



Lake District Traverse (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/lake-district-traverse.html.



Gorse in the Newlands valley

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 Penrith
Finish St Bees
Region Lake District
Country England
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 111km or 69.5 miles
Typical day 18.5km (11.5 miles), 515m ascent
Highest altitude 574m above Blea Tarn
Grade Intermediate

Introduction

Take this journey across and through the Lake District's famous mountains. Based loosely on the popular Coast to Coast path but sticking to the most spectacular scenery of the Lakes, this 6-day route sets off from Penrith and treks across to St Bees Head on the coast.

Each day's walk brings a change in scenery. The first and last days are naturally gentler as they wind through the foothills and countryside. The middle four days pass through the high mountains, taking in sights such as Ullswater, Watendlath, Rosthwaite and Buttermere before walking out through Ennerdale, perhaps the grandest of all Lakeland valleys. A huge number of attractive detours can be made along the way.

Both Penrith and St Bees are easy to reach by train. With no local transport required along the trek, and with all accommodation booked for you, this holiday provides a real break where your only focus will be on enjoying the walk.

Our approach

Your route

Your route charts an intriguing course and over the last one and a half stages follows Wainwright's Coast to Coast route. Set off from Penrith and reach the open country surprisingly soon. Field paths and an optional wooded hill lead to Pooley Bridge. Walk the length of Ullswater on the second day to Patterdale, then climb steadily up pretty Grisedale to Grisedale Tarn high above Grasmere. Borrowdale seems a long way off but is reached much more easily than could be imagined by a clever and unusual route. Link Borrowdale with Buttermere over a high pass. Climb to the side of Haystacks, Wainwright's favourite Lakeland mountain, and drop into Ennerdale to pick up the Coast to Coast route. Walk through the forests and the length of the lake to Ennerdale Bridge, a quiet village. A final stage with a small hill, riverside walking and field paths ends in spectacular fashion along the coast at St Bees Head. Reach St Bees itself, by the sea.

Route cards and maps

Each day's route is explained in detail on your route cards, 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 Penrith and ends in St Bees. Travel to Penrith and from St Bees is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Penrith is on the main train line between London and Glasgow and St Bees is on the train line around the edge of Cumbria. 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 Penrith

Evening arrival in Penrith. There is scope for eating out in the town centre.

Guesthouse, Penrith

Day 2: Penrith to Pooley Bridge

(11km or 7 miles)
The first day's walk takes you through rolling pastoral terrain for a shorter day than some of the coming days, as an ideal introduction to the trek. An initial stroll through Penrith's industrial estate is an unusual start to a trek, but very soon over. The village of Pooley Bridge provides a welcoming base at the end of the day.

Inn, Pooley Bridge

Day 3: Pooley Bridge to Patterdale

(17.5km or 11 miles)

The higher Lake District fells are around you later on during this second stage. The route approaches the head of Ullswater, from where there are many ridges running up to the Helvellyn and Fairfield ranges.

Guesthouse, Patterdale

Day 4: Patterdale to Rosthwaite

(21.5km or 13.5 miles)
Today is a fascinating stage crossing the walk's high point at Grisedale Tarn, descending to Dunmail Raise and climbing again to cross the High Raise range. Finally a descent to picturesque Watendlath heralds a final short climb and then a descent to Rosthwaite in Borrowdale. This is a day of magnificently varied terrain and a real sense of moving through the district.

B&B, Rosthwaite

Day 5: Rosthwaite to Buttermere

(17.5km or 11 miles)
The terrain changes to that of the North Western Lakes today, with their long smooth ridges pointing down to the Newlands Valley. However, first there is a delightful walk North through Borrowdale along a short section of the Allerdale Ramble. Buttermere as a destination is delightful, nestling between Buttermere (the lake) and Crummock Water with mountain ranges on either side.

Guesthouse, Buttermere

Day 6: Buttermere to Ennerdale Bridge

(19.5km or 12 miles)
Scarth Gap Pass is today's highest point, marking the crossing from Buttermere to Ennerdale - neighbouring valleys with very different qualities. Ennerdale has a remote and wild feel. Walk out through the forest and along Ennerdale Water to the small village of Ennerdale Bridge.

Inn, Ennerdale Bridge

Day 7: Ennerdale Bridge to St Bees

(24km or 15 miles)
The last stage of the Lake District Traverse is made up of rolling terrain as you head towards the sea, reflecting on the mountainous terrain successfully crossed and with this final goal now in focus.

B&B, St Bees

Day 8: Departure

Morning departure from St Bees.

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 or 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, and of course in the hostel.

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

### Food

The food of the Lake District 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 are not universal; paths might have wooden finger posts or small yellow arrows as waymarks, but might also have no markings 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 and villages, for example Keswick, are possible. 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 Lake District 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 breakfasts, 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](mailto: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.