

ENGLAND: WAINWRIGHT'S CHALLENGING COAST TO COAST WALK

15 days / 14 nights CHALLENGING long-distance GUIDED inn-to-inn walk



Explore on foot the dramatic landscapes of the Lake District with its majestic lakes and rugged mountains. Appreciate the classic rural countryside of rolling hills and pretty villages of the Yorkshire Dales. Experience the satisfaction of completing one of Britain's best long distance hikes from the Irish Sea to the North Sea coast. Walk in the company of your guide and enjoy the hospitality of your hosts along the route.

This is the quintessential English hill walking and long-distance trail experience: 190 or so miles (approximately 320km) traversing three national parks and many fascinating landscapes, old towns and villages, pubs and churches in between. It is amazing to think that this most famous of routes, was only classified as a National Trail in 2022, nearly fifty years after Alfred Wainwright first described it.

Starting at the Cumbrian seaside resort of St. Bees on the Irish Sea we head east, with the wind, into the Lake District with its famous lakes and across passes. On to the Yorkshire Dales and over the mystical Nine Standards Rigg, before following the River Swale to the old market town of Richmond. There follows a marathon section to link up with the North York Moors National Park from where we roller coaster around to the North Sea coast to make a triumphant entrance into Robin Hoods Bay.

Along the way be amazed at the charming little villages, the drystone walls and just how much you get to eat for a full English cooked breakfast! We stay at cosy small hotels, guesthouses and pubs and these, as well as the rich variety of people you meet en route, reflect some of the great diversity of England.

2026 Departures: 15 August 2026

EARLY BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Cost from: \$6350 per person twin share

Single supplement on request (limited availability)

Includes: 14 nights' accommodation in hotel / guesthouses / B&Bs with breakfast, transfer of one piece of luggage per person (not exceeding 18kg), experienced walking guide.

Not included: Dinners, lunches, drinks, entry fees, travel insurance, personal expenses such as laundry and phone calls, unscheduled transfers required during the trip.

Grade: **Challenging** – recommended for experienced walkers with a high level of fitness. Average daily walk 25km (6 to 9 hours), with some longer days, over undulating terrain with some steep ascents and descents. Average daily elevation gain approx. 750m with two days over 1000m. The group pace must be 4 to 5km per hour to arrive in a timely fashion and all walkers are expected to keep up. Trails can be rough or rocky underfoot. Expect mixed weather including strong winds, rain, low cloud or fog, and varying temperatures.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive St Bees

Make your way to St Bees on the Irish Sea, with views across to the Isle of Man, accessible by train from London, Manchester, or Glasgow via Carlisle. If time permits visit the Abbey church, which has features on the local history and has a display on a mummified knight that was discovered in a lead coffin from the graveyard. Book an extra night here (at additional cost) to follow the coastal path to the attractive town of Whitehaven, with its marina and museum. It is famous in the annals of the US Navy as the site of an elaborate raid on the British mainland by John Paul Jones during the American War of Independence. This evening meet your guide and fellow walkers for a briefing on the next two weeks of walking.

Day 2 Walk to Ennerdale Bridge

walking @ 14½ miles / 24km, 6 hours

Climb from the beach taking a footpath along red sandstone coastal cliffs of St Bees Head with England's only breeding colony of Black Guillemots, then head inland over hilly ground. Dent Hill is the first real fell that we cross and will give you some indication as to whether you are fit enough for the days ahead! Although short, there follows possibly the steepest descent of the whole tour down to Nannycatch Beck, a delightful stroll to the final descent to leafy Ennerdale Bridge at the edge of the Lake District National Park.

