



Medium  
6 miles  
(9.6km)

# Coton circular

A gentle walk through young  
woodlands in the Mease Lowlands.



# Exploring the National Forest

Located right in the heart of the country, the National Forest embraces 200 square miles of the Midlands. It spans parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire, and aims to link the two ancient forests of Charnwood and Needwood.


After centuries of coal mining and clay extraction, the closure of the pits in the 1980s left a scarred and derelict landscape. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, millions of trees have been planted, breathing life into the landscape and its communities – turning a landscape from black to green. This bold regeneration shows how trees can transform not only the landscape, but also, vitally, people's lives and the local economy.





Coton circular  
trail starts here

To find out more about the National Forest and how you can get involved, visit:

[nationalforest.org](https://nationalforest.org)

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The National Forest Company  
Charity No. 1166563

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THE NATIONAL  
FOREST





# Walking in the National Forest

There are hundreds of miles of paths and trails to explore in the National Forest, and plenty of places accessible for all ages and abilities. Grab your walking boots, your trainers or your dog and head out into the woods for a walk or a run, or try your hand at orienteering or geocaching.

Follow gentle trails through vibrant young woodlands and nature-rich ancient forests. Discover more about the area's heritage or just let a canal towpath take you to the nearest pub lunch.



## Walking highlights



### Coton Wood

An interesting feature of the wood are the old hedgerows which pre-date the planting of the existing wood. The footpaths also have historical relevance, used as far back as the Black Death for moving plague victims. Before Coton-in-the-Elms had its own church, bodies were carried a mile and a half along the coffin trail (known locally as Procession Way) to Lullington for burial. The mourners passed under a curve of tree boughs known as the Devil's Arches on their journey.



### Grangewood and Top Wood

Top Wood was originally made up of a mix of agricultural uses, numerous ponds and small copses. Look closely and you may find signs of medieval ridge and furrow field systems, and the embankment along which a mineral railway line used to run. The new woodland planting forms an important buffer for the surrounding ancient woodland of Grange Wood. In time the ancient woodland species will begin to migrate there.

## Noon Column

See the light at the six Noon Columns dotted around the Forest. Slots cut into these 3-metre-tall oak sculptures, designed by internationally renowned artist David Nash, allow rays of sunlight through at true noon each day. Find the Mease Valley Noon Column just off route, found in an open glade within Grangewood.



## Off route highlight

Rosliston Forestry Centre offers a range of activities for great days out; from quiet walks to action-packed family fun. The mix of woodland and meadow, ponds and play areas offer the perfect playground for visitors of all ages and physical abilities, all year round. Spot the wildlife, join a guided walk or enjoy a short break in one of the lodges.



## Be a responsible visitor to the National Forest



To get the most out of your visit, please follow some simple rules:

**Respect other people** · Consider other people enjoying the outdoors · Leave gates and property as you find them and follow marked paths

**Protect the natural environment** · Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home · Keep dogs under effective control

**Enjoy the outdoors** · Plan ahead and be prepared · Follow advice and local signs



# Coton circular

**Medium length**

**Distance:** 6 miles (9.6km)

**Time:** Allow 2.5 hours

**Path type:** Unsurfaced paths, tracks, farmland and tarmacked sections. Stiles. Sturdy footwear recommended.

**Use with map OS Explorer 245 The National Forest**

**Start at:** Coton Wood, Lullington Road, Coton-in-the-Elms, DE12 8EP.

**OS Grid Ref:** SK245148

**Latitude:** 52.731025

**Longitude:** -1.6385923

**what3words:**

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## Map Key

	Trail route		Point of interest
	Footpath		Parking
	Bridleway		Bus stop
	Road		Pub
	Woodlands		Shopping
	Rivers and lakes		Public toilets
	Buildings		Camping
	Trig point		Cafe
	Route marker		

**1** Starting at **Coton Wood**, take the gate opposite the car park entrance and walk straight ahead along the broad, well-defined central path. Where the path divides, keep left. Ignore the next track on the left and walk on to the T-junction, where you turn left. After 20m, turn right where the tracks cross and follow this path around the perimeter of the wood, keeping the hedge on your right.

**2** When you come to a stile and plank bridge, cross them and follow the footpath across the field to a stile in the middle of the hedge. Cross a farm track and another stile to continue on the footpath. Where the footpath meets a road, follow the road ahead to the crossroads. On the corner of the roads to Botany Bay and **Grangewood** go through the entrance in the hedge, marked by a footpath marker, into the **Grangewood** site.

**3** Follow the footpath along the inside of the hedge, turning left after 200m onto a wide grass track signposted 'footpath'. Continue along the footpath and through a gap in a hedge. Continue on for 350m until you reach some mature trees at the corner of an older plantation to your right. Pass through a gap in the hedge to enter **Top Wood** (marked by a Woodland Trust sign).

**4** Take the footpath uphill alongside the hedge and cross the stile. Follow the edge of the wood, over stiles and through paddocks until you meet a farm track by Park Farm. You have now joined the **National Forest Way**. Turn left and continue down the track for 200m before turning right to enter another section of **Top Wood**. Follow the path that runs parallel to the track, veering away briefly to pass an old field pond before exiting the wood where the track joins the road. Turn left along the road and after a few metres, turn right to enter **Penguin Wood** through a gate.

**5** Follow the footpath through **Penguin Wood** and into the field beyond. Enter the large field and continue straight ahead for 400m to a cross of paths (unmarked) close to an oak tree. Leave the **National Forest Way** and turn left to meet a road.

**6** Turn right and then left to enter **Beehive Woodland**. Continue along the fenced track to a T-junction. Turn right and walk along the right of way between hedgerows and caravan site to a stile. Turn left over the stile and go across the field, with hedge on your right, to a double metal gate. Cross the next field to the far left corner and through a kissing gate to the left of a row of garages and onto the road.

**7** Cross the road and walk along Elms Road to Church Street. Turn right and then cross the road into Greenacre Park. Walk straight through the development, along the path to the right of the garages and into a long, narrow field fenced off in paddocks. Follow the footpath through the paddocks and into **Hill Close Copse**.

**8** Walk along the footpath past a lone mature tree to the edge of the plantation, then turn left. Follow the inside edge of the wood until you reach a pond. Keep on the grass track to veer right towards a wooden power pole, crossing Pessall Brook. Turn immediately left, keeping the brook on your left, into **Garlands Wood**.

**9** Follow the brook straight on ignoring any tracks on the right then pass a large fishing pond on the left. At the end of the lake turn left, then immediately right to cross a footbridge over Pessall Brook. Turn right to continue along the track to reach the road.

**10** Cross the road and turn left. After a few metres, turn right to cross a stile back into **Coton Wood**. Turn left to follow the hedge to the car park.