



South Lakes Circuit (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/south-lakes-circuit.html.



Bridge End in Little Langdale

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 Ambleside
Finish Ambleside
Region Lake District
Country England
Length 4 walking days and 5 nights
Total distance 51km or 32 miles
Typical day 13km (8 miles), 320m ascent
Highest altitude 275m in Grizedale Forest
Grade Intermediate

Introduction

This beautiful 4-day circular walk leads you through the heart of Southern Lakeland.

The patchwork of fields, small woods, walled tracks, tarns and paths is enchanting and could almost have been designed to be as appealing as it is.

Places visited en route include classic walking destinations such as Grizedale and Great Langdale, as well as the pretty villages of the area including Hawkshead and Coniston.

The pace of each of the four stages is quite relaxing, as befits the gentler terrain in this corner of the Lakes.

With no need for local transport 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
This is a neat, logical and flexible circuit of some beautiful countryside. Set off from

Ambleside and take paths around Loughrigg Fell. Undulating woodland paths follow before a stretch of open walled track leads easily through the landscape to Hawkshead. Between Hawkshead and Coniston lies the Northern end of Grizedale Forest and it is here that the next stage's route lies. From Coniston, cross tracks into Little Langdale and climb past Blea Tarn to Great Langdale. A final, tranquil, walk out of this famous valley takes you back to Ambleside.

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 and ends in Ambleside. Travel to and from Ambleside is not included in the holiday price - we leave it to you to make the arrangements that suit you best. Ambleside is easily reached by a bus from Windermere, Windermere being on the local train line from Oxenholme on the main London-Glasgow line. Your info pack contains full information on travel options. It is possible to park your car at your accommodation. If you would like to do this, please let us know.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Ambleside

Evening arrival in Ambleside. There is a choice of places at which to eat out in the town centre.

Guesthouse, Ambleside

Day 2: Ambleside to Hawkshead

(16km or 10 miles)
The first day's walk takes you through the tranquil terrain south of Ambleside, around the North West edge of Windermere. Your accommodation for the night is in Hawkshead, an enchanting village with some great pubs.

Inn, Hawkshead

Day 3: Hawkshead to Coniston

(9km or 5.5 miles)
A number of appealing routes offer themselves today. Making for Coniston to the West, your route can take in Grizedale Forest with its network of forest paths, or you can visit the beautiful lake of Tarn Hows. Coniston is an excellent place to be based for a night.

Inn, Coniston

Day 4: Coniston to Great Langdale

(12.5km or 8 miles)
Head North today to enter some grander scenery. First pass Yewdale, then climb to reach Blea Tarn in a lovely mountainous setting, before a final descent into Great Langdale with the Langdale Pikes above.

Inn, Great Langdale

Day 5: Great Langdale to Ambleside

(13.5km or 8.5 miles)
Today's final stage naturally presents a choice of higher or lower walks as you make your way East back to Ambleside. The valley is superb, and the hillside and ridges to the North offer spectacular views of the Southern Lake District.

Guesthouse, Ambleside

Day 6: Departure

Morning departure from Ambleside.

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)

While most of the walking is simple and in the valley, 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 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! 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; in addition the months of March and November can be excellent. 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 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 relatively remote areas, in particular some areas of moor and fell 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.