

Usk Valley Walk



Highlights

This five-day self-guided holiday takes you along the Usk Valley on a gentle 48-mile walk through the heart of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Start at Caerleon and end in the pretty market town of Brecon – accommodation in comfy B&Bs and guesthouses along the way included.

The Usk Valley Walk traces an 48 mile (77km) in the stunning Vale of Usk between Caerlon in the South and Brecon in the North. The walk follows the River Usk - a small but perfectly formed river which carves its way through hills passing charming small market towns and historic landmarks from the Industrial revolution.

Kick-start your holiday with a trip around the ruins of Caerleon's Roman fortress and amphitheatre. You'll also be able to see the best remains Europe has to offer of Roman barrack buildings, too. After that, it's time to crack on with some serious walking. Highlights along the way include riverside pathways where the bright-cobalt-blue of kingfishers can often be spotted among tall grasses, canal towpaths that take in old lime kilns and other remnants of Wales' industrial age and the village of Talybont-on-Usk that nestles among the Central Beacons.

Is it for me?

You'll cover 48 miles over five days, so this walk is not such hard going on the legs – especially as there aren't too many steep uphill climbs on this one. The team who organise it has graded it as moderate – so it'll suit active families and those used to walking fair distances. As this is self-guided there may also be some points where good navigational skills are required – though most of the time paths are marked.

Accommodation

You'll be staying in B&B accommodation and good guesthouses that the team has used previously – so they know they're of a high standard. In terms of food, you'll get breakfast at your accommodation, and will then need to sort out your own lunches and evening meals – so budget extra for this. Don't forget to bring snack supplies too – especially if you've got teenagers in tow.

Itinerary

Day 1-Caerleon to Usk (10miles)

Begin at the old Roman town of Caerleon, originally called Isca after the River Usk, and explore the Roman fortress baths, Legionary Museum and amphitheatre. The first day is a gentle climb through woodland followed by a river-level walk to Usk town.

Day 2-Usk to The Bryn (10 miles)

Leaving the peaceful town of Usk, known in Welsh as Brynbuga, the walk continues along the riverbank. You will pass some of the most beautiful stretches of the river today, with plenty of opportunity to see kingfishers and other wildlife. The Abergavenny area has a growing reputation for excellent food, and enjoys a stunning location on the edge of the Black Mountains.

Day 3-The Bryn to Crickhowell (11 miles)

Enjoy views of the Brecon Beacons without any major climbs today as the trail continues past Govilon along the Monmouth and Brecon canal, passing lime kilns and other industrial archaeology. The restored canal is popular

Prices from

365 GBP (5 days) per person

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with narrow boats, whose bright colours and cheerful flowerpots enhance the natural environment, while the towpath makes for easy walking.

Day 4-Crickhowell to Talybont-on-Usk (9 miles)

After breakfast it's worth exploring Crickhowell Castle, before the journey continues westwards through the wide and fertile Usk Valley, first veering away and then rejoining the canal by the village of Llangynidr. A series of five locks are passed as the route ascends to the high point of the walk at 300m above sea level. Then it's down to Talybont-on-Usk with its sparkling reservoir and marvellous spot in the shadow of the Central Beacons.

Day 5-Talybont-on-Usk to Brecon (8 miles)

The final day takes you through the landscape beloved by Henry Vaughan, the 18th-Century poet who lived near Talybont, and on to the thriving market town of Brecon. Here, fine Georgian townhouses and the buildings of Christ College, a school established by Henry VIII, provide the perfect backdrop for an annual Jazz Festival and numerous other cultural and artistic events.

Details

Getting there

The nearest train station is in Cwmbran which is about five miles away from Caerleon. It's on the Hereford to Newport line.

Price includes

Pick-up and drop-off at the nearest railway station at the start and end of the tour, B&B and guesthouse accommodation, luggage transfer, vehicle back-up, custom maps, route guide with directions and background information, first-aid kit.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

5 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed