

Walk the Dales Way!



Highlights

Covering two national parks (the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District), the Dales Way is a great walk and an excellent way of experiencing some of the fantastic scenery England has to offer.

The Dales of Yorkshire have been work in progress formed over millions of years, with most of the limestone valleys existing today etched out of the land during the last period of glacial activity which ended ten thousand years ago. Along with the Cotswolds and Cornwall, The Yorkshire Dales and the neighbouring Lake District are excellent showcases to remind the world how spectacular the landscape of England truly is. The tour begins in Ilkley, a spa town in West Yorkshire, taking you on an enchanting 84 mile walk up to the shores of Windermere in the Lake District. On the trip you'll be staying in a specially chosen selection of lovely 3 and 4 star country houses, inns and B&Bs.

This tour is a celebration of nature and British culture. There's seemingly no end to the variety of the ground you'll cover on your way up to the lakes, from lush meadows lined with stone walls to roaring rivers cutting through steep limestone valleys - it's no surprise that the Dales Way is a popular walking route in England. Although very heavily geared toward cashing in on the tourism which comes its way, Bowness-on-Windermere couldn't make a more pleasant end-point to the tour. Touching the shores of England's largest lake, the multitude of quirky stores, excellent eateries and lake excursions mean you could probably kill an entire day in the town. The famed British hospitality also shines through in the numerous inns and B&Bs which make up your accommodation for the week. The classic country pub is an institution in England - after a long day in the fresh air, make sure you take half an hour out to 'quaff an ale' at the bar!

Is it for me?

Although the days are long, you're likely to end the day feeling invigorated and energised after a day out in the fresh air! Standard walking equipment will be required of course, the basics of which are good walking footwear, warm and waterproof clothing and a day bag. your main luggage will be transferred to your next stop during each day but it is asked that you keep this luggage to one 15kg case per person.

While England is famed for its green landscapes, it's also famed for its lousy weather - keep an eye on the forecast before planning your trip! The summer months, particularly August and September, tend to be good months for walking trips.

The tour guides adhere to strict responsible tourism policies, so you can sleep easy knowing that your explorations are being conducted in an environmentally friendly way.

Accommodation

The tour operators take great pains to seek out the very best independently-run accommodation. As a result, you can expect quality overnight stays in 3 and 4 star establishments, ranging from guesthouses, B&Bs, country pubs and small hotels. Wherever possible, rooms with en-suite facilities are booked. A large breakfast is included on each day of the tour, generally a filling cooked breakfast with all the trimmings, although toasts and cereals are available if you fancy something a bit lighter. Lunch and dinner is not included in the price, but staff at the accommodation you will stay at on any given day are usually more than happy to make you a packed lunch to take on the walk. In the evening, you can't go wrong with a freshly cooked meal at a country pub - steak and ale pies, gammon and minted lamb shanks are staples of an English pub menu and all highly recommended.

Itinerary

Prices from

405 GBP (6 days) per person

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This is a six walking days, seven night itinerary.

Day One: Ilkley, West Yorkshire

The time here is your own, with overnight stay provided to get you well rested before the first day of walking.

Day Two: Burnsall Bridge (13 miles)

The Old Bridge in Ilkley is the starting point for the day's walk north up to Burnsall. Passing some old mills, you will go on to pass through the ornamental gardens of the old rectory which features a charming lake home to many ducks. The path continues along the waters edge past a 17th century church and through meadowlands, leading to a view of Bolton Priory which becomes visible as you reach the valley floor with dramatic rock cliffs. You will continue on to Cavendish Pavilion where you can get lunch or just some refreshments to ready you for the walk through the waterfall areas around Barden Tower. After passing medieval settlements and trekking through woodlands reach Burnsall Bridge, the destination for the day.