Day 3 Scenic walk to Borrowdale

walking @ 16½ miles / 27km, 7 hours

A quiet and scenic footpath along the shore of Ennerdale Water, with an easy scramble under Angler's Crag at Robin Hood's Seat. A long walk on a forest track then continues to Black Sail Hut, the smallest youth hostel in England, originally a shepherd's hut. A steep climb follows before traversing some of the Lakeland fells, perhaps with views down to Buttermere. Finally we reach the 'drum house' which marks the descent path to the Honister slate mine workings and café to Borrowdale; perhaps the most delightful valley in the Lakes with its crags and broadleaved trees. This is a delightful ensemble of hamlets: Seatoller (the wettest place in England), Longthwaite, Rossthwaite and Stonethwaite. Delightful riverside paths connect the places and their pubs together if you have sufficient energy left of an evening

Day 4 Classic lakeside scenery enroute to Grasmere

walking @ 8½ miles / 14km, 5-6 hours

Classic Lakeland scenery over Greenup Edge to Easedale and Grasmere, one of Lakeland's most scenic and celebrated villages. If time permits we may visit the Wordsworth Museum at Dove Cottage, William Wordsworth's grave at the church and the famous Ginger bread shop.

Day 5 Another great walking day via Grisedale Pass

walking @ 7½ miles / 12km, 5½ hours

Over Grisedale Pass (610m) and around the small mountain lake of Grisedale Tarn to Patterdale or Glenridding. In good weather if we are feeling strong, the best option is to take the route up St. Sunday Crag, for some exceptional views down across Ullswater, possibly the most breathtaking views of the trip. This adds around 1½ hours to our walking day.

Day 6 Walk to Shap over Kidsty Pike

walking @ 16 miles / 26km, 7-9 hours

Some would say this is the most difficult stage especially in bad weather. The day starts with a steep climb up past pretty Angle Tarn, and then up and onwards to a critical cairn where we turn off the route to High Street to go up and over Kidsty Pike (2560 feet / 780m, the highest point on the whole route) and then descend steeply to walk along Haweswater, a huge body of water conceived in 1929 to supply Manchester with drinking water, drowning a couple of villages in the process.

We walk through undulating fields to Shap Abbey, the most easterly point of the Lake District National Park. This was the last Abbey to be founded in England in 1199 and the last to be destroyed in 1540. It nevertheless is a pretty place to pause. After this we continue into Shap, a former granite mining town, with several pubs and shops. The village offers an interesting insight to the history of the area.



Day 7 Across moors and farmland to Kirkby Stephen

walking @ 20½ miles / 33km, 8 hours

A hilly section across Limestone Moors with limestone pavements strewn with glacial erratics, boulders moved there by glaciers. We drop into Orton; if time permits we may visit the Kennedy's Chocolate factory.

Walking now between Cumbria and the Yorkshire Dales, we cross attractive farmland with a section of moors around Sunbiggin Tarn, which is an important site for birds. A steep descent to the Scandal Beck at Smardale Bridge makes for a nice late lunch stop. Then ascend over Smardale Fell for the pretty descent into Kirkby Stephens and attractive market town, with St. Hedda's Church containing the 8th Century Loki stone depicting Loki, the mischief-maker and god of chaos from Norse mythology.

Day 8 To Keld

walking @ 14½ miles / 24km, 6 hours

Climb out of town to the cairns of Nine Standards Rigg (661m / 2170 feet) with its array of obelisks. This is a mysterious and ancient possibly boundary feature, marking the Watershed of England. Next we cross squelchy moors down to Keld in Swaledale. If it is a wet and cold day we might relish a scone and tea made on the farm at Ravenseat, where they breed prime rams. The moors then become increasingly gentler as we walk into Keld with its many waterfalls and old stone barns.

Day 9 Cross wild moorland to Reeth

walking @ 12-13 miles / 20km, 5 hours

There are two options to Reeth. The slightly longer and higher route is over wild moorland with long-abandoned lead mines, a magnet for the industrial archaeologist. If we have unfavourable weather or we just prefer a lower level walk, the pretty alternative route via Swaledale is a lovely option. There is a really nice pub in Gunnerside on this route. We finish the day in Reeth, an attractive Green Village which flourished at the height of the mining age and today does well out of tourism, hence its collection of pubs and tea shops.

Day 10 A walk through pretty Swaledale to Richmond

walking @ 12½ miles / 20km, 5 hours

A morning walk through pretty Swaledale lined with limestone crags on either side, to Richmond whose Norman Keep towers above the Swale on one side and the ancient cobbled market square on the other. We may also follow the Swale to Town Falls, which are quite impressive when the river is high.

Day 11 A flat walk to Osmotherley

walking @ 24 miles / 39km, 9 hours

This is the longest and flattest day of the tour, bridging the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors National Parks. A gentle rural day, walking from Richmond beside the River Swale and across the fields to Catterick Race Course, then threading our way to Brompton on Swale and trundling along beside tiny streams and quiet country roads to Danby Wiske with its village green and single pub.

From Danby it is a road walk although there are cross-country sections. There are two hills towards the end, a short climb to (what was) East Harlsey Castle, and then with the North York Moors pressing ever closer we carefully cross the main A19 road to take a lovely woodland footpath up the hill to Osmotherley. On the way one can visit Mount Grace Priory (built 1398) a partially restored ruin. Osmotherley is a quaint hill village with 3 pubs, and Britain's oldest functioning Methodist Church, where John Wesley came to preach.

Day 12 A strenuous walk in the Cleveland hills to Blakey

walking @ 21 miles / 34km, 8-9 hours

A strenuous day with repeated ascents and descents in the Cleveland Hills, then across heather moors to Rosedale. A steep stretch from Osmotherley introduces us to the North York Moors, sandy heather clad hills with areas of forest. After coming off Scarth Wood Moor, there is a long ascent up Live Moor and Carlton Bank (408m) before descending to Lord Stones Café, almost hidden in an off road embankment, for morning coffee.

There then follows the succession of Cringle Moor, Broughton Bank and White Hill all at or over 400m. You lose and then re-ascend 100-200m between each one. We thread through an area of sandstone boulders called The Wainstones on the way up White Hill. In clear weather we are rewarded with views of Roseberry Topping, Vale of Mowbray and back to the Pennines.

From the road at Claybank Top, we follow a moorland ridge up over Round Hill (454m) and maintain our height as the path follows the line of the old dismantled Rosedale railway line. The moor is bleak in bad weather and is dotted with standing stones some marked with inscriptions. There are enticing views at times into the fertile upper valleys of Farn and Esk dales, but the arrival at the ancient Lion Inn at Blakey is welcome especially if it is wet and cold. The Lion Inn has been a refuge from the elements for some 400 years.



Day 13 Walk to Egton Bridge or Grosmont

walking @ 10-11 miles / 16-18km, 4 hours

Some road walking, then an undulating descent down to wooded Eskdale with views to the sea. The latter part of the walk follows a pretty path through the woodlands on the banks of the River Esk, where we come across the 'Beggars Bridge', a parabolic stone structure that has a story of love lost and love re-found. Egton Bridge features a church with relics of the Catholic Martyr, Oliver Postgate. A really pretty setting, the river is famous for fly fishing and has some interesting stepping stones enabling you to hop between the two pubs faster than using the road. On occasion we may stay overnight in Grosmont, about a mile further on.

Day 14 Last day walk to Robin Hood's Bay

walking @ 16 miles / 26km, 7 hours

Following a private road to Grosmont, we may arrive in time to see a steam engine pull out for Pickering. There then follows a very steep pull up across heather moors with views down to Whitby and its Abbey. But the sea and journey's end is still tantalisingly far as the route abruptly changes course to visit the May Beck valley with its Falling Foss waterfall. A last area of high moor brings us to the coast, where the last three miles are spent on the coastal cliff path to Robin Hood's Bay, which appears almost by surprise as you near it. This is a village of red-roofed houses clustered around a harbour on the North Sea coast and it marks the end of this 190-odd-mile crossing of England. Normally we dip our toes in the sea then celebrate with a drink at the Bay Hotel (both optional activities).

Day 15 Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast in Robin Hood's Bay. Take the local bus or a taxi to nearby Whitby or Scarborough railway station for onward travel.

Outdoor Travel offer a wide range walking holidays, centre-based guided or self-guided inn-to-inn with luggage transfers and meals, in the UK and Ireland, including the **West Highland Way** and **Great Glen Way** in Scotland, and the **Ring of Kerry** and **Dingle Way** in Ireland.

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