

England: Coast to Coast

Tour-Only Itinerary

Pocketing a carefully chosen piece of red sandstone from the cliffs of St. Bees' beach, you turn your back on the Irish Sea and embark on your weeklong Self-Guided Walking tour across northern England. That pebble has a big adventure in store: tradition holds that travelers on the Coast to Coast walk should carry a stone with them and cast it into the North Sea at journey's end. With it, you'll explore three spectacular national parks: roaming the Lake District's windswept tarns, crossing the Yorkshire Dales' flower-strewn meadows, and cavorting with Swaledale sheep in the heather-clad North York Moors. Along the way, there are quintessential pubs to enjoy and stops in charming market towns bustling with shops. When you reach Robin Hood's Bay at week's end, your pocket may be a little lighter, but your memories will fill an entire backpack.

Highlights

- Walk the most spectacular portions of Alfred Wainwright's renowned Coast-to-Coast Walk, as you make your way from the Irish Sea to the North Sea.
- Gaze out at the deep-blue waters of the Irish Sea from the clifftops of St. Bees Head, the westernmost point of Cumbria.
- Marvel at some of England's most breathtaking vistas as you trek through the Lake District, home to the scenery that inspired poet William Wordsworth.
- Stroll the enchanting, quintessentially English landscape of Muker Meadows—a vast green expanse dotted with wildflowers, sheep, cows, horses, barns, and drystone walls.

- Soak in the rich heritage and history of Richmond, England's second largest cobbled market town.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated moderate overall, with an average of 7 to 11 miles per day. While walks typically are not able to be shortened, it is possible to travel with your luggage to your next accommodation on any given day (included in the price of the tour). There are daily ascents and descents, with a maximum elevation gain of 1,800 feet and maximum elevation loss of 1,850 feet. Most of the hills are gradual as opposed to short and steep with the exception of days 3 & 4 in the Lake District; on these days you have the choice of a rugged mountain hike (featuring a strenuous ascent and long gentle descent) or an overall gentle lakeside walk. The terrain includes narrow gravel and asphalt roads, springy turf, packed dirt trails, stretches of loose gravel, boggy areas, and rugged moorland. As many walks bring you through open pastures (muddy when wet!) and constantly evolving farmland, it's important to be comfortable around livestock (sheep, cows, horses) and helpful to remain attentive; some navigation skills and a sense of adventure may come in handy as well. Weather can increase the difficulty of this tour as the majority of the walks are fully exposed to the elements. Waterproof boots and breathable waterproof clothing are absolutely essential on this tour! And remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!

DAY 1

Your England: Coast to Coast tour begins

Make your own way to the railway station at Whitehaven, a coastal Cumbrian town near northern England's beautiful Lake District. The town's ties to the US date to the Revolutionary War, when American naval captain John Paul Jones led a raid upon this coast. This was also the final home of George Washington's paternal grandmother, Mildred Gale. Upon arrival, a taxi takes you about 20 minutes to Cleator, an old iron-ore mining village on the Ehen River. With its Irish Sea location at the western end of

England's famed Coast-to-Coast Walk, Cleator attracts walkers from all over the world. The walk's creator, Alfred Wainwright, was fond of saying that his footpath traversed "the grandest territory in the north of England." Take time to visit your lodge's gardens and settle in or perhaps take a stroll into town to visit the 12th-century St. Leonard's Church, built during the reign of King Henry I. Later, meet our local representative for an orientation meeting. A hearty three-course dinner is included tonight at the hotel, giving you a chance to sample the town's delicious and locally sourced produce from the nearby Cumbrian farmland and the cold waters of the Irish Sea. Freshly prepared cuisine is featured throughout your journey; on some days, you may well walk past farms that produce some of the food that will be on your plate that same evening!

Included Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

Coast-to-Coast Walk: St. Bees to Cleator. Transportation to Grange-in-Borrowdale

9.7 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain and 800-ft. elevation loss

Wake up to a full English breakfast, as you will all week long. You leave via taxi for a 10-minute ride to St. Bees, a delightful, sandstone village where the Coast-to-Coast Walk begins. Alight your taxi at the railway station near St. Bees Priory, a Norman church dating to 1120. Dedicated to St. Bega, an Irish nun who was shipwrecked here in the 9th century, the priory is closely linked to the town's spiritual identity and heritage. From the station, you follow a narrow, paved lane a half-mile to the coast, passing the statue of St. Bega along the way. You may stop at Hartley's Beach Café on Seacote Beach for coffee, tea, or last-minute items before starting your walk.

Proceed to the beach, a long stretch of sand flanked by a concrete seawall that was erected between 1959 and 1961 to prevent erosion. The scenic coast is littered with colorful boulders, many fallen from the dramatic cliffs above. While here, you may wish to pick up a pebble to mark the start of your adventure, as is the tradition with many an English walker; bring it with you on your hike and toss it into the North Sea when you arrive. To the north, continue to St. Bees Head, the westernmost point of Cumbria. This hulking wall of red sandstone, threaded with white streaks of rock, stretches four miles; its nooks and crannies are abuzz with the activity of northwest England's only cliff-nesting seabird colony and ablaze with a riot of colorful wildflowers. To reach the start of your walking trail, follow the path up these cliffs to South Head,

towering an average of 300 feet. Two headlands, north and south, jut into the Irish Sea here, demarcated by the rock-strewn gully at Fleswick Bay. Pause here to admire the views, and on a clear day, you may spot the Isle of Man out in the sea and the Cumbrian Mountains inland.

The Coast-to-Coast Walk begins at the Wainwright Wall, named for the hardy English walker who devised the route. You trace the trail along a cliff through a nature reserve managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), following the fence that borders the precipice. As you walk among breathtaking vistas kissed by a sea breeze, you pass sheep and cows grazing on green pastures. Descend to Fleswick Bay and take a break on its shingle beach in the shadow of the headlands before continuing up to North Head. At the whitewashed lighthouse and keeper's cottages, take in views of Saltom Bay and Whitehaven. The first beacon here was built in 1717 and replaced after a fire in 1822. Today's tower, whose light is visible for 25 miles, dates to 1866 and has been automated since 1987.

Later, arrive at a quarry, making your way onto a red sandstone path slicing through green banks before passing some cottages. Join a paved road to Sandwith, a charming village that leads you onto a country lane past a large working farmyard and fields. Pass through the tiny village of Moor Row, named for its row of houses on a moor, before returning to the Ennerdale Country House Hotel. Relax with time to enjoy a drink at the bar, before boarding a taxi for a 50-minute drive to tonight's accommodation in the Borrowdale Valley. Here, you're surrounded by a lush paradise of green meadows and steep, rock-strewn slopes draped in oak forests. Your hotel for tonight is a five-minute walk from the small village of Grange-in-Borrowdale. Once you've settled in, perhaps you'll venture into the village before returning for dinner at the hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 3

Lake District National Park: Rosthwaite to Grasmere OR Grasmere and Rydal Loop

8.3 miles, moderate with challenging sections, 1,800-ft. elevation gain and 1,850-ft. elevation loss OR 5.3 miles, easy, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss

Choose from two walking options today, depending on your enthusiasm and—always a consideration in England—the weather. After breakfast, travel just two miles by taxi to the village of Rosthwaite, the

unofficial and charming capital of the spectacular Borrowdale Valley, a quaint collection of slate and whitewashed houses. Here, you are surrounded by the rugged fells of the Lake District, a UNESCO World Heritage site renowned for its cultural landscape; it is English rural terrain at its most authentic. Start your walk tracing the dreamy contours of the Stonethwaite Valley, which slices through the soaring wall of Borrowdale. Follow a crisscross of meticulously laid, drystone walls covered in a delightful patchwork of soft moss. As you enjoy the song of the trickling waters of Stonethwaite Beck, a lovely mountain stream, you will be in good company as countless Herdwick sheep graze or lounge in emerald fields. At the junction of two valleys, the waters of Langstrath Beck and Greenup Gill (a narrow ravine) merge before making their way back down to Stonethwaite. But you continue upward along Greenup Gill, entranced by its waterfalls, tributaries, and wide-open skies. Breathtaking vistas unfold as you climb and circle around the towering Eagle Crag before a final steep jaunt over a stone gully. Your ascent ends at the massive Lining Crag.

The remainder of the day's trek is more or less level or downhill as you follow an indistinct path through a boggy landscape to cross Greenup Edge, a pass straddling Borrowdale and Grasmere. Pause for your picnic lunch in this peaceful spot. Then continue across scenic Wythburn Valley before a descent into Far Easedale, tracing a low riverside trail to Grasmere. This lovely village of stone buildings sidles up to a pristine, island-dotted lake. The famed poet William Wordsworth lived in Dove Cottage here with his sister and later moved to Allan Bank after his marriage to Mary. There may be time to explore the Wordsworth Museum at your own expense and visit the family's poignant cemetery plot in the church graveyard.

