

Leytonstone to Loughton walk

Epping Forest



Length 12.8km (8.0m)

Maps Explorer 174. Epping Forest and Lea Valley

Landranger 177 East London, Billericay and Gravesend

Toughness 1/10 mainly flat; some very gentle. short slopes. Overall there is 224m of ascent and 168m of descent.

Most of the walk – 8.2 km is done before lunch

For the long Leytonstone to Epping walk option the toughness is 3/10 (see below)

Features This short walk covers the southern part of Epping Forest, starting in London's East End and heading generally NNE to Loughton in Essex. You are never too far from busy roads which you have to cross but it makes an excellent outing through open woodland and more densely forested areas. The entire walk takes place within London Underground travel zones on the Central underground line so you have no worries about trains back.

This walk can be linked with [SWC 197 Loughton to Epping walk](#) making a long Epping Forest walk of 23km (14.4 miles) – and again all within Zone 6.

As this is a short walk it may mainly be done in winter but a word of warning; the soils in Epping Forest drain poorly and there are sections before lunch where it will be muddy and possibly waterlogged after rain. You can avoid most of these by taking little side tracks off the main route which have been made by locals but a map or GPS and a compass are very helpful here.

Perhaps the best time to do the walk is April/May when the growing vegetation can suck up any water making the tracks less muddy and October/November when the leaf colour should be at its autumn best.

Most but not all of the morning route follows the Centenary path (see below) and although this is marked by white topped footpath posts some of these can be easy to miss if you are not familiar with the area. Also the open woodland areas are often criss-crossed by many smaller paths so you need to concentrate to ensure you keep to the main route. For the longer morning section I have broken up the walk directions into sections of the path between the roads you have to cross which will hopefully help navigation.

Notes

Leytonstone

The area is part of East London and is in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The busy main road, Leytonstone High Road is an ancient pathway dating to pre-Roman times and the remains of roman buildings have been found in the area. It has long been an important route from London to Epping Forest.

The High Stone at the junction of Hollybush Hill and New Wanstead, near the eastern boundary of the parish at the junction of the roads from Woodford and Woodford Bridge, is a restored 18th-century obelisk set up on an earlier stump which has been traditionally described as a Roman milestone.

Leytonstone was the centre of protests against the construction of the M11 link road in the early 1990s.

Leytonstone is at the end of Zone 3/start of Zone 4 on the Central underground line. Nearby Leytonstone High Road is an overground station on the Barking to Gospel Oak line.

Epping Forest

This ancient woodland, straddling the border of NE London and Essex covers 2,476 hectares and most of it is an area of special scientific interest.

You can find out more about the forest on the walks page for [SWC walk 197 Loughton to Epping](#). It also has a detailed entry on Wikipedia.

Centenary Path Epping Forest

This 24km (15 mile) walk starts at Manor Park library near the railway station and continues all the way to Epping. The path, instituted in 1978 celebrates the passing of the 1878 Epping Forest Act whereby the forest was declared a public open space. On a visit to Chingford in 1882 Queen Victoria declared it the “Peoples Forest”.

Every September the path is walked by the Friends of Epping Forest. The walk is open to everyone and you can find details of the Friends of Epping Forest and their walks programme on their website [here](#).

There are maps showing the full route [here](#) . The route is marked by white topped wooden footpath posts but these can sometimes be hard to spot and a compass is very useful

Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge

This unique surviving timber-framed hunting lodge was built on the orders of Henry VIII in 1543. Further details about the lodge and its opening times can be found [here](#). It is right by the lunch-time pub or café options and so you could combine a visit with your lunch.

Loughton

A town in the Epping Forest district of Essex. Its underground station is in Zone 6. It has an extensive Wikipedia entry which can be found [here](#)

Walk options

Shortening the walk

You can shorten the walk when you reach the **Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge** by going to **Chingford railway station** just 10 mins walk away.

This makes a walk of 9.3km (5.8m). Details are at the end of the walk directions.

Lengthening the walk

You could choose to do the **Centenary path** – see above- or you could combine most of this walk with most of **SWC 197 Loughton to Epping**. This makes a long walk of around 23km (14.4m). Further details are at the end of this walk’s directions.

Transport

Both stations on this walk are on the Central Line Underground. Leytonstone is in zone 3 /4 and Loughton is in Zone 6.

For the shorter walk Chingford station is in Zone 4 and has a regular train service to London Liverpool Street

Suggested trains

It takes about 30 mins to travel from Central London to Leytonstone on the Central Line. In winter you should aim to be at Leytonstone tube station between 10.30 and 10.45. You should reach your lunch-time pub or café in around 2 to 2.5 hours.

A good place to assemble before setting off is not in the small and potentially crowded underground ticket hall but just outside the station at **Le Parisien café** where you can pick up refreshments.

Lunch

When you reach the Queen Elizabeth hunting lodge you have two lunch-time options.

(1) **Brewers Fayre Pub**, the Royal Forest, 4 Rangers Road, Chingford E4 7QH. Tel 020 8523 7246. Essentially basic pub grub for under £10. Open throughout the day at weekends.

(2) **Butlers retreat** 12 Rangers Road, Chingford E4 7QH. Tel 020 7998 7858. Originally a 19th century barn it is now an up-market café, refurbished in 2012. It serves a hot food menu until 4pm at weekends and after that there is a “sharing” menu. It also serves cakes, hot and cold drinks and wine. (For a main hot meal I can recommend the vegetable tagine which is also suitable for vegans.) There is extensive outdoor seating for when the weather is fine.


Tea

In Loughton High Road, off the direct route to the station, there are a number of cafes and pubs – walk see directions. These include Café Latte 243 High Road, Café Spice 274 High Road and Costa Coffee 230 High Road.

On the way to Loughton Underground station you pass a Sainsburys superstore where you can get refreshments. At the station there is a small café but it is not open on Sundays.

If you do not mind breaking your tube journey back to London, at Leytonstone there is **the Olive restaurant** which does delicious eastern Mediterranean food at very reasonable prices. It is just 40 metres from the underground station and you pass it as you start the walk . Open until 11pm (10.30pm on Sundays) it is , imho, one of the best places to eat in Leytonstone.

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the  [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to](#)  [Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** E11 1HE **Finish** G10 4PD

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

Walk Directions- pre-lunch

Sections 1-10 cover the route up to the lunch-time pub or café options. This is 8.2km (5.1m) and is almost 2/3 of the total walk.

wtfp = white-topped footpath post, which waymarks the Centenary path

1. **Leytonstone Underground to the Centenary Path**

2. Turn left up the slope after leaving Leytonstone underground ticket hall. Walk past Le Parisien café and continue on past the bus station to your left along Kirkdale Road. Church Lane and the Olive restaurant are to your right.
3. Kirkdale Road soon turns sharply to the right but you continue ahead up Lemna Road passing a jobcentre plus on your right.
4. You soon reach a T junction with Gainsborough Road with a huge Tesco superstore ahead of you. Cross Gainsborough Road using the pedestrian crossing to your left and turn left along the pavement.

5. As Gainsborough Road turns sharply left downhill you continue ahead across a bridge over the very busy A12. (Just before you reach the bridge if you look to your left and the visibility is good you can see all of London's modern iconic buildings lined up on the horizon.) After crossing the bridge take the steps to your right and ignoring Colworth Road away to your left continue ahead down Poppleton Road which in 60m turns sharply left.
6. 50m after the sharp turn left you turn right into Ashbridge Road. In 100m turn right into Teesdale Road and at the end of this cul de sac bear left past concrete bollards to continue along a tarmac path. The path soon bears left to meet Chadwick Road. Continue on this road for 50m and then turn right past some bollards and cross the busy Whipps Cross road via the pedestrian crossing.
7. Turn right on the other side of the road to go along a cycle path. In 15m the path turns left and in a further 30 metres you see a car-blocking barrier to your left and a gap between two wooden posts and a sign saying no barbecues and fires. Go through the gap. Just ahead of you is a **white-topped footpath post (wtfp)**. This marks the Centenary path which you will mainly follow all the way to lunch.
8. **2. Centenary path to Snaresbrook Road**
9. Start on the path on a bearing of 340 degrees – essentially North. This is the general direction you need to follow all the way to Snaresbrook Road. After passing two pairs of posts just away to your right you bear right towards a **wtfp** and you continue on this path heading for a wide gap between trees and gorse. You will see some houses ahead of you above the line of gorse.
10. Swing left with the path soon passing another **wtfp**. Cross a short but potentially very muddy and boggy area within a grove of trees and bushes (you may have to find a way around this) and then bear right to pass a further **wtfp** and continue on the broad grassy path ahead of you in an open grassy area.
11. 100m after you have passed the post bear left on a path your direction 330 degrees. You soon reach a wide grassy path where you bear right to head for a narrow gap between gorse bushes.
12. Go through the gap and continue ahead on a bearing of 340 degrees. You continue past two **wtfps**. After passing the 2nd post you can see (and hear!) Snaresbrook Road about 130m ahead of you.
13. You pass another **wtfp** and an Epping Forest and Leyton Flats notice board and continue ahead through a small car-park to the road.
14. **3. Snaresbrook Road to Woodford New Road (A1404)**
15. Cross the road with care passing a car-barrier to your left and a **wtfp** to your right. In 40m you pass a further **wtfp**. You are in a wooded area on a wide earth path and soon pass houses and flats to your left. You pass a **wtfp** and a street lamp where you ignore a narrow path to your left to continue ahead on the wide earth path.

- L6. In 100m you reach a cross paths and a **wtfp** to your right and you continue ahead towards a **wtfp** 140 ahead of you. ! At the **wtfp ignore** the clear track ahead of you and bear left to cross a ditch your direction 320 degrees. Your sometimes indistinct path now follows the line of trees and shrubs just a few metres to your left. There is open grass land to your right.
- L7. **!! Attention here.** In 130m the open ground area narrows and the path enters dense woodland. In 10m you **ignore** the narrow path to your left and you continue on the wide grassy track into the wood.! In 50m as the main path veers gently to the right you take a narrow path to your left (300 degrees).
- L8. In 70m you cross a wide low bridge over a ditch and continue ahead. Traffic noise will now be clearly audible ahead and away to your right. In 30m you reach a small grassy area a **wtfp** just ahead of you to your left .Go towards the road passing a further **wtfp**.
- L9. **4. Woodford New Road (A1404) to Forest Road (A503)**
20. Before crossing this busy road you should see on the other side: a bus shelter ahead of you and a large and ugly grey building to your left which is a restaurant/bar and which has a car-blocking barrier just to its right. Cross this road with great care and head towards the barrier.
21. Go past the barrier passing an Epping Forest notice board to your right and continue on a track bearing right into the forest. In 70 you pass a **wtfp** to your right and continue ahead.
22. In 50m pass another **wtfp** and then in 10m bear right on a wide earth track heading towards another **wtfp** 40m ahead of you.
23. In 20m you enter an open area soon passing a wooden seat and a pond to your right. You are heading for a **wtfp** ahead of you. In 60 you pass the **wtfp** and the path swings to the left. You are leaving the pond to your right and you continue ahead on the wide earth track soon reaching a **wtfp** to your left.
24. **!!** At this **wtfp** leave the path you are on and take another wide earth path just 5m to your left. Continue on this path in the same direction as before. On your left 10m away is a dilapidated fence half hidden by foliage. (Beyond this fence are allotments.) ! In 70m at the end of the fence to your left the path forks and you take a narrow path to your left through some trees your direction 290 degrees.
25. Continue on this winding path through woodland; a fence should be visible to your left about 40m away through trees. In 70m you emerge from the wooded area and the path begins to rise and opposite a gate through to some allotments you turn right up a wide track into an open area with some bushes. You continue ahead on this track heading almost due North passing some reservoirs over to your right.
26. In 80m you reach a substantial bridge crossing Forest Road, the A503
27. **5. Forest Road (A503) to the North Circular (A406)**

