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Hiking in the English Lake District / Guided: 8 days

Trip starts: Day 1 at Glaramara Hotel, North Lakes

Trip ends: Day 8 at Glaramara Hotel, North Lakes

We have put together a great week hiking in the Lake District National Park - home to the highest mountains in England and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explore the spectacular and rugged mountain scenery, the beauty of the glacial lakes and the quaint villages dotted in the valleys. We stay at a comfortable 3-star hotel for the week.

Our hikes include the famous and highest mountains in England: Scafell Pike - the highest mountain in England; Helvellyn, with its rugged ridges; Great Gable, Blencathra and Catbells. We also climb some of Alfred Wainright's favourites: the Buttermere High Fells, Haystacks and High Spy.

We stay in a lovely 3-star, family-run hotel in Seatoller - not far from Keswick, a pretty town in the North Lakes. The hotel has been recently renovated and the kitchen makes some very good meals. The hotel is surrounded by hills and you can be on the fells within minutes. The hiking will suit anyone is happy covering 12-18km (9-12miles) each day, with a number of ascents and descents. This is a challenging holiday, and you should be confident of your fitness. However, the benefit of being based in the same hotel for the week, means that you can take a rest day if you wish. It will appeal to you if you have comfortably completed the Tour du Mont Blanc or you are looking to train to complete one of our other guided treks in Europe.

The walking will be mostly on well-established paths, through it is likely you will encounter some rougher ground. Some ascents will be challenging, and you should be confident of climbing 1000-1200m (3280-3940ft) per day; the day we climb Helvellyn there is total ascent of 1400m.

The trip will be led by an experienced and fully qualified Mountain Leader (ML).



ITINERARY

Day 1 Meet at the Glaramara Hotel – check-in from 3pm

Our base for the week is the 3-star Glaramara hotel, in the picturesque hamlet of Seatoller in Borrowdale. This is 7 miles from Keswick in the North Lake District.

The hotel is easily reached by road or train. If arriving from overseas there are direct trains to Penrith from Manchester Airport and London Euston. From here you can take a taxi or a bus.

Hotel. Meals included: dinner

Day 2 Newlands Horseshoe

After breakfast we take a short drive from the hotel where we can begin our hike. Our horseshoe hike takes in Wainwright's Catbells, Maiden Moor, High Spy, Dale Head, Hindscarth and Robinson. The hike gives a really great introduction to the area and there are lovely views of the fells, Derwentwater and bigger mountains in the distance.

Hiking time is approximately 6 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 3 Buttermere High Fells

A short drive from the hotel over the Honister Pass takes us past stark, rocky scenery towards Buttermere Lake: one of the most picturesque lakes in the region. From here, we start our hike up towards the imposing band of rocks that stand like the wall of a fortress. Our route ascends through the hills of Red Pike Ridge, High Style and High Crag and onto the top of Haystacks (597m) with fabulous views across Ennerdale Valley and to the great peaks of Pillar and Great Gable. Haystacks gained fame thanks to the writings of Alfred Wainwright as his favourite fell-top of all, and his ashes were scattered here. We descend along a different route with beautiful views of Buttermere and Crummock Water.

Hiking time is approximately 6 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 4 Scafell Pike – England's highest mountain (978m)

The ascent of Scafell Pike is a challenging hike and takes us to some of the most spectacular scenery in the UK. After a very short drive we start at the hamlet of Seathwaite and follow the river to the 18th century Stockley Bridge. We continue beside Grains Ghyll to the impressive gullies of Great End and then to Sprinkling Tarn. From here we make our way through heather and grasslands and on to rocky terrain following a good path through the scree and boulders. We reach the summit plateau of Scafell Pike in around 4 hours. The views from the top on a clear day are outstanding with Moasdale and Wast Water below us and the Irish Sea and Southern Lakes in the distance. We will descend, steeply at first, with some scree, to join up with the classic Corridor Route that leads us past Styhead Tarn and eventually back to our start point. There is one very short section of easy scrambling where you use your hands to steady your balance.

Hiking time is approximately 7 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 5 Blencathra

Blencathra is a great hulk of a mountain and marks the north end of the Lake District. We follow a route across the fells and then up on to Halls Fell Ridge which is an exciting route and can feel a bit airy sometimes. From the top, you can see the whole of the Lake District spread out to the South.



Hiking time is approximately 5-6 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 6 Great Gable and Green Gable

We hike from the hotel to Seathwaite before ascending the steep and beautiful Sourmilk Ghyll – a beautiful mountain river in a quiet valley. We ascend the mountains of Base Brown, Green Gable and finally Great Gable which is famous for its mountaineering and climbing history. There is a World War 1 memorial on the summit of Great Gable with steep sides all around. We return to the hotel via two further mountains, Brandreth and Grey Knotts linked by a wide ridge,.

Hiking time is approximately 6 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 7 Helvellyn and Dollywaggon Pike

Helvellyn is England's second highest mountain (950m) and flanked by the lakes of Thirlmere and Ullswater. The route starts in the most beautiful Lakeland village of Glenridding and winds its way up to Red Tarn and Swirral Edge. From the summit we head along a wide ridge to Dollywaggon Pike and then back towards Glenridding via the stunning Grisedale Valley.

