



Coast to Coast West (Self-Guided)

Please email us at info@ukexploratory.com or call us on +44 (0)1729 823 197 to chat about this holiday. You'll find all the latest information at www.alpineexploratory.com/holidays/coast-to-coast-west.html.



Near Rosthwaite in Borrowdale, the Lakes

About these Holiday Notes

These Holiday Notes help you decide whether this holiday is right for you. Before your trip we send you final detailed information.

Details

Start St Bees
Finish Kirkby Stephen
Region Lake District, Yorkshire Dales borders
Country England
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 136.5km or 85 miles
Typical day 23km (14 miles), 610m ascent
Highest altitude 792m on Kidsty Pike
Grade Expert

Introduction

The famous Coast to Coast walk in England runs for nearly 200 miles between the Irish Sea on the West coast (start point St Bees) and the North Sea on the East coast (a triumphant finish at Robin Hood's Bay).

This self-guided walking holiday treks the Western half of the route - the first 6 stages as far as Kirkby Stephen. The market town of Kirkby Stephen makes a practical terminus for this walk, being easily accessible. Your last day is outside the Lake District, and there is the option to end the trip at Shap instead, the night before; however, the last stage to Kirkby Stephen is attractive and a fitting finish. As with the whole route, any length or schedule can be accommodated according to your plans.

The Coast to Coast walk was devised by Alfred Wainwright, the well known author of guidebooks to the Lake District, and published in his book A Coast to Coast Walk in 1973. The aim was to cross England and visit the national parks of the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors. Over the three decades since, the walk has become one of, if not the most, popular treks in the British Isles. The clever route and the

sheer beauty and variety of the views make sure of that!

Walking the whole route, or any of the tougher stages, is a challenge. As well as pastoral footpaths and shady woods, there are sections over rough open moor and mountain landscape. Especially over the Lake District stages, proper outdoor equipment and experience are essential.

Compared to some long distance trails in the UK, the paths underfoot are a real mixture. Where the West Highland Way for example has purpose-built stony paths for much of its distance, the Coast to Coast runs on pre-existing paths and tracks, and these vary from wide and smooth to narrow, boggy and sometimes unclear.

The real charm of the Coast to Coast lies in the genuine and unspoilt places met along the way. Hidden corners of England reveal themselves as you cross the country. This is true long distance walking, passing through the landscape and enjoying new aspects every day.

Our approach to the Coast to Coast

Your route

Your route follows the Coast to Coast, as officially as the slightly relaxed nature of the route allows, as far as Kirkby Stephen. Set off from St Bees and reach the headland above cliffs before breaking away inland towards Ennerdale. Cross the centre of Lakeland, past the Black Sail hut into Borrowdale, then through Grasmere and across to Patterdale. Over the ridges of High Street reach Shap and some gentler ground. Pass Orton and later reach Kirkby Stephen in the valley.

Fancy the whole route?

As well as the complementary Eastern half of the route, from Kirkby Stephen to Robin Hood's Bay over 8 stages, we offer the whole Coast to Coast route in one splendid trip of about a fortnight.

Routecards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your routecards, to bring you to your night's accommodation. We give you the real maps for you to follow, not printouts or photocopies.

Getting there and back

Your holiday starts in St Bees and ends in Kirkby Stephen. Travel to St Bees and from Kirkby Stephen is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. St Bees is on the train line around the edge of Cumbria and Kirkby Stephen is on the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle train line. Your info pack contains full

information on travel options. It is possible to leave a car at either your first or last night's accommodation. If you would like to do this, please let us know.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in St Bees

Settle into this pretty village near the sea; the Grammar School, Priory Church and long beach are all worth seeing.

Guesthouse, St Bees

Day 2: St Bees to Ennerdale Bridge

(24km or 15 miles)

Start the Coast to Coast West with a highly scenic stretch along the cliffs, high above the Irish Sea. The route then turns inland to follow tracks and cross fields. Pass the village of Cleator. You might meet trekkers coming the other way, about to finish. Climb a hill called Dent (352m) before a lovely walk through the valley to the village of Ennerdale Bridge.

Inn, Ennerdale Bridge

Day 3: Ennerdale Bridge to Rosthwaite

(25km or 15.5 miles)

This second day of the route makes a classic Lakeland crossing into Borrowdale. First walk the length of the wild and remote Ennerdale Water and then Ennerdale itself, past Black Sail youth hostel and over Honister Pass before descending to the village of Rosthwaite in Borrowdale.

B&B, Rosthwaite

Day 4: Rosthwaite to Grasmere

(15km or 9.5 miles)

Another day travelling through the heart of the Lake District is in store. Link up Borrowdale, typically reached from Northern approaches, with the village of Grasmere firmly in the South of the district. There is the option of an entertaining ridge walk culminating in Helm Crag before dropping down to Grasmere.

Guesthouse, Grasmere

Day 5: Grasmere to Patterdale

(13km or 8 miles)

Cross Grisedale Hause today on the way to Patterdale, hopefully with views of Fairfield and the ridges of Helvellyn. Fairfield, St Sunday Crag and Helvellyn are all options to add excitement. Patterdale has its own atmosphere again, surrounded by high ridges.

