



SWANSTON
FARM

Where to find our Highland Cows

Swanston Farm is a working farm and we have our own herd of Highland Cows which live a natural life on our 300 acres of hill land. We don't have opening or closing hours and visitors are welcome - just make sure you are off the hill before it gets dark!

Visitors to Swanston Farm are able to see our Highland Cows if you are prepared to take a walk up the hill!

We recommend sturdy trainers or preferably walking boots, along with appropriate clothing for the weather conditions, before venturing out up the slopes of Caerketton and Allermuir Hills, which form part of the Pentland Hills Regional Park.

You can sometimes get quite close to our Highland Cattle - enough to take good photographs - however we recommend that you do not try to cuddle or stroke them as they are not used to being touched!

Please take your litter home and keep dogs under strict control to avoid startling the cattle.

Read on to see a map of our Highland Cow Zone, follow a walking route and find out more. Happy Exploring!

Why not pop in for some refreshments at our farm restaurant, Swanston Brasserie after your walk?



@swanstonfarm

www.swanston.co.uk



@swanstonbrasserie

Highest point: 1474ft / 450m AMSL

Highland Cow Zone



Area size:
300 Acres
(that's about...
4,800 tennis courts
or
450 football pitches!)



Swanston Village

Swanston Brasserie.
Drinks, cakes,
breakfast, lunch
& dinner, free Wifi.



Swanston Cottage.
Holiday home to
Robert Louis Stevenson,
1867 - 1880



- Start & Finish
- Easy
- Moderate
- Steep

START

Park or walk to the **Pentland Hills Regional Park car park** next to **Swanston Brasserie** & your walk to find the Highland Cows starts here. Our Highland Cows roam a very large area of 300 acres of our hill land, where they live an undisturbed life on the slopes of the Pentlands Hills.

The hills rise up to c.1474ft/450m above sea level. There is a stone track that follows the low-lying area of the Highland Cow Zone, however this may not be suitable for buggies or young children that tire easily.

This is a 30-40 minute route, during which you may be able to spot our Highland Cows. It may take longer if they aren't instantly visible! Start at Swanston Brasserie & walk up to Swanston Village & follow the stone track up hill until you arrive at the gates on to the hill land.

You may come across wild deer, grouse, partridge, birds of prey, rabbits, hares & other wildlife. Please respect the nature & the wildlife & take your litter home. Keep dogs on a lead around wildlife & livestock.

Please be aware that as well as well-worn grass tracks & stone paths, the hill land also consists of burns (streams/small rivers), ravines, gorges, scree (unstable stones underfoot), cliffs, vertical slopes & drops, grassy knolls (small to large hillocks of mossy soft turf that may be unstable underfoot), bogs (deep muddy wet areas), gorse bushes (spiky & impenetrable!), boulders & varying sizes of stones & rocks, so please choose your walking routes carefully.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SHUT GATES AGAIN BEHIND YOU

Follow the stone tracks upwards (with Edinburgh city centre behind you) until you meet the flat stone track traversing across the hill from left to right. Turn right and follow this track (Edinburgh city centre should now be on your right).

This path involves up & down hill gradients, finally reaching the far end of the farm & the hill land boundary gates bordering the land at Dreghorn (Edinburgh city centre will now be in front of you).

FINISH

At the bottom of this track you'll arrive at the stable yard where you can take a right behind the muck heap and in to the back of the Swanston Brasserie & Golf Club car park & make your way back to where you started.

Take a right after going through the gate, follow the flat farm track that takes you between the golf course (on your right) & fields containing horses (on your left), past the stone wall that borders the gardens to the famous white 'Swanston Cottage' that was once the holiday home for Robert Louis Stevenson (this is now a private home).



We used to have a pet Highland Cow called Lily who lived to the grand old age of 25.

We don't hand-feed our cows or give them any hard feed/cattle feed. They graze the hill land all year round & we supply them with hay in winter to keep them well-fed. Hand-feeding cattle can make them human-orientated or human-dependant & we prefer ours to live as natural, organic & free-range a life as possible.

Did you know?
A herd of Highland Cows is known as a 'Fold'.

Our cattle drink from the many burns & springs on our hill land, however they also get a lot of moisture from the grass.

Our Highland Cows love the wild Scottish Blaeberrries that grow on our hills & our cattle share them with many other mammals & birds that live in the area.

Our fold is extremely agile & the cows like to head up the steep slopes to the heights of Caerketton & Allermuir Hills during the warmer summer months & can often be found sleeping & grazing on the peaks, in the cool winds.

We don't currently breed from our Highland Cows, but instead buy young stock in from around Scotland.

About our Highland Cows

Our Highland Cattle keep our hills happy & healthy by grazing down the grasses & plants, encouraging more & stronger growth as the seasons change. They even eat the young growths of gorse & the coconut-smelling yellow flowers during Spring & Summer. This all helps the natural habitat to thrive, which is also home to a wide range of wildlife & plant life.

There is a wide range of legume species & grasses that grow on our hill land, giving our cattle a healthy dose of fibre, natural sugars, natural probiotics & medicinal anthelmintic plants. Our fold is often seen grazing with our resident deer & they all co-exist happily together on the hills.

Our cows are remarkable jumpers & have been known to pop over the fence on to the golf course!

Our youngest were born in 2019 & weigh approximately 500kg & our oldest were born in 2012 & weigh approximately 850kg (that's the weight of a small car!).

Our fold consists of females & neutered males.

We leave our cattle as natural as possible with their horns on, however some of our Coos have had one or both horns removed if there were complications with the growth. Some just have wonky horns!