If the weather is poor or if you prefer a shorter walk today, you travel with your luggage to Grasmere and stroll a loop that follows pleasant and varied terrain around Grasmere Lake and Rydal Water. Trace the Old Coffin Road, so named because it was once the final journey taken by the dead of Rydal as they were brought to the Grasmere church for burial. Pass Dove Cottage, home to Wordsworth from 1799 to 1808, and the Wordsworth Trust Shop, perhaps visiting them at your own expense. In Rydal, stop by Rydal Mount (another of the poet's homes) or the elegant Rydal Hall (where Wordsworth's landlord lived). Today, the latter offers lunch and tea shops should you wish to indulge in a snack.

This evening, choose from one of Grasmere's many dining options or enjoy an elegant meal at the hotel restaurant, where creative dishes are prepared from locally sourced ingredients. Handmade cheeses and hand-cured meats might start you off, perhaps followed by a fresh lamb or salmon dish accompanied by delicious produce.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4

Lake District National Park: Dunmail Raise to Glenridding OR Glenridding to Aira Force and return

6.5 miles, moderate, 1,150-ft. elevation gain and 1,500-ft. elevation loss OR 5.8 miles, easy, 500-ft. elevation gain and loss

After a hearty breakfast of cereals, yogurt, smoked fish, eggs, meats, and whatever else whets your appetite from the generous buffet, choose from two walking options. The first continues along the Coast-to-Coast Walk, starting at Dunmail Pass, at 1,929 feet. Legend has it that the Saxon King Edmund and Celtic King Dunmail fought here in 945 AD. After Dunmail was killed, his crown was hastened up a steep path along the waters of Grisedale Beck and tossed into the tarn, or lake, to keep it out of Saxon hands. The crown, never found again, was believed to have magical powers that gave its wearer the right to the Kingdom of Cumberland.

Begin with a steady climb on a rocky and uneven trail following Raise Beck, a trickling mountain stream. Make your way past tall ferns and small waterfalls, tracing the route of a stone wall to the final resting place of Dunmail's crown, Grisedale Tarn, set at 1,768 feet and surrounded by bare hills. The grand setting is the ideal spot to pause and contemplate the rugged wildness of this place, framed by the slopes of Dollywaggon Pike, Fairfield, and Seat Sandal. Continue traversing this starkly beautiful area until reaching a large cairn. Then descend into the lush, green pastures of Grisedale Valley, grazed by cattle and sheep. At the village of Patterdale, one of the region's most pristine hamlets, take a paved road to tiny Glenridding, set on the shore of Lake Ullswater. After settling into your hotel, there may be time to treat yourself to a lake cruise on an Ullswater Steamer, or you may rent your own boat.

If you prefer—due to weather conditions or a desire for an easier walk option—travel by taxi after breakfast to lakeside Glenridding, where you follow the Ullswater Way. From your hotel, follow the trail north to Stybarrow Crag and Mossdale Bay to Glencoyne. Cross the stream of Glencoyne Beck into Glencoyne Park, whose quiet, pristine beauty inspired Wordsworth to write one of his most loved poems, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud.” Later arrive at the 65-foot Aira Force waterfall, with lovely views of Aira Beck. You may also spot the endangered red squirrel, nearing extinction because of the encroaching non-native grey squirrel. You might pause at a tearoom for a leisurely cuppa. Return the same way you came, or, board a steamer from Aira Force Pier at your own expense. Seek out a spot for dinner on your own this

evening.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5

Yorkshire Dales National Park: Muker to Reeth

10.1 miles, easy to moderate, 450-ft. elevation gain and 600-ft. elevation loss

After breakfast, a 1.5 hour taxi ride delivers you to Yorkshire Dales National Park, where the Swaledale Valley cradles the village of Muker on a hillside overlooking the Swale River. After time for tea or browsing the grey-stone shops in the tiny hamlet, navigate your way through the village and set off along farm tracks to the banks of the Swale River. Stroll downstream and cross the Ramps Holme Bridge, continuing into the lovely Muker Meadows, a riot of orchids, lady's mantle, cat's ear, buttercups, and wood crane's bill. So precious are these fields that they are protected by the Wildlife Trust. The hay meadows, too, are conserved as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. As you walk, take time to really drink in this unique place. The traditional 18th- and 19th-century barns and drystone walls are the most authentic feature of Muker Meadows. Swaledale sheep, cows, and horses complete the picture-perfect setting. Follow the river through some woodlands to the iconic Ivelet Bridge, a beautifully arched packhorse span that, in medieval times, helped convey corpses to the consecrated grounds at Grinton Church. The adjacent "coffin stone" allowed pallbearers to lay down their burden for a spell. Do not cross the bridge, but walk into more fields to the picturesque village of Gunnerside, the ideal spot for a break in the local pub or tearoom.

