

Survival & Bushcraft Courses in the Lakes



Highlights

From making fire to building a shelter, foraging for fungi to navigating by the stars, wilderness survival is diverse and fascinating subject. These hands-on survival or bushcraft courses are the perfect choice for those wanting to learn or perfect the art of bushcraft!

One of England's only true mountainous regions, the Lake District is in many ways the quintessential old English landscape, with gently rolling hills, thick oak forests and mighty tarns (lakes), as well as bogs and marshes fed by heavy rainfall. Once the haunt of artists and poets, the Lakes today are a magnet for lovers of the very great outdoors. There's top-class cycling, sailing and climbing to be had, not to mention some of the most inspirational hiking in Britain! It's little wonder that Wordsworth and Co. found so much to rouse them here. Even the place names are evocative; Scafell Pike, Buttermere, Helvellyn and Crinkle Crags wouldn't be out of place in a Tolkien novel! Whether you're diehard thrill-seeker or a leisurely stroller, you're bound to discover a lot to your liking in the Lakes

These two- or six-day bushcraft courses offer a comprehensive introduction to rough-country travel and wilderness survival. Set around an expedition-style base camp, you'll cover everything from camp crafts and knife-handling to building shelters and making fire. There are practical lessons on identifying wild foods like mushrooms and berries, as well as classes in backwoods cookery! The longer six-day course is more immersive, featuring techniques for hunting and trapping, wilderness fishing, knots and rope-throwing, star-craft navigation and water harvesting. Whichever option you choose, you can be guaranteed of a unique experience that will profoundly change the way you view the natural world!

Is it for me?

These bushcraft courses are without doubt some of the most unique and inspirational holidays you'll find. This said, they're most definitely not to everyone's taste. For a start, the whole trip is based outdoors, which means no TV, en suites or cosy double bed! Much of your time will be spent exploring the local landscape, so a good level of fitness (and a decent waterproof!) is important. There's also a ban on alcohol (for obvious safety reasons), and pets and under-18s aren't allowed, so this isn't the place to come for a family holiday! If none of this sounds like too much of a problem then we'd highly recommend these fascinating courses. You don't need any prior experience, just an open mind and a love of the great outdoors. The emphasis is on reconnecting with the natural world and our ancient heritage of survival, a potentially life-changing experience!

Accommodation

These bushcraft courses are based at a stunning 2,000 acre woodland estate situated between Lake Windermere and Esthwaite Water in the centre of the Lake District. Base-camp is on the wooded shore of a four acre lake, complete with assorted shelters, a giant campfire and an early 19th century boathouse! All the bushcraft courses are fully catered, with food cooked on site from super-fresh, locally sourced ingredients, some of which you might be expected to hunt, gather or cook for yourself (depending on the course). Typical meals include cereals and tinned fruits for breakfast, wholesome rolls with a variety of fillings for lunch and Indian-, Thai-, Italian- or Chinese-style dinners. (Special dietary requirements can be catered for with advance notice.)

Prices from

225 GBP (2 days) per person

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Itinerary

The two day weekend course is a gentle introduction to wilderness living covering essential bushcraft and survival skills. The focus is on keeping warm, dry, safe and well fed in the outdoors. The week course will give you a deep awareness of the outdoors. You will learn how to build shelters, feed yourself from the wild, make fire by friction and find and purify water.

The Weekend Course covers:

- Safety & basic camp-craft
- Making water safe to drink
- Safe use of cutting tools
- Fire lighting methods
- Lightweight camping systems
- Shelter Building
- Plant & tree uses
- Backwoods cookery

The Six Day Course covers:

- Safe use and maintenance of cutting tools
- Wilderness Fire making techniques, from modern to friction
- Collection, purification and transportation of water
- Wilderness fishing methods
- Techniques for hunting and trapping
- Natural shelter types; construction and considerations
- Star-craft navigation
- Natural bindings and cord
- Wild plant identification; food, folklore and medicine
- Tree identification; food, utility and woodcarving
- Backwoods cookery
- The modern outfit - going light
- Basic Mountain safety
- Rope throwing & basic knots

Seasonal subjects will be added to the syllabus, such as fungi ID during the Autumn courses. The course will conclude with a certificated test on the final day, allowing you to put into practice all that you have learnt. (On this course you will be given a sheath knife to keep).

Details

Getting there

M6 then A590 to Kendal then A592 to Far Sarway

Price includes

Food, accommodation, tuition, sheath knife (6 day course).

2 day course costs GBP 225.0 p.p.; 6-day course costs GBP 545.0 p.p.

Available

Apr—Oct

Typical Duration

2 days - 6 days

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

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

Travellers should bring

A comprehensive list of equipment and clothing will be sent to you upon booking.

Reviews (2)

Reviews of this experience

“ After a week spent taking part in the Woodlander course, learning wilderness bushcraft, I know that I will never own a PlayStation. No amount of sitting in front of a television exercising my thumbs could possibly have the magical effect of this supremely absorbing subject. Strangely, producing fire by friction is an emotional moment. I feel initiated. There is something quite primal about the process, as if I've connected in some significant way with my ancestors. I feel more tuned-in with the outdoors than I have ever felt. I also have an irrepressible grin etched across my face.

The course takes place in one of nature's most beautiful classrooms on a remote 300-acre private forestry estate to the west of Lake Windermere, with a spectacular backdrop of mountains, lakes and rivers. Such a location gives the participants - a maximum number of 12 taught by five instructors - the chance to really commune with nature on a very intimate level. In my ten years of enjoying outdoor pursuits, mainly climbing and mountaineering, with a healthy dose of mountain biking and hill walking thrown in, I've never really engaged with my surroundings in this way until now.

Before I arrived, I did have concerns about the nature of the subject matter, in particular whether it would be an exercise in Rambo-style machismo, an initiation into tree-hugging pseudo-spiritualism, or a sentimental regression into the past. Thankfully, it is none of these things. Rather, it encourages me to see what I've been missing when out walking.

(Written by James Reynolds published in The Scotsman on 19 June 2004) ””

Scotsman reviewing Survival & Bushcraft Courses in the Lakes

“ When I originally booked this Bushcraft day I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. Were we going to be like Ray Mears, skinning rabbits, or cooking moose on hot coals, or were we going to be exposed to the Bear Grylls way of life where we dived into frozen rivers, and jogged 50 km's through mosquito ridden swamps. Luckily it wasn't the Bear Grylls side, phew! but it was definitely more Ray Mears, and definitely a lot of fun!

As soon as we arrived in camp, which is set in a beautiful pine forest, set on the far banks of Lake Windermere, we had to make fire, and properly. We all failed miserably at this task, but we learnt very quickly how to make a fire properly, and this lesson will stick with me for a long time to come. Throughout the rest of the day we made some Banock cakes that we then ate. Tracked foxes and squirrels, ate wild berries and mushrooms, and even made fire from wood. Not only do I feel like a proper caveman but the whole group thoroughly enjoyed the whole day and we were all sad to see it come to an end!

Stephen was a great instructor, who delivered at just the right level, and the day has made us all want to learn more about how to survive in the wild.

Bear Grylls, eat your heart out! And maybe a snake too!

5 out of 5 – Brilliant! ””

nbamford reviewing Survival & Bushcraft Courses in the Lakes