28. Cross the bridge and continue ahead on a grassy track passing a wooden seat and **wtfp** to your left. You should see footpath posts ahead of you showing you the onward direction. There are houses away to your left.
29. Continue on this potentially muddy path in a wooded area ignoring ways off and passing further **wtfps** as you go. You soon come to a further substantial pedestrian bridge crossing the very busy North Circular Road.
30. **6. North Circular (A406) to Oak Hill.**
31. Cross the bridge and continue ahead along a wide earth track post passing in 30m a **wtfp** to your left. You continue ahead passing a further **wtfp** and with some cream coloured houses soon visible ahead of you. ! You now need to keep to the path with some brambles just to your left and a **wtfp** 50m ahead of you.
32. At the **wtfp** bear left down a wide track heading towards another **wtfp** 70m away. Continue on the wide earth track soon passing a **wtfp** to your left. Ignore a wide path to your left and continue ahead down a potentially muddy track. ! This track soon forks and you take the right hand fork your direction 345 degrees. In 50m you pass a **wtfp** just to your left and continue on the path as it swings gently to the left.
33. In 60m you pass a **wtfp** and you reach another **wtfp** in a further 30m. ! At this **wtfp** turn right on the wide earth path with substantial houses just away to your left. In 70m after going gently downhill you pass a **wtfp** and continue ahead gently uphill heading towards another **wtfp** passing a small pond just away to your right.
34. In 60m you reach a **wtfp** and a car-blocking barrier to Oak Hill.
35. **7. Oak Hill to the Charter Road.**
36. You cross Oak Hill and continue past another car-blocking barrier on the path. Continue on the path, crossing an earth path to continue down a narrow path into woodland with a block of flats away to your left. In 30m you reach a T junction with a **wtfp** just to your right and here you turn left on a narrow earth path.
37. Continue on this woodland path with houses and flats away to your left. (***Following the main path can be a little tricky here as there are a multiplicity of little paths away to your left and right. Keep on a bearing of 340 degrees and with the houses about 60m away to your left. You may care to take one of the smaller paths to your left as they could be less muddy but keep on the bearing of almost due north, 340-345 degrees.***)
38. In 200m you pass some wooden barriers and you reach a minor road – the Charter Road.
39. **8. The Charter Road to Chingford Lane (A1009)**
40. Cross the road and take the wide path ahead of you which is just to the right of a large boating lake and modern boatyard. You pass an Epping Forest sign to your right and continue on the path with the lake just away to your left.

11. You are soon passing the open space to your right called The Highams Park . You pass a wooden bench the path swinging gently to the right. You pass a footpath post just away to your right. There is an attractive open area to your right and you soon pass another footpath post to your left.
12. The path begins to swing to the left and gently descends. You continue ahead at a cross-roads heading for a **wtfp**. At this post swing right with the path through a potentially muddy area. Continue along the wide track with houses and gardens just away to your right. You pass a **wtfp** and continue past others as you go. Bear right with the path as it merges with another path to your left and you head towards a main road 70m in front of you.
13. **9. Chingford Lane (A1009) to Whitehall Road (A110)**
14. Cross the road with care and head towards a **wtfp** 10m ahead of you and continue ahead along the wide grassy path through an area known as the Lops. ! In 70m pass a partially hidden wtfp and continue ahead on the path as it swings gently to the right.
15. ! In 50m you reach a cross paths. Continue ahead for 10m and then bear left on the path ignoring a path to your right in 10m. Continue ahead on the path on a bearing of 20 degrees. (***There is a potentially very boggy area ahead of you and you may have to navigate round this on a narrow winding path to your left which eventually links up with the main path.***)
16. You will pass intermittent footpath posts showing you the way ahead. Soon after passing a **wtfp** with a wide grassy area to your right the path gently rises and you continue ahead. At the top of this gentle slope you pass another **wtfp** and you continue ahead on the wide track.
17. ! In 50m you reach a confluence of paths and you bear left heading towards a **wtfp** 40m away your direction 20 degrees. Soon the onward path should become more grassy and potentially less muddy. There are houses just away to your right.
18. Continue on the path soon reaching the busy Whitehall Road (A110)
19. **10. Whitehall Road (A110) to Rangers Road (A1069) and the lunch-time pub or café options**
20. Cross the road and continue ahead on the main path immediately passing a Beware Cattle sign. There is an open grassy area to your right – the Whitehall Plain - and bushes, trees and shrubs immediately to your left.
21. Continue on the wide grassy path through an attractive woodland area. ! You soon come to a wide grassy area away to your right with trees about 150m ahead of you and to your right and with road traffic possibly just visible also to your right. Here, you do **not** continue ahead but turn left on a wide path into a wooded area your initial direction 325 degrees.
22. In 20m you cross a wide earth bridge over a stream and continue ahead on the path. In 40m you pass a 2m high wooden post just to your left and continue ahead across a

small grassy area. In 70m the potentially muddy path enters woodland. The path soon emerges into a more open area and you continue ahead on a more gravelly and drier surface. A pond is to your right and a road just visible ahead of you.

- 53. In 70m you reach some wooden posts and a car-blocking barrier and you bear left on a very wide gravel track heading for the main road – Rangers Road. ***There will be cars using this track as it is adjacent to a parking area.***
- 54. On the other side of Rangers Road the **Queen Elizabeth Hunting Lodge** is straight ahead of you. Just away to your left is the **Brewers Fayre** lunch-time pub but the recommended lunch-time option is the white clapperboard building away to your right, the **Butlers Retreat** , a high quality and very popular café. There is a lot of outside seating at the front and rear of the café.
- 55. Cross the busy road with care. Here you can cut the walk short and head to Chingford station, 10 minutes walk away. See Section A at the end of these directions..

Walk Directions after lunch

(This part of the walk is just 4.6km (2.9m) to Loughton and the tracks will be less muddy and often with a made-up surface)

- 56. **11. Rangers Road to Epping New Road (A104)**
- 57. After lunch and a possible visit to the Hunting Lodge go to the back of the Butlers Retreat café and head towards a large and recently restored water fountain just to the right of the outdoor seating area.
- 58. ! The direction you now need to take is the wide grassy path between two footpath posts on a bearing of 20 degrees. This path goes gently downhill. In 60m you pass a **wtfp** to your left and you continue along the wide grassy path heading towards another footpath post with a green arrow showing the way ahead. Continue past this footpath post with a line of bushes either side of you.
- 59. In 100m you pass a **wtfp**. In a further 60m you reach a green footpath post and then in 10m you keep straight ahead at a cross-paths on a wide dirt track into woodland. In 40m you pass a no horse-riding sign and a narrow path to your right and you continue ahead.
- 50. In 200m you pass a two armed footpath sign for the Holly trail and Willow trail. In 15m you reach a cross-path and you continue straight ahead on a wide forest trail (the Green Ride) ignoring paths to your left and right.
- 51. A track to your left with a footpath sign merges with your onward route and you continue ahead as the track swings to the right and goes gently downhill. In 200m you reach a footpath post on your right and 5 metres beyond that a path to your left. Ignore this path to pass a tree on your right with a white arrow on it pointing left just above its base. In 40m ignore a path to your left and continue on the track as it swings gently to your right.

