



Pennine Way Central (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/pennine-way-central.html.



High Cup, a huge bowl near Dufton

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 Malham
Finish Alston
Region Yorkshire Dales and North Pennines
Country England
Length 7 walking days and 8 nights
Total distance 185km or 115 miles
Typical day 26km (16 miles), 600m ascent
Highest altitude 893m on Cross Fell
Grade Expert

Introduction

The Pennine Way stretches for 429km (268 miles) from Edale in the Peak District to Kirk Yetholm just over the Scottish-English border.

This self-guided walking holiday takes in the central section of the Pennine Way from Malham to Alston, a stretch of 7 days that includes the scenic highlights of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The idea for a long distance path along the central mountains of England came from Tom Stephenson in 1935. Creating public access to such a long string of paths took many years. The Pennine Way was officially opened on 24 April 1965 at a gathering on Malham Moor. It became the first official long distance path in Britain.

The Pennine Way in its entirety is regarded as among the toughest walking challenges in Britain. The terrain it passes through is inhospitable in many places and requires a degree of resistance and tenacity!

The rewards for this are great, however. The scenery is bold and varied and the sense of

achievement at the completion of each stage is considerable.

One image of the Pennine Way is of a series of bleak wet moors where getting wet feet is unavoidable. There are still some wet places but nowadays that image is outdated. The path has been improved substantially in recent years with many areas of stone flags underfoot. Much of the rest of the route lies on good tracks and field paths.

As for the scenery, the Pennine Way is full of interest and each local place you pass has its own way of life. The route does not stick to the Pennine watershed, because to do so would make the walk extremely arduous and give it many fewer staging posts. Instead the path descends East or West throughout its length, spending much time alongside rivers and visiting villages.

Our approach to the Pennine Way

Your route

Your route follows the official Pennine Way. Set off from Malham at the start of your holiday, quickly reaching Malham Cove and later on Malham Tarn. An ascent of Pen-y-ghent, one of the Yorkshire Three Peaks, on the first day really sets the scene for the grandeur of this trip. As you progress Northwards through Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Hawes and Keld, enjoy the limestone Dales as you reach the North Pennines. Cross moors to beautiful Teesdale then cross the spine of the Pennines to Dufton. Your final stage ascends Cross Fell, the highest point in England outside the Lake District. Arrive in Alston, England's highest market town. Highlights of the route include the remote Tan Hill Inn, the waterfall High Force on the River Tees, and Cross Fell.

The whole Pennine Way

By completing this Central section, the South and North sections can be picked off on later trips of about 6 days each to complete the whole Pennine Way from Edale to Kirk Yetholm.

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 Malham and ends in Alston. Travel to Malham and from Alston is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Malham and Alston have good bus connections to main line trains and the Settle to Carlisle 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 Malham

Explore the centre of this extremely pretty village, or the surrounding countryside including Janef's Foss and Gordale Scar - two noted features of the limestone Dales.

Guesthouse, Malham

Day 2: Malham to Horton

(25km or 16 miles)

Your aim for the first stage is to reach the village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale, capital of Three Peaks country. Pass Malham Cove and Malham Tarn on the way, then climb Fountains Fell on old mining tracks before tackling the famous peak Pen-y-ghent. Descend along a stony lane to Horton.

Inn, Horton-in-Ribblesdale

Day 3: Horton to Hawes

(24km or 15 miles)

This classic stage of the Pennine Way takes you North through the Yorkshire Dales. You move through a great deal of gradually changing scenery. Pass the Ribbleshead area and take to the Cam High Road, an old Roman road running for much of the way to Hawes. The wild moors present themselves all around you. Later the small town of Hawes is a welcoming sight down in the valley.

Hotel in the Market Place, Hawes

Day 4: Hawes to Keld

(23km or 14 miles)

Your third day's walking takes you North from Hawes past the hamlet of Hardraw and up the long ascent to Great Shunner Fell (716m), the longest continual ascent on the Way. Pass through the pretty village of Thwaite in Swaledale to start an exceptionally pretty stretch above the valley to the small hamlet of Keld.

Guesthouse, Keld

Day 5: Keld to Bowes

(22km or 14 miles)

The Tan Hill Inn, in its famously wild setting, is a feature of this stage and a good place to stop for lunch. Afterwards set off across the moors for the quiet village of Bowes with its old ruined castle.

Traditional inn, Bowes

Day 6: Bowes to Middleton-in-Teesdale

(21km or 13 miles)

Today's route returns to the moors and crosses two valleys, Baldersdale and Lunedale, both with reservoirs. Arrive in the attractive settlement of Middleton on the River

Tees, a large village with all the shops and facilities you need.

Guesthouse in village centre, Middleton

Day 7: Middleton-in-Teesdale to Dufton

(35km or 22 miles)

High Force, a 21m high waterfall, and Cauldron Snout, another spectacular waterfall at the bottom of Cow Green reservoir, are highlights of today's stage along with the glaciated bowl of High Cup Nick. Today is a long stage but there is the option to walk the first stretch to Langdon Beck the previous afternoon. Emerge in the pretty Cumbrian village of Dufton with its central green.

Guesthouse, Dufton

Day 8: Dufton to Alston

(34km or 21 miles)

On your final day, the Pennine Way takes its highest journey of the whole route. This is another long stage. Enjoy the climb to Cross Fell (893m) and the long walk out on a track to Garrigill before a final leg of field paths beside the River South Tyne. The bustling village of Alston provides a welcoming end to your holiday with its shops and pubs.

Gesthouse in town centre, Alston

Day 9: Departure from Alston

Morning departure from Alston.

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, hotels, 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.

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

Food

The food of the Yorkshire Dales and North Pennines 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 or game of many types 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
Stony mountain tops

The landscape should be treated as wild terrain in which you will need to be self-reliant. We strongly recommended 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 reasonably common in the form of small yellow waymarks, wooden finger posts and the National Trail acorn symbol denoting a long distance path. However, signs have a habit of disappearing or confusing at crucial points, so 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 Settle, Richmond or Barnard Castle, 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 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.