Guesthouse, Patterdale

Day 6: Patterdale to Shap

(26.5km or 16.5 miles)

Some of the wildest and grandest walking of the trip occurs on this stage as you cross the high ridge of the High Street range. Pass the high-point of Kidsty Pike (792m) before dropping to a low-level walk along the length

of Haweswater and through fields to Shap. **Guesthouse, Shap**

Day 7: Shap to Kirkby Stephen

(33km or 20.5 miles)

With the Lake District firmly behind you (but still in view for much of the way) settle in to enjoy this long, gentle stage across moorland and through fields. Detour to the pleasant Yorkshire village of Orton having crossed the moorland South of Oddendale. Spot stone circles along the way. Bustling Kirkby Stephen is reached and forms a welcoming stop for your last night with its shops and pubs.

Guesthouse, Kirkby Stephen

Day 8: Depart from Kirkby Stephen

Morning departure from Kirkby Stephen.



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Our usual schedule of accommodation might not be available, especially if there is not much time between booking and your trip starting. We will book accommodation as closely as possible to this itinerary and present you a schedule for you to check before we proceed.

Accommodation

This holiday stays in pleasant guesthouses, bed & breakfasts and inns along the route. We place most value on a friendly welcome, comfortable standards and a good location within the village or town.

We book ensuite accommodation except where it is not available, for example in older buildings or more remote locations.

Your info pack contains full details of your accommodation including contact details and directions.

Food

The food of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales is hearty and often locally produced. Classic dishes include Cumberland sausages or lamb shank with mashed potato; steak and kidney pie; and of course fish and chips. Fish and game are often seen. You will have enough chances to buy lunch ingredients, or to stop for lunch, along the way. However, on some stages you will have to be self-sufficient throughout the walk. Your routecards show places to eat and stock up on the route. We include breakfast on all mornings.

The walking

Terrain

The terrain is a mix of the following and more:

Paths in woodland
Walled tracks
Paths through fields (some indistinct)
Country lanes
Paths over the open hillside (some indistinct)
Steep rocky paths or steps

The landscape should be treated as wild terrain in which you will need to be self-reliant. We strongly recommend that you know how to navigate with a map and compass; the skills are easy to learn and your notes include details of some good books.

Signposts and waymarks

Directions on the ground vary from wooden or metal Coast to Coast finger posts, through small yellow arrow waymarks, to nothing at all. Please be prepared to navigate!

Your own routes

While your routecards make up the walking for the trip, you are of course free to walk wherever you choose, taking side trips or going by a different route of your own choice. Please note that if you follow your own route you will have left the holiday for the duration.

Local transport

No local transport is needed for this holiday due to its nature as a continuous walk. Your only focus is on the walking – a real break! Excursions to local towns, for example Keswick, Penrith and Appleby, might be possible by bus or train. As well as these options your notes and routecards tell you about the options for shortening or missing out entirely each day's walk by using buses and trains, where possible.

Language

English is the local language.

Weather

The weather in the Lakes and Pennines between April and October is generally very suitable for walking. While snowfall is in theory possible on higher ground all year round, it is very rare in the summer months. April and May can often be excellent months for warmth and relative dryness. Any time in June, July and August is likely to be warm enough for comfort but with a good chance of rain on at least some days. Towards the Autumn, September and October can be quieter and very pleasant, though colder.

This all means that it is sensible to come equipped for and expecting all the types of weather that might be experienced in a typical summer in the UK: from heavy rain storms with a chill in the air, to hot sunshine.

Equipment

You will need the usual equipment for mountain walking in the UK. Especially important are good walking boots, waterproofs and sun protection. Your info pack contains a suggested equipment list. Please also see the Equipment page of our website for more information.

Insurance

We recommend, but it is not compulsory, that you have insurance cover for personal liability, cancellation and your baggage and money. Your info pack contains details of suitable insurance policies.

Money in the UK

The currency is the Pound Sterling (GBP).

Local expenses

Local expenses include food and drink other than breakfast, which is included, plus any local transport, attractions and extras.

Guided days

Hire a professional mountain leader to join you on this self-guided holiday, for one or more days. A leader helps plan and carry out each day's walking and adds interest to your holiday by pointing out local features. Please contact us for prices and more information.

Groups

Walk by yourself or in your own group, or see if we can match you up with other like-minded walkers on the same holiday. Any group will be a maximum of 8 people.

Hazards

Health

The UK does not require tourists to take any vaccinations. However, it is recommended to keep tetanus vaccines up to date.

Safety

This is adventure travel! This holiday takes you to some wild and remote areas, in particular some areas of upland moor and mountain where navigation can be difficult in poor weather. The weather can also be a hazard in itself. During any walking, whether following a routecard or making your own route, you are responsible for your own actions and safety and you should join the trip with suitable skills, experience and equipment.

Further information

Please email us with any questions at info@ukexploratory.com.

Disclaimer

This information is given in good faith and is believed to be correct at the time of issue. UK Exploratory cannot be liable for any loss or injury incurred.