Later, follow the footpath into Gunnderside Flats, well-tended lands still used by local farmers to raise livestock among fields marked by the crisscross pattern of stone walls. Soon, the trail returns to the banks of the Swale River. The remainder of your route meanders to pasturelands, to a country road, and back to the river. At walk's end, arrive in Reeth, a rural village spectacularly set on a plateau above the river in view of sweeping hills and moors. This quaint Yorkshire Dales village, once a lead-mining town, seems torn from a storybook; stone and brick cafés, pubs, and shops surround its large triangular village green.

Following time to explore Reeth, a short taxi ride delivers you to Richmond, home to England's second-largest cobbled market square, a stunning Norman castle, a splendid Georgian theater, dramatic ruins, and your lodging for the next two nights. This evening, you have many options for dinner on your own in

Richmond.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

Yorkshire Dales National Park: Reeth to Richmond OR spend a leisurely day in Richmond

10.5 miles, easy to moderate, 950-ft. elevation gain and 1,200-ft. elevation loss

If you wish to forego a day of walking, today is the day. It is easy to while away a day exploring the traditional town of Richmond that drips with English heritage.

If you are walking today, stop in town to pick up supplies for a picnic, then taxi to Reeth to begin the day's walk back to Richmond. Trace the main road out of Reeth, where a field leads you to the Swale River. Once you arrive at a country road that's overseen by grazing cows and sheep, follow it past the 12th-century Marrick Priory, home to Benedictine nuns until it fell victim to Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540. Today, it lies in ruins except for the tower, which you may see past the barns of the adjacent Abbey Farm and the Ripon Diocese. Here, a grassy uphill path leads to an entrance gate to the Steps Wood, a small patch of forest traversed by some 375 steps known as the Nuns' Steps, said to have been laid by local sisters. These point you to the small hamlet of Marrick, which soon opens up to walled fields that descend into the village of Marske. Here, visit the Church of St. Edmund the Martyr, dating to the 11th century. Drinks and snacks are available if you'd like a refreshment.

The main road out of Marske delivers you to a succession of grass fields connected by stiles, easy steps that allow you to climb over fences. As you walk, you may spot the large white cairn on Applegarth Scar, a dramatic limestone crag. Continue in this direction along a farm track, crossing more open fields into Whitcliffe Wood. Your footpath through this patch of forest deposits you onto a shady asphalt lane, which affords delightful vistas of Richmond and its castle tower, as you descend into town. This evening, find a local spot for a satisfying meal on your own.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

North York Moors National Park: Seavey Hill to Glaisdale

7 miles, easy to moderate, 1,200-ft. elevation loss

After another bountiful breakfast, travel about one hour and 20 minutes to North York Moors National Park for a moorland walk over gentle downhill terrain. One of England's most celebrated parks for its bright purple bell heather that blooms in July and August, North York Moors is a haven for birdlife such as the merlin, red grouse, skylark, and snipe. Delicate moss, flowing hair grass, and cotton grass will also mark your progress today.

Today's pathway follows the heather crest of Danby High Moor. In these uplands, you might spot juniper, bog rosemary, or cloudberry. This contemplative and peaceful road points you to a solitary gate and a signpost for the Coast-to-Coast Walk and Glaisdale, today's destination. Follow a clear track from here, crossing a heather moor past the stout stone building of Trough House; a secluded shooting hut often kept company by a few upland sheep. Later, you round the head of Great Fryup Dale, named for the seductive Norse goddess Freya ("up" is the Olde English term for "valley"). A gentle downhill walk leads to a gentle uphill one as you traverse a rugged moorland trail to the crest of Glaisdale Moor, offering splendid views of the valley you just left. Later, meet an all-but-abandoned asphalt road—known as Glaisdale Rigg—that traces the ridge. Enjoy spectacular views of Great Fryup Dale to one side and Glaisdale Head to the other. The vistas here are breathtaking, so take your time and enjoy this magnificent stroll in the clean mountain air as moorlands stretch out all around you. Pause along the way to contemplate those who erected the many standing stones along Glaisdale Rigg. One is inscribed "Whitby Road," and once pointed many a journeyman or trader to Whitby, a seaside town with a great maritime and mining heritage.

At a local pub in Glaisdale, meet your driver for a 50-minute ride to Helmsley, a traditional market town nestled in the Ryedale Valley amid the beauty of the North York Moors. Enjoy the remainder of the day exploring its pretty streets lined with traditional stone cottages, perhaps stopping by a tearoom or gift shop. Stroll along the Rye River, visit the busy market, and admire its ancient castle. This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel's restaurant, named for its dual functionality. By day The Gallery Restaurant is home to 'Helmsley Galleries,' the most important commercial collection of art in the North. As the evening draws, it takes on the more functional role as a 3 AA rosette restaurant serving inspiring modern cuisine with strong flavors and largely reliant on Yorkshire ingredients.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 8

North York Moors National Park: Littlebeck to Robin Hood's Bay

11 miles, moderate, 900-ft. elevation gain and 950-ft. elevation loss

Today, you conclude your journey at the North Sea, the eastern terminus of the Coast-to-Coast Walk. Before leaving Helmsley, purchase supplies for today's picnic lunch. Taxi 50 minutes to the foot of the steep Esk Valley and Littlebeck, a tiny village named for its "small stream." From the Littlebeck Methodist Church, head down the road beside the village information sign and cross the bridge over Little Beck. You pass the Old Mill, used to grind corn until the 1930s, and the Old Woodcarver's cottage. Gain a little elevation as the road curves right. Look for the wooden footpath sign that reads "Falling Foss and Coast-to-Coast," which puts you back on the Coast-to-Coast Walk you started in St. Bees. You may also see the sign for the Nature Reserve known as Littlebeck Wood, a 65-acre protected parcel through which the Little Beck stream runs. This semi-natural forest, blanketed with patches of mosses and fungi, is dense with oak, ash, alder, hazel, cherry, rowan holly, and conifers.

Pass through a wooden gate to continue on this often-muddy pathway through the forest. Pause to explore the Hermitage, a cave sculpted into an enormous boulder by an 18th-century reclusive hermit. Descend to the trickling May Beck en route to Falling Foss, a stunning 30-foot cascade of water. Nearby, the woodland tea garden of Midge Hall is the ideal place for a break. This charming cottage, built in the 18th century for a gamekeeper, was later transformed into a tearoom for visitors to Falling Foss but was abandoned in the 1960s. In 2008, new owners reinvigorated this charming slice of woodland heritage, so walkers can relax over a scone with jam and cream, or a cold drink.

Arrive later at the May Beck car park before heading uphill on a country road. At New May Beck Farm, your path diverges into Sneaton Low Moor along a boggy (and possibly muddy) trail that ends at a busy main road. You need to follow it briefly before stepping onto a footpath into Graystone Hills, an untouched landscape of rough moorland and bogs. Ahead, walk along quiet, paved lanes, passing Low Hawsker en route to High Hawsker. You step away from the road to cut through some parkland, which points to a clifftop path where the Coast-to-Coast Walk meets the Cleveland Way, another of England's long-distance trails. Trace the clifftop for a glorious three miles as the vast North Sea stretches before you. Cows and sheep mingle in the sea breeze on approach to Robin Hood's Bay; you cross the Rocket Post Field known for its lifeboat drills that prepped rescuers to save ships that wrecked on the inshore rocks. One of the most picturesque places on the Yorkshire coast, Robin Hood's Bay is a former fishing village that spills

down a hillside. The origin of this seaside hamlet's name is a mystery despite its association with the famed well-intended thief. Victorian villas and fishermen's cottages dot the streetscape, built by 19th-century seafarers. A stroll down to Old Bay reveals an engaging network of narrow lanes lined with tearooms, pubs, shops, and studios. Cast your pebble into the sea to mark the end of your intranational journey before settling into your hotel and enjoying dinner on your own in this charming seaside village.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9

Your England: Coast to Coast tour concludes

After breakfast, travel about 30 minutes by taxi to the Scarborough train station, where your tour ends.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Boutique accommodations

11 meals: 8 breakfasts and 3 dinners

Detailed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps

Orientation meeting with a Country Walkers representative

Local representative available 24/7

Scheduled taxi and luggage transportation (Please note: If unable to walk, it is possible to travel with your luggage from one accommodation to the next at no additional charge.)

Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz Global Assistance

Access to Self-Guided Flight Concierge—Ask our

What's Included

Tour Only

knowledgeable team to find flights that sync perfectly
with your planned trip.