



Pennine Way North (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-north.html.



On Hadrian's Wall above Crag Lough

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 Alston
Finish Kirk Yetholm
Region North Pennines and Cheviot Hills
Country England and Scotland
Length 6 walking days and 7 nights
Total distance 126.5km or 79 miles
Typical day 21km (13 miles), 620m ascent
Highest altitude 743m near The Cheviot
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 northern section of the Pennine Way from Alston to Kirk Yetholm, a stretch of 6 days that includes the scenic highlights of Hadrian's Wall, the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Cheviot Hills in the Northumberland National Park.

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. Nowadays that image is outdated.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. However, the Northern stages are among the least 'civilised' of the whole Pennine Way and include some stretches of very wet ground.

As for the scenery, the Pennine Way is full of interest and each local place you pass has its own way of life. This Northern section actually leaves the Pennines behind after Hadrian's Wall, crossing lower ground to reach the Cheviots, a distinct range.

Our approach to the Pennine Way

Your route

Your route follows the official Pennine Way. Set off from Alston at the start of your holiday, reaching Hadrian's Wall at Greenhead after an arduous first day. The Wall is a superb feature to follow and makes for an entertaining and shorter second stage to Once Brewed. The links to Bellingham and then Byrness make two days of classic PW trekking. The Cheviot Hills form the final obstacle before Kirk Yetholm. Our normal schedule tackles this long, twisting ridge over two tough days; we can combine them into one extremely long day, but this would suit only the strongest walkers. Kirk Yetholm is an enchanting spot to end the quest, being homely and charming, and sited most definitely to the North of any hills. It sits just inside Scotland.

The whole Pennine Way

By completing this North section, the South and Central sections can be picked off on later trips of about 6 and 7 days respectively 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 Alston and ends in Kirk Yetholm. Travel to Alston and from Kirk Yetholm is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Alston has bus connections to main line trains at Carlisle, and Kirk Yetholm is linked to a good bus network to Berwick-upon-Tweed and Carlisle. 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 Alston

Reach Alston, the highest market town in England and a useful start point for the trek. Guesthouse, Alston

Day 2: Alston to Greenhead

(25.5km or 16 miles)
The first day on trek is tough. It crosses a patchwork of fields and low moorland. The River South Tyne is followed to Slaggyford and Lambley before the climb to Black Hill and descent to Greenhead. Much ground is covered on this link to Hadrian's Wall. Guesthouse, Greenhead

Day 3: Greenhead to Once Brewed

(11km or 7 miles)
Today the Pennine Way and Hadrian's Wall Path coincide, for intriguing and atmospheric walking. No great heights are reached but the series of milecastles and forts provide continuous interest. Guesthouse, Once Brewed

Day 4: Once Brewed to Bellingham

(24km or 15 miles)
This is a classic Pennine Way stage of mixed moorland, woodland and fields. Detour to Housesteads Roman fort before striking off North into the wilds. Wark Forest and Shitlington Crag are features today. Inn, Bellingham

Day 5: Bellingham to Byrness

(24.5km or 15 miles)
A second typical PW day, this completes the link to the foot of the Cheviot Hills. Cross three stretches of moorland including Padon Hill. Redesdale Forest provides the easy walking on the run down to Byrness. Guesthouse, Byrness

Day 6: Byrness to Uswayford

(22km or 14 miles)
We break up the famously long Cheviot Hills stretch into two days, as our norm, with a well-placed break in the remote valley of Uswayford. The ridge is broad to start with, becoming sharply defined as the day's high point of Windy Gyle is reached. Uswayford is a walk of 2km from the PW and the ridge. B&B, Uswayford

Day 7: Uswayford to Kirk Yetholm

(19.5km or 12 miles)
Returning to the ridge, the final challenge of the PW is this grand ridge walk. Pass below The Cheviot, with a detour possible to the

summit, then take the roller-coaster ridge to The Schil and down to pastoral scenes above Kirk Yetholm. This end point is delightful.  
**B&B, Kirk Yetholm**

#### Day 8: Departure from Kirk Yetholm

Morning departure from Kirk Yetholm.

There is more than one way in which we can break up your days over the Cheviots. We will ask your preference on booking.

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 friendly guesthouses, bed & breakfasts and inns along the route. We place most value on a warm 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 North Pennines and Northumberland 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 most stages you will have to be self-sufficient throughout the day's walk. Your routecards show places to eat and stock up on the route.

We include breakfast on all mornings plus dinner at Uswayford, where local pubs are thin on the ground.

#### 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!

The Cheviot Hills give some of the toughest walking of the Pennine Way, physically and in some parts navigationally. A fence marks the border between England and Scotland for much of the way here, but it cannot be relied on. Experience of mountain walking is key.

#### 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 Carlisle, Hexham and Jedburgh, might be possible by bus. 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 and Cheviots 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 and one evening meal, which are 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](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.