52. In 30m you reach a footpath post to your left and a T junction where you bear right with the car-wide dirt path. In 180m you reach a T junction with a footpath post to your left and you then bear left with the main track which soon swings round to the left.
53. In 140m the path swings round to the right. In 70m you reach a T junction with a tarmac lane (Fairmead Road). Cross the lane and continue ahead on the dirt track passing signs to your left and right saying rides closed. You will hear and see traffic ahead of you. You soon pass through a wooden gate to the right of a wooden field gate reaching busy road in 20m.
54. **12. Epping New Road to Loughton Underground station.**
55. Cross the road with care, go through a small car-park and pass a car-blocking barrier to continue on the path. In 80m you reach a small grassy area and you continue ahead to a notice board 80m away. At this notice board you bear left with the main path ignoring in a few metres a narrow path to your left and in a further 15 metres you reach a T junction.
56. **(If you turn left at this T junction you will be on the route of SWC 197, Loughton to Epping walk- see note at end of these directions.)**
57. To continue on this walk you turn right , passing in 5m an ancient and partially hidden **wtfp** to your right. **(You are now doing in reverse the opening part of SWC 197 all the way to Loughton Underground station.**
58. In 150m you reach a road (Nursery Road) a modern half-timbered house ahead of you. Cross this road to the pavement and turn left, passing Upper Park to your right in 10m. In 70m pass Little Dragons entrance way on your right and continue on the footpath.
59. ! In 40m on your right just before the entrance to Forest Nurseries on the other side of the road you turn right past some horse-blocking barriers and a footpath sign to go up an earth track, a high brick wall to your right.
70. In 50m go through horse-blocking barriers and pass a footpath sign to continue down a tarmac lane. In 60m you pass a footpath sign to your right and you bear right down Ollards Grove soon going steeply downhill.
71. At the bottom of the hill Connaughts Avenue joins Ollards Grove from the left and you continue ahead towards the busy road (A121, Loughton High Road) 60m ahead of you.
72. At the main road you can turn left for Loughton's pubs and coffee shops but the onward route to the tube station is to cross the road using the pedestrian crossing to your right. Turn left after crossing the road and in 30m turn right into Old Station Road passing a two armed footpath sign in 10m.
73. You pass a Sainsbury's superstore to your right and you continue onwards to Loughton Tube station which soon becomes visible ahead of you.

Options

74. **A. Shortening the Walk to go to Chingford Railway station (Zone 4). Takes about 10 minutes.**
75. After lunch turn right down Rangers Road (A1069) on the pavement – or turn left after crossing the road if you are neither having lunch nor visiting the Hunting Lodge.
76. In about 200m you reach a confluence of roads and you continue past Bury Road to your right to pick up the A1069 –now the Station Road – as it swings left . You need to be on the left hand side of this road and a few metres after passing Connaught Avenue away on the other side of the road to your right you turn left up a station approach to Chingford station.
77. There are regular trains from Chingford station, which is a terminus, to Liverpool Street station.
78. **B. A long Epping Forest walk from Leytonstone to Epping, 23km (14.4m)**
79. Follow the instructions for this walk to the end of the first paragraph in section 12 above. You then pick up the walk instructions for SWC 197 Loughton to Epping at para 5 “ at a white topped post with a horseshoe painted on it” where you turn **left** and continue with the SWC 197 instructions.
30. **C. The Centenary Path - Manor Park to Epping.**
31. If you wish to do the full map-led 24km (15mile) walk then please refer to the web links in the Features section of this walk. You can catch a train from London Liverpool Street (or Stratford) to Manor Park which is in Travel Zone 3/4. Epping is in Zone 6.
32. If you Google “Epping Forest Centenary Path” then you will find a number of links showing maps and some descriptions of the route. A map or GPS and a compass are essential for this walk

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