

22 MONMOUTHSHIRE YSGYRD FAWR

▶ Distance: 3¼ miles/6km ▶ Time: 2½ hours ▶ Grade: Easy

SEE
FEATURE
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Sugar Loaf from
Ysgyrd Fawr.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY... PHILIP THOMAS

The maverick mini mountain forming the eastern edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park, Ysgyrd Fawr exudes character from every angle. And besides looking good from afar, the extensive views from this beguilingly cleaved outlier put loftier hills to shame. On a clear day, you'll see the Sugar Loaf and Pen y Fan out west. To the east, you can pry across the Rivers Wye and Severn, deep into England. The hill is fondly known by locals as the 'Skirrid' – the anglicised form of a Welsh word meaning 'shattered' or 'split'. Steeped in mythology, many believed it was a holy

mountain. A legend tells how its fractured west side broke away at the exact moment Jesus was crucified. A more convincing explanation says Ysgyrd Fawr's distinctive appearance resulted from an ice age landslip. Millennia later, an Iron Age tribe fashioned the summit into a hillfort. In turn, a medieval chapel stood at the summit. Sure to please hill-happy families, this short but sweet ascent twists up the leafy south flank to emerge on the open, grassy summit ridge. Backtracking from the top to descend an easier path across the east slope, the return path swings through the sun-dappled woods on the west side, sopping with bluebells in spring.

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking National Trust P&D car park off B4521 Old Ross Road from Abergavenny, NP7 8AP, grid ref SO328163

Is it for me? Mostly well-signed, dirt/stony woodland and hill paths, rougher later on. Mostly easy gradients
Stiles None

PLANNING

Nearest town Abergavenny

Refreshments The Copper Kettle tea room, near start (open 9-5, except Weds; 01873 851929); The Walnut Tree (for fine dining) in Llandewi Skirrid (01873 852797)

Public toilets None

Public transport None

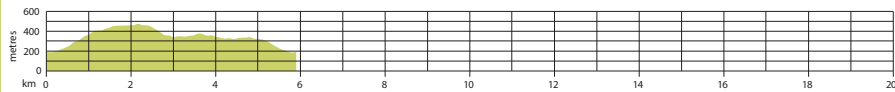
Maps OS Explorer OL13; Landranger 161

1 Start

At the west end of the car park (by the map board)



GRADIENT PROFILE



22 MONMOUTHSHIRE
YSGYRYD FAWR▶ OS Explorer map OL13 ▶ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

and picnic benches), take the path through a gap in the hedge and turn R up a track into Caer Wood. Go through a gate into the woods (past a bench) and ahead fork R uphill, as signed by a yellow arrow (the route is also waymarked 'Beacons Way'). Cross a track further on and follow arrow uphill. Cross another track further up to go through a stone wall/wooden gate.

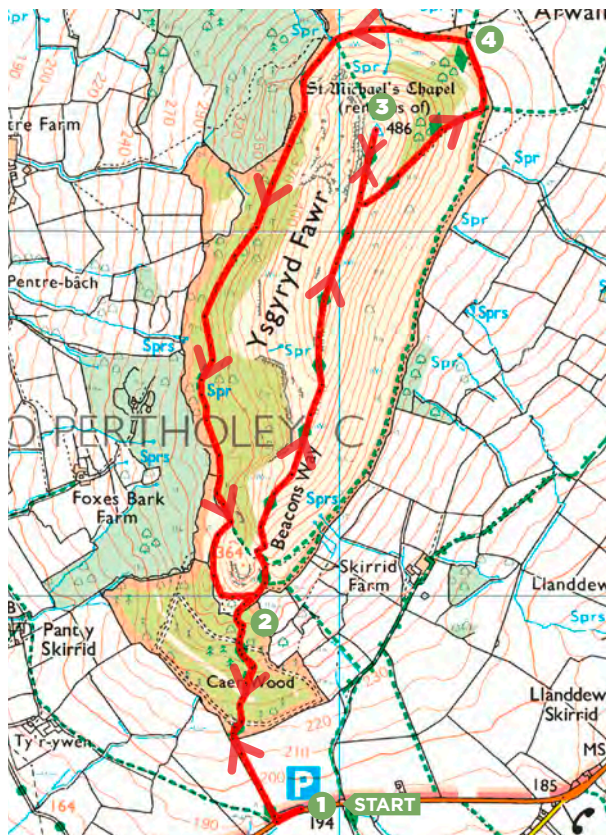
2½ mile/0.8km

Turn R away from boardwalk and fork L at the yellow arrow up steps. Continue up a stone path, twisting R to emerge from the trees. Follow the path north along the ridge to the summit trig point at the north end. The low, rectangular stony banks you pass through at the top are the remains St Michael's Chapel. Used by Catholics after the Reformation, the last recorded service took place in 1680. The chapel stood inside the earthworks of an Iron Age hillfort.

3½ miles/2.4km

Retrace your steps south from the summit for about 200m. Ignore first path L, but take the second path L/northeast downhill. Swing R at signpost, then fork L down to next signpost/junction (before a stile). Turn L/north on the path around the lower north slopes of Ysgyryd Fawr.

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**4.2 miles/3.2km**

Keep L where you see a signpost/gate for a diverging path. Stay on the path curving west around the hillside and south up through a rocky cleft, weaving into the woodland that cloaks the west slopes of Ysgyryd Fawr. Eventually, the path picks up a wall into a slight clearing and turns east to cross a short stretch of boardwalk, bringing you

back to the wooden gate at point 2. Turn R and retrace your earlier steps back down to the start. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Ordnance Survey

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING