



Pennine Way (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.html.



Evening light at Keld in the Yorkshire Dales

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 Edale
Finish Kirk Yetholm
Region Pennines & Cheviot Hills
Country England and Scotland
Length 19 walking days and 22 nights
Total distance 429km or 268 miles
Typical day 24km (15 miles), 620m ascent
Highest altitude 893m at 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 completes the whole Pennine Way from Edale to Kirk Yetholm. It is a magnificent accomplishment for the trekker. The challenges are greater than other famous treks in the UK, but the sense of achievement in Kirk Yetholm will be greater too. To roll into this peaceful village with only plains in front and with all of England's hills behind is a special moment.

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 are a bold landscape and an insight into still-quiet corners of England. The mix of civilisation and wilderness is intriguing.

Very generally, the further North you go the more wild it gets.

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 Nowadays that image is outdated.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 Way and still include some stretches of very wet ground.

Our approach to the Pennine Way

Your route

Your route follows the official Pennine Way. Set off from Edale to cross the High Peak towards the South Pennine towns of Hebden Bridge and Howarth. Low moors then grassy plains take you to the Yorkshire Dales at Malham. Delightful stages to Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Hawes and Keld follow. The North Pennines now beckon and you cross back West to Dufton before climbing Cross Fell. Alston and a low stage lie on the way to Hadrian's Wall. A day on the wall is diverting, then strike off North into the wilds: bold forests and bleak moors. The Cheviots come as a final obstacle, almost cruelly so, but immensely rewarding and beautiful. Kirk Yetholm is the final haven; time to celebrate!

The Pennine Way stage-wise

It is just as valid to complete the PW in two, three or many more trips. We offer South, Central and North trips each of one week. Other short trips are very possible too.

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 Edale and ends in Kirk Yetholm. Travel to Edale and from Kirk Yetholm is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Edale is on the train line between Manchester and Sheffield, 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 Edale

Settle into the Peak District village of Edale.
Guesthouse, Edale

Day 2: Edale to Torside

(24km or 15 miles) Kinder Scout kicks off the PW as it means to go on (hard) followed by Bleaklow Head.
B&B, Torside area

Day 3: Torside to Standedge

(20km or 12.5 miles) Black Hill at 582m is the main challenge of this second stage of wild moorland.
Guesthouse, Standedge area

Day 4: Standedge to Hebden Bridge

(26.5km or 16.5 miles) Start with moorland, cross the M62 motorway then drop to the busy Calder Valley.
Inn, Hebden Bridge

Day 5: Hebden Bridge to Haworth

(23.5km or 14.5 miles) Cross an old stone packhorse bridge to reach moorland, Top Withins and Haworth.
Guesthouse, Haworth

Day 6: Haworth to Earby

(25km or 15.5 miles) This low moorland stage is one of the least remarkable, but it has its own charm.
Hostel, Earby

Day 7: Earby to Malham

(22.5km or 14 miles) Here the fields start in earnest on this long stage to Gargrave and Malham.
Guesthouse, Malham

Day 8: Rest day in Malham

Take it easy: explore Janet's Foss and Gordale Scar, two noted features of the limestone Dales.
Guesthouse, Malham

Day 9: Malham to Horton

(25km or 16 miles) This is Three Peaks country: Malham Cove, Fountains Fell and Pen-y-ghent.
Inn, Horton-in-Ribblesdale

Day 10: Horton to Hawes

(24km or 15 miles) This classic and bold stage takes you North past the Ribblesdale area to Hawes.
Hotel, Hawes

Day 11: Hawes to Keld

(23km or 14 miles) Great Shunner Fell (716m) is the longest continual ascent on the Way. Pass Thwaite.
Guesthouse, Keld

Day 12: Keld to Bowes

(22km or 14 miles) The Tan Hill Inn, in its famously wild setting, is a good place to stop for lunch.
Inn, Bowes

Day 13: Bowes to Middleton-in-Teesdale

(21km or 13 miles) Return to the moors and cross two valleys, Baldersdale and Lunedale.
Guesthouse, Middleton

Day 14: Middleton-in-Teesdale to Dufton

(35km or 22 miles) Pass waterfalls High Force and Cauldron Snout, plus the huge bowl of High Cup.
B&B, Dufton

Day 15: Dufton to Alston

(34km or 21 miles) The Pennine Way takes its highest journey to Cross Fell (893m), high and wild.
Small hotel, Alston

Day 16: Rest day in Alston

Bustling Alston is the highest market town in England and a useful place to take stock.
Small hotel, Alston

Day 17: Alston to Greenhead

(25.5km or 16 miles) Follow the River South Tyne to Slaggyford before the rough climb to Black Hill.
Guesthouse, Greenhead

Day 18: Greenhead to Once Brewed

(11km or 7 miles) The Pennine Way and Hadrian's Wall coincide: explore milecastles and forts galore.
Guesthouse, Once Brewed

Day 19: Once Brewed to Bellingham

(24km or 15 miles) Strike North from the Wall to Wark Forest and Shitlington Crag; a super stage.
Inn, Bellingham

Day 20: Bellingham to Byrness

(24.5km or 15 miles) A second typical PW day, this completes the link to the foot of the Cheviot Hills.
Guesthouse, Byrness

Day 21: Byrness to Uswayford

(22km or 14 miles) We break up the long Cheviot Hills stretch into two days; superb high walking.
B&B, Uswayford

Day 22: Uswayford to Kirk Yetholm

(19.5km or 12 miles) This final challenge of the PW is a grand ridge walk. Pass below The Cheviot.
Hotel, Kirk Yetholm

Day 23: 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, small hotels, inns and one hostel 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 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 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 except the hostel, plus dinner at Uswayford where local pubs are rather 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 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 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 Settle, Barnard Castle and Hexham, 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 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 (except at the hostel) and one evening meal, which are included, plus any local transport, attractions, a small membership fee (if not a YHA member) at Earby YH, 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.