

Pyrenean Group Holidays

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The English Coast to Coast hike – guided **15 nights/ 16 days including 1 ½ rest days**

Trip highlights

- Experience the satisfaction of completing one of Britain's best long distance hikes
- Journey through three of Britain's most beautiful national parks: Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors
- Visit William Wordsworth's village of Grasmere, set amidst stunning Lakeland scenery
- Far-reaching panoramas of some of Britain's largest lakes and highest fells
- Walk through classic rural countryside of rolling hills and pretty villages of the Yorkshire Dales
- Enjoy the international camaraderie of the UK's most popular long distance trail



Trip Summary

This is the quintessential English hill walking and long distance trail experience: 190 odd miles traversing three national parks and a variety of interesting landscapes, old towns and, of course public houses, on the way.

The route was originally proposed in 1973 by a legend of English Hillwalking, Alfred Wainwright.

Starting at the tiny Cumbrian seaside resort of St. Bees on the Irish Sea we head east, with the wind behind us, into the Lake district to pass by some of its most famous lakes and cross some important passes.

Then it is on into the Yorkshire Dales and over the mystical Nine Standards Rig, before following the beautiful River Swale for a couple of days into the old market town of Richmond. There follows a 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 Hood's Bay where a celebratory pint, bottle of Champagne or ice cream whilst standing in the sea is in order. Along the way you will be amazed at the variety of the dry stone walls, the charming little villages and just how much that you get to eat for a full English cooked breakfast! There are hotels, guesthouses and pubs to stay in on this tour and these, as well as the rich variety of the people that you meet en route, reflect something of the great diversity of England.

On three days we use private transport to shorten the hiking. This allows us to have a well deserved half day on Day 7 and **shortens Days 12 & 13** to enjoyable distances.

Suitability

The trip is graded Moderate to Challenging. Some long days and steep climbs and descents. The walking each day cannot be underestimated. Mixed weather can be expected. It is not recommended for first time walkers. Note that often the trails in the Lake District especially are steep and rocky at times.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive St Bees

Travel to starting point at the pretty village of St Bees on the edge of the Irish Sea. If there is time we can visit St Mary and St Bega's church – the Great west door dates from 1160. We may also be able to stroll down to the "official" starting point of the Coast to Coast to contemplate what we are about to do!

Meals: Nil



The Start

Day 2

Walk to Ennerdale Bridge at the edge of the Lake District National Park

We climb from the beach taking a footpath along red sandstone coastal cliffs of St Bees Head with views across to the Isle of Man then go inland over hilly ground to the edge of the Lake District National Park. Dent Hill is the first real fell that we cross. Then down to Nannycatch Gate and beck, followed by a delightful stroll along which brings us to the final descent to leafy Ennerdale Bridge.

16 miles / 26km, 7 hours. Total ascent 2300 ft / 700 metres.

Meal: Breakfast at St Bees



St Bees Head

Day 3

Walk to Borrowdale

We follow a quiet and scenic footpath along the shore of Ennerdale Water, with an easy scramble under Angler's Crag at Robin Hood's Seat. Then a long walk on a forest track continues to Black Sail Hut, which is the smallest Youth hostel and was originally a shepherd's hut. A steep climb follows to Honister Pass before the descent to Seatoller on the edge of beautiful Borrowdale.

14 ½ miles / 23 km, 6 ½ hours. Total ascent 2300 ft / 700m.

Meals: Breakfast at Ennerdale and evening meal at Seatoller



Above Honister Pass

Day 4

Classic lakeside scenery en route to Grasmere

Our ascent takes us up to Greenup Edge, the pass between Borrowdale and Grasmere. Soon there is a choice of routes. The direct route via Easedale Gill is more sheltered, the longer route via Helm Crag more dramatic.

10 miles / 16 km 5 hours. Total ascent 1700 ft / 600m via Easedale Gill

11 miles / 18 km 5 ½ hours. Total ascent 2600 ft / 800m via Helm Crag.

Meals: Breakfast at Seatoller

Day 5

Another great walking day to Patterdale via Grisedale Pass

We go over Grisedale Pass (2000 ft) and around the small mountain lake of Grisedale Tarn from where there are three choices. With good weather conditions we have the choice of via the renowned Helvellyn or to take the route up St. Sunday Crag, for some exceptional views down across Ullswater as we descend to the village of Patterdale.

An easier route in case of poor weather descends straight down the Grisedale valley.

8 miles / 13 km 4 ½ hours. Total ascent 1700 ft / 600m via Grisedale valley

9 miles / 14 km 5 ½ hours. Total ascent 3100 ft / 940m via St Sunday Crag

10 miles / 16 km 6 ¼ hours. Total ascent 3300 ft / 1000m via Helvellyn

Meals: Breakfast at Grasmere



Above Grisedale Tarn

Day 6

Walk to Shap over Kidsty Pike, the highest point on the route

The day starts with a climb to pretty Angle Tarn and the Roman road of High Street, before ascending Kidsty Pike (2650 ft / 808 m, the highest point on the whole route). There are excellent views from the summit before we descend to Haweswater, a huge body of water conceived in 1929 to supply Manchester with drinking water, drowning a couple of villages in the process. We then undulate through fields to Shap Abbey, the most easterly point of the Lake District National Park. After this we continue into Shap, an old granite mining town with several pubs and shops.

16 miles / 26 km, 8 hours. Total ascent 3800 ft / 1150 m.

Meals: Breakfast at Patterdale



Angel Tarn

Day 7

Half day crossing a limestone plateau to Kirkby Stephen

From Shap we take transport for a short ride, avoiding the motorway, cement works & quarry, to Sunbiggin Tarn, an important site for birds. From there we hike across Ravenstonedale Moor, following some impressive dry stone walls, drop down to the scenic Smardale bridge before the final climb and descent to Kirkby Stephen for a well deserved afternoon rest.

9 miles / 15 kms, 4 hrs hours. Total ascent 1350 ft / 410 m.

Meals: Breakfast at Shap

Day 8

To Keld crossing the main Pennine watershed

We climb out of town to the cairns of Nine Standards Rigg (2170 ft / 661m) with its array of stone pillars of uncertain origin. Whether they are a "stone army" to deter the Scots long ago, or boundary markers, they are nevertheless a remarkable array of sturdy beacons. It also marks the watershed of England. Next we cross peaty moors to cross into Swaledale. The moors then become increasingly gentler as we walk into Keld with its many waterfalls and old stone barns.

13 miles / 21 km, 5 ½ hours. Total ascent 2300 ft / 700m

Meals: Breakfast at Kirkby Stephen



Nine Standards Rigg

Day 9

Cross wild moorland to Reeth

After crossing the River Swale our walk meets the Pennine Way before traversing an area rich in industrial archeology with remains of smelters, tunnels, forges and flues from long-abandoned lead mines. There are fine views from a high level path before a gentle descent into pretty village of Reeth.

11 ½ miles / 19 km, 5 hours. Total ascent 1700 ft / 600m.

Meals: Breakfast at Keld



Blakethwaite Smelt Mill

Day 10

A walk through pretty Swaledale to Richmond

We have a morning walk through pretty Swaledale lined with limestone crags on either side with the River Swale being the dominant feature. We pass by the ruins of the 12 century Marrick Priory before the attractive descent to Richmond.

11 miles / 18 km, 5 hours. Total ascent 1300 ft / 400m .

Meals: Breakfast at Reeth



Richmond Market Place

Day 11

A day off at Richmond

This is a delightful town steeped in a long history that still lingers in the form of its massive Norman castle, narrow alleys and large cobbled market place. Nearby are the Swale falls which are quite impressive when the river is in spate.

Meals: Breakfast at Richmond

Day 12

Across the low farmland to Ingby Cross

A taxi ride from Richmond to Bolton-on-Swale before crossing from Swaledale to the Cleveland Hills. This is a long leisurely day, entirely over low ground. The fertile agricultural land of the Vale of Mowbray is only just above sea level. This is the flattest day of the tour, bridging the gap between the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors National Parks and passing through the village of Danby Wiske.

17 miles / 28 km 6 hours. Total ascent 650 ft / 200 m.

Meals: Breakfast at Richmond

Day 13

Across the Cleveland hills to Blakey

A taxi ride to Lord Stones café gives us a good starting point to enjoy this section of the trail with repeated ascents and descents along the Cleveland Hills, then across heather moors to Rosedale.. Great views in clear weather. Later 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.

15 miles /24 km 6 hours. Total ascent 1700 ft/ 600 m.

Meals: Breakfast at Ingiby Cross

Day 14

Over moorland and down the Esk valley to Grosmont

After a short road section passing a white cross called Fat Betty, there follows an easy undulating descent down to the village of Glaisdale and the beautiful wooded Eskdale valley. We also get some views opening up to the sea. The latter part of today's walk follows a pretty path through the woodlands on the banks of the River Esk. At Egton Bridge the river is famous for fly fishing and has some interesting stepping stones which we carefully cross.Finally we follow a delightful private road to the village Grosmont where there are often steam trains running.

14 miles / 22km, 5 ½ hours. Total ascent 1000ft / 300m.

Meals: Breakfast at Blakey



Cross the River Esk

Day 15

Last day walk to Robin Hood's Bay

A steep pull up out of the village and then across heather moors with views down to coastal Whitby and its Abbey. But the sea and journey's end is still tantalizingly 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 3 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 its harbour on the North Sea coast marking the end of this 190 odd-mile crossing of England.

15 ½ miles / 25 km, 6 ½ hours. Total ascent 2200 ft / 660 m.

Meals: Breakfast at Grosmont



Approaching Robin Hood's Bay

Day 16 Sunday 19th May

End of tour

The trip concludes after breakfast.

Meals: Breakfast at Robin Hood's Bay.

Accommodation

A mix of hotels, pubs and guesthouses. All rooms en-suite and a full English cooked breakfast included. Except for one night we are booked in for Bed & Breakfast only and will eat in the evening either at the place we are staying or at nearby restaurants/pubs.
Full details to follow.

Baggage transfers

During the trip all baggage transfers will be arranged between hotels. 1 bag per person.

Local transport

It is planned to use local transport on days 7, 12 & 13. The cost of this is included.
For those needing an unplanned rest day it is usually possible to ride with the baggage if arranged the night before.

What is not included

Getting to the first hotel at St Bees.
Lunches. It will be possible to buy food or packed lunches in all the villages/towns where we stay.
Evening meals on 14 days when the hotels are booked just for bed & breakfast (evening meal on Day 3 included in the holiday price).
Medical & travel insurance.
Personal expenses including drinks at the hotel.
Entrance fees (if any)
Transport away at the end of the trip.

What is included

Accommodation and meals as detailed above
Experienced guide for the whole trip
All baggage transfers between hotels
Local transport as detailed above.