Day Three: Hubberholme (15 Miles)

With the village of Hubberholme as the day's ultimate end point, you'll leave Burnsall behind and make your way towards the first checkpoint of Grassington, utilizing a remarkable suspension bridge along the way. You'll also get to take a leisurely walk along Linton Falls which power the local woollen mill and provide an almost natural entranceway into the village. After Grassington, you'll ascend further into the Dale highlands, discovering some stunning views later on the path as you head up to Conistone Pie which provides the best views of the Dales Way. The group will work its way down the hills and back into the woods which takes you slowly downhill and finally you will reach the valley floor along to the villages of Kettlewell and Buckton. Along this stretch you'll come across a magnificent Victorian church complemented by stained glass and the opportunity to try out a pint of locally brewed nettle beer. The final stretch of the walk will lead you into Hubberholme. This pretty little village is a one pub town, The George Inn, but the food is good and being the only pub you will not go wanting for the company of other walkers.

Day Four: Dent (17 Miles)

As you leave Hubberholme you will also leave Warfedale and enter Dentdale, circling a delightful little church and following the river upstream. This path takes you past the river cascading over several ledges which is reduced to a trickle in the dry season. You will head towards a curious stone circle, of which its purpose and date are unknown, before continuing with more river side paths leading all the way to Deepdale Gill which is a splendidly rugged area. Past Deepdale there is a pretty little farm which benefits from a waterfall at its front door, after this the path begins to climb and this area can be a little muddy from the springs and streams that cascade down the hillside. After following the ambling track you will approach the Water Shed and the birdlife is again plentiful, the path will lead through a wood and up a hill, at the summit of which you will find the post marker which declares the point where the Pennines meet the Dales Way. Following an ancient path will take the group to the next stopping point, Dent Head Viaduct, with the impending Lake District now becoming visible. Food is served at most B&B's by prior arrangement; however you can take a taxi into Dent just 3 miles away for more choice.

Day Five: Sedbergh (10 Miles)

You'll start the day with a section of walking beside a deep ravine and on to Scar Force, a very impressive fall after a downfall. A short while after you will reach Dent Station, England's highest train station, then on to a winding meadow and forest path to a clearing where the Dentdale landscape proves its diversity from Warfedale now left behind. With the 2124ft Whernside mountain watching over you, the walk will lead out of the forests and open up to views over the Lakeland Fells and Millthorpe. As you pass you will get the sense of leaving Yorkshire and entering the Lake District, although the official border is some way off yet. Shortly after Millthorpe the path will lead on to your overnight village of Sedbergh. Sedbergh is well stocked with pubs and restaurants - there is a post office a few cash machines, and some good shops here so stock up with what you will need before you get to the next big town in Windermere.

Day Six: Kendal (13 Miles)

The views and landscape are delightful today as you pass through a wood which displays the remains of Akay House including what has been left of a folly tower. You will continue on to a cotton mill and past a gorge which allows the river to crash through just before it meets the Dee. After walking through the floral meadows, evidence of the impending lakes forms up ahead as you pass through slate roofed villages and amble across a beck romantically crammed full of fallen rocks and falls. On passing Sprint Mill you will see Burnside Hall which was used as refuge centre for farmers during the cross border raids. It is not long after Burnside Hall that you stroll in the Burnside itself. A short trip to Kendal (one mile out of Burnside) is an option tonight for a variety of eateries and pubs. Kendal is a large town with lots of shops, post office, pubs, restaurants and cash machines. If you don't want to go into Kendal, the pub in Burnside can provide you with lovely pub meals.

Day Seven: Windermere (10 Miles)

Pressing on with the final leg of the tour you'll leave Burnside and head off to the River Kent, rich with birdlife and the chance to see kingfishers feeding on the river. There are many mills in this final section, from cotton to paper mills and there is an entire village of them at Cowen Head, and the terrain becomes increasingly rocky as you progress to the end of the Dales Way. The river really comes in to its own today as it crashes and gurgles over the rocks, and is shaded by majestic trees. As you see the majestic lake ahead you can choose from either the long or short way to your finale destination. There is no shortage of fine places to eat and drink in Bowness-on-Windermere, making it a great place to celebrate your survival of the week! There is every thing you may need in Windermere from new walking boots to trinkets for those at home, a post office, cash machines and of course the whole of the Lack District at your finger tips.

Details

Getting there

A two-hour train journey from London will take you to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, only five minutes' drive to Chipping Campden. Public transport also available.

Price includes

Accommodation, door to door baggage transfer, detailed info pack, guide book and map for the group leader, emergency telephone support.

Available

Apr—Oct

Typical Duration

6 days - 9 days

Comfort level

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

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed