

Coln St Aldwyns to Bibury Walk – and return

Distance: 6 miles. Easy stroll through rolling countryside with three short inclines.

A pleasant circular walk that can be done in either direction as both Bibury and Coln St Aldwyns have good places to eat, though if starting from Bibury an early start is advised due to the shortage of parking spaces. The direction given below are starting in Coln St Aldwyns and parking is available near the cross roads with its Post Office/cafe and store, but limited parking is also available on the roadside close to the bridge over the River Coln.

1. From the centre of Coln head down the hill past the New Inn on the Quenington Rd, around a sharp R bend at the bottom and along a straight stretch of road to a small road bridge over the River Coln. Cross the bridge and take the footpath on the immediate R, by a small cottage. Go through two gates and the path then forks, with the right hand path heading towards the river – this will be the return route- so branch off L and head gently uphill, following the visible path through a few trees, keeping a wall on your left (note - sheep may be in the field). Where the wall ends a field begins, go directly ahead with farm buildings visible in the distance – through gate with sign to Palladian Way. Aim for these buildings, then take the path across a smaller field towards another cottage by the road. Go through the gate which gives access to Akeman Street - Roman road.
2. Turn R on road and walk for approx. 100yds to the first signed footpath on the R. Following a well marked track downhill (through gate), the path then cuts across a field (through another gate) before heading uphill and around the right hand side of a field – this can be a little overgrown but easily passable. When you meet the obvious crossroads of tracks, turn R until you reach another set of paths crossing. Follow the path (straight on) downhill and at the next junction of paths, after a stone wall, bear R until you emerge into the village of Bibury at the top end of the famous Arlington Row.
3. Cross the footbridge at the bottom of Arlington Row and you can turn either L to head into the village (with the river on your L) with its Fish Farm, Mill and Museum; the Swan Inn and, further up the hill going out of the village on the Cirencester Road, the Catherine Wheel pub. Or you can turn R, at the bottom of Arlington Row, continuing straight on where the main road bends L and up the hill, and go past the Village Hall on your L, followed by the Church and Primary School on your R. Directly ahead you will see a red telephone box, head for this following the road round until you re-join the main road for a few yards at the road junction, follow take the R fork, signposted the 'New Inn at Coln'. After a few paces you need to turn R again down a paved track marked 'Private Road'. As you walk down look right for a magnificent view of Bibury Court. Continue over the bridge and follow the road round and up past the Mill, until you reach a gate.
4. Carry straight on and upwards into woods and branch L. The track becomes a well defined path that dips downwards and through woodland. Finally you meet the River Coln and follow its course through meadows and eventually bear R directly towards more woodland. This section through the woods can be the muddiest part of the walk. When you emerge into the open fields again you will find that you are approaching the point where you initially branched L to head uphill. You now walk straight ahead past the cottage, now on your R, until you meet the road, turning L and retracing your steps across the bridge and back to Coln St Aldwyns.