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Cotswolds - Korea Friendship Trail: Stinchcombe Hill

Experience one of the most beautiful meanderings of the Cotswold Way, and discover a new world of walking on an island five thousand miles away.

Distance:

Start A: 3½ miles or 5.6km
(Start B: 3 miles or 4.8km)

Duration:

2 - 2½ hrs (Shorter route 1½ - 2 hours)

Difficulty:

Moderate, firm surface, no stiles one long steep ascent/descent (Shorter route - Easy - firm surface, no stiles, mostly level)

Public transport:

Start A - easily accessible by bus and train from Cam and Dursley Station.
(Visit www.travelinesw.com).

Start/Finish:

Start A: in Dursley Grid reference ST 754/981
Start B: on Stinchcombe Hill ST 744/983
(OS Explorer sheet 167)
Postcode GL11 6AQ

Refreshments:

Numerous cafés and pubs in Dursley.

Parking

There is long stay parking in May Lane or 3 hour parking in Water Street or at the swimming pool.

This Cotswold Way circular walk is twinned with route 3 of the Jeju Olle Trail, South Korea, as a mark of friendship and international cooperation between our two countries. There are many similarities between the two routes and it is hoped that teaming up in this way will promote understanding and tourism on both sides.

Jeju Olle is a series of walking routes on Jeju Island, 130km off the southwest coast of Korea. This beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site is almost subtropical in climate, its scenery passing from windswept coastline, through countless tangerine groves criss-crossed by distinctive stone walls, and up to the 6,400 foot peak of Hallasan.



Following the Friendship Trail could not be simpler as it keeps to the Cotswold Way for its entire length. To



make it even easier, a special marker disc has been added to selected Cotswold Way posts to mark the

Friendship Trail and guide you round the route.

1 Start A: If you choose to start from Dursley, pick up the signs for the Cotswold Way on the corner of May Lane and Hill Road near the library and across the road from the Old Spot Inn. Head steeply up Hill Road for 200 metres until you reach a sharp bend to the left, and follow the Cotswold Way fingerpost straight on through the kissing gate into the woods. Carry straight on steeply up the track, until you emerge out onto Stinchcombe Hill next to a fingerpost between the golf clubhouse and car park.

2 At this point, the Cotswold Way splits in two. Ignoring the route to the right, follow the signs straight on across the golf course.

3 At the next fingerpost, the Cotswold Way splits again in two. Ignore the path straight on through the woods, and continue to follow the Cotswold Way and Friendship

Trail signs around to the right.

4 As breathtaking views begin to open up to your left, you will come upon a small blue sign next to a Cotswold Way marker post at the side of the car park.

This figure, known as 'Ganse' and shaped like a Jeju pony, is a symbol of Jeju Olle and appears on signs for the trail in Korea. It is central to the Friendship Trail that a part of the Cotswold Way is signed with Jeju Olle markers, and in turn, a section of Route 3 of Jeju Olle will be marked with Cotswold Way signs. In the Jeju dialect, 'Ganse' also translates as 'lazy-bones; this is no coincidence, as one of the main aims of Jeju Olle is to encourage people to slow down and appreciate the wonderful surroundings of the island at a slower pace.

5 After a short while following the signs, you emerge from a stand of trees out onto one of the most spectacular sights of the whole walk. It is well worth taking a few minutes here to make use of the bench and soak up the views.

6 After half a mile (0.8km), you will find yourself at a stone cabin erected and maintained by the Stinchcombe Hill Trust - the perfect spot to shelter if the weather is less than perfect! Follow the signs for another half a mile (0.8km).

7 You will cross over the access road to Stinchcombe Hill House.

For a short cut back to the car park (point **4**/start B) take the track to your right. To carry on the Friendship Trail and complete the loop, continue to follow the Cotswold Way all the way round and back to point 3. From here retrace your steps back down to Dursley to finish the walk.

Start B: If you prefer to travel by car and do not fancy the steep climb up from Dursley, start the walk at the car park in the centre of the hill. Picking up the route at point **4**, simply follow the signs clockwise all the way round the hill. Ignoring the route back to town, you will eventually end up back where you started.

Spare a few minutes to consider how walking can bring people and landscapes together the world over, and how the experience is essentially the same whether you walk in the Cotswolds or Korea. Better still, follow the links from the Friendship Trail page on the Cotswold Way website and take a virtual tour of Jeju Olle - this wonderful trail is waiting to welcome you! In the meantime, let your walk remind you that there is a corner of a foreign field that will remain forever Cotswolds.