side of the road.

START From the bay follow the signposts and waymarkers along the clifftop then head inland to meet the road. Turn left and walk back along the narrow road to East Tarbet.

The east side of the Mull is very different from its west coast. Steep, grassy slopes end in vertical layers of greywacke, a type of sandstone pushed upwards from the seabed 400-500 million years ago. There are fabulous views to the Mull of Galloway lighthouse at the very tip of the Rhins and north to Maryport and Cailiness Point. On a clear day you can see Scare Rocks in Luce Bay, home to hundreds of pairs of nesting gannets. These large sea birds often hunt along the coastline, diving steeply to spear unwary fish.

Heading inland, follow Kirk Burn upstream and soon you pass Kirkmaiden Church. All that remains of this early church is its foundations, now covered in grass. It was replaced in the 17th century by the church which stands today in Kirkmaiden village.

The narrow road to the Mull leads you back to East Tarbet Bay. In the past, paraffin and other supplies for the lighthouse keepers were brought by boat and stored in the small, stone building here.



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