Hiking time is approximately 7 hours

Hotel. Meals included: breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 8 Check out of the hotel

After breakfast the holiday ends. Check out is at 11am.

Meals included: breakfast

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route as printed above, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. Occasionally, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons – climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best alternative arrangements possible that maintains the integrity of the original itinerary.



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Is it for me?

Each hike is approximately 19km/12 miles but will involve hiking up and down to reach the ridges and summits. This trip should appeal to you if you regularly take walking weekends and are happy covering similar distances each day. On this trip we normally hike for between 5 and 8 hours each day.

We generally follow good paths that are well-travelled, but they are not maintained by a park authority apart from some of the more well-known trails that have had steps added to slow erosion. You will encounter uneven paths, rocky steps, rocks underfoot and occasional tree roots on the trail. There is occasionally the need to use your hands to steady yourself when there is a small section of easy scrambling.

The highest altitude we walk is just under 1000m / 3280ft, so there are no effects of altitude.

We grade this trip as Challenging

The longer days cover 16-20km with over 1000m/ 3280ft of ascent and descent. There is approximately 6-8 hours of walking each day on a mix of well-worn and uneven paths. There may be some long ascents and descents and, as you get higher, the effect of any poor weather could bring cold wind and rain. You need to be confident of your fitness.

Staff

Throughout the trip, you will be accompanied by a qualified Mountain Leader who has a First Aid certificate and carries a First Aid Kit.

Group size

Minimum 6, maximum 16

Price and what it includes

Accommodation on a twin-share basis.

Single rooms can be requested and there is a single supplement.

All transfers when part of the organised hikes.

7 breakfasts, 6 picnic lunches and 7 dinners.

The trek is led by a qualified Mountain Leader (ML).

What is not included

Transfers to and from the hotel on the first and last day.

Accommodation and meals

We stay in the 3-star Glaramara hotel for 7 nights.

Rooms at the hotel are on a twin-share basis: all have attached private bathrooms. Single rooms are available on request and there will be a supplement. There is a good restaurant and a nice bar with a lovely lounge from where you can see the mountains.

All dinners are normally a set 3-course meal and are eaten in the hotel restaurant area. Tea and coffee at dinner and all other drinks are not included.

Typical meals at the hotels

Breakfast: tea, coffee, juice, cereals, bread, butter, jam, yoghurt, eggs. You can also order a traditional full English breakfast.



A picnic lunch is provided for every walking day and will include sandwiches, crisps, chocolate, fruit etc.

Dinner: starter, main course, dessert. There are 3 choices for each course.

The hotel sells soft drinks, beer, wine, mineral water, coffee etc.

The hotel is able to offer meals for vegetarian, vegan and low gluten diets.

You must advise us at the time of booking of any dietary requirements.

How to find the hotel

By car take the M6 motorway to junction 40 (Penrith). Follow signs to Keswick and West Cumbria (A66). Head to Keswick and then take the B5289 to Borrowdale. 7 miles from Keswick, just before the village of Seatoller. The hotel is on your right. There is parking available at the hotel.

If arriving by train the nearest station is Penrith and from there are taxis and regular buses to Keswick (line X4 / X5) and then on to Borrowdale (no. 77 / 77a / 79). Taxi takes about 50 minutes; the bus will take significantly longer and involves a change in Keswick.

Weather

In the summer, daytime temperatures can vary from 15-25°C in the valleys to 5-18°C on the tops of the mountains and ridges. On a good sunny day you will only need shorts and T shirt and a windproof jacket. On a cooler, wet day you will need full waterproofs and warm clothes.

As with all mountain regions it can rain – either as frontal weather or as thunderstorms after a hot day – and you should come prepared for this. It can be cold and windy at higher. We pay special attention to the local weather forecasts and will adjust the day-to-day itinerary if we feel it is necessary to get the best from your trip.

Clothing and equipment

Good walking boots: leather or fabric and should be worn-in before you arrive.

Full set of good-quality waterproofs – jacket and trousers. Gore-Tex is recommended: a 'pac-a-mac' is not good enough.

Trousers or skirts, short trousers.

T-shirts and tops that includes a jumper or fleece jacket.

Rucksac that will give you enough room to carry a few clothes 30-35 litres is recommended.

Sun hat, sun cream, sunglasses, water bottle, warm woolly hat and gloves.

Blister kit, any personal medicine.

The evenings will be cooler and so a small, lightweight down gilet or jacket might be welcome.

Extra expenses & money

Cards are accepted almost everywhere and you can get cash from ATMs in Keswick. Please note that Amex seems to get commonly refused.

Typical costs

These are approximate costs: you can spend more or less than indicated.

Wine (£5-8 per glass), beer (£3-5), soft drinks (£2-3), cakes & snacks (£3-5), coffee (£4).



Passports, visas and insurance: for non-UK residents

It is essential that you are in possession of an up-to-date and valid passport. You must check the visa and entry requirements.

You must check that you are covered for medical emergencies and longer-term care in UK hospitals should you have an accident or other incident. You are advised to take travel insurance that covers you for all medical treatment, helicopter or ambulance rescue, repatriation to your home country and guiding hiking in the mountains of the UK.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from clients. You will be informed of any major changes to your trip but small changes may just be added.

