4 Night Southern Lake District Gentle Guided Walking Holiday



Trip style:	Destination:	Walking Grade	Carbon Footprint:
Gentle guided walking	Lake District	2, 3 & 5	128kg CO2

HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Perfect for those wanting to explore the Southern Lake District at a more relaxed and leisurely pace, this gentle guided walking holiday rewards with lakeside and wooded trails, big-name historic attractions, and comfortable accommodation at our country house overlooking Coniston Water. Enjoy a mix of short guided walks and time spent sightseeing. You'll also get to follow in the footsteps of Wordsworth, Ruskin, and Beatrix Potter to discover the places that stirred their imaginations.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Exploring the impressive Cathedral Caves
- Visiting charming Lakeland villages
- Discovering places that inspired Wordsworth, Ruskin, and Beatrix Potter
- Views of the rugged mountain landscapes and scenic lakes
- Spending time with like-minded people in the great outdoors
- Staying at Monk Coniston, our Grade II-listed country house

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- En-suite accommodation in our 4-star country house
- Cream tea on arrival day
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walking with experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Choice of three guided walks (each walking day) from March to October, and two from November to February.
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Easy-to-follow routes, maps, and information in our Discovery Point if you want to explore independently

ITINERARY - ITINERARY 2025

Day 1 **Arrival Day**

Check-in at the hotel is available from 16:00. If you are a member you can arrive at the house from 14:00. Enjoy a complimentary cream tea at 16:30 and meet other guests.

Day 2 **Little Langdale**

Option 1 - Little Langdale and Elterwater

Distance: 3½ miles (5.5km)

Ascent: 550 feet (160m)

In summary: We begin our walk following a lane past High Park to Stang End and into the picturesque Little Langdale valley. We visit the impressive Cathedral Cave and the historic Slater Bridge. We then continue through Little Langdale village and on to end in the village of Elterwater with its characterful pub.

Highlight: Cathedral Cave one of the hidden gems of the Lake District.

Option 2 - Skelwith Bridge to Elterwater

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 950 feet (300m)

In summary: From Skelwith Bridge our walk takes us by two beautiful waterfalls Skelwith Force and Colwith Force into the Little Langdale Valley. We then visit Cathedral Cave and the iconic Slater Bridge before heading into Little Langdale village and then on to Elterwater.

Highlight: Two spectacular waterfalls of Colwith Force and Skelwith Force; two of the best cascades in the Lake District.

Option 3 - Skelwith Bridge to Coniston

Distance: 7 miles (11.5km)

Ascent: 1,200 feet (360m)

In summary: From Skelwith Bridge we follow the route of option 2 past Skelwith Force and Colwith Force into Little Langdale. After a visit to the impressive Cathedral Cave and picturesque Slater Bridge we head via High and Low Tilberthwaite, on into Low Yewdale and back to the house.

Highlight: Take in all the highlights of beautiful Little Langdale from waterfalls to caverns.

Day 3 **Troutbeck and Ambleside**

Option 1 - Troutbeck to Ambleside

Distance: 4 miles (6.5km)

Ascent: 650 feet (200m)

In summary: We begin our walk from Jesus Church, Troutbeck. From here we ascend to the Mortal Man Inn and then walk through the hamlet of Troutbeck. We then follow Robin Lane past the viewpoint at Jenkin Point through the woods and down to Ambleside. This busy and popular town of Ambleside is brimming with opportunities. Choose to visit Ambleside roman fort, cruise on Lake Windermere or indulge in some retail therapy in one of the many specialist outdoor shops or independent retailers in the town.

Highlight: Spectacular views over Windermere and beyond.

Option 2 - Troutbeck and Stockghyll Force

Distance: 5½ miles (8.5km)

Ascent: 900 feet (260m)

In summary: Our walk begins as option 1 at Jesus Church, Troutbeck, and continues through the hamlet of Troutbeck to Robin Lane. We pass High Skelghyll then head through Strawberry Wood to visit Stockghyll Force on our way down into Ambleside. Enjoy some time exploring the town before our return to Coniston.

Highlight: The attractive multi-tiered waterfall, Stockghyll Force.

Option 3 - Wansfell Pike

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 1,480 feet (480m)

In summary: This is a more challenging walk but with rewards of far reaching views and a real sense of achievement for anyone who feels up to this. We begin from Ambleside and head to Stockghyll Force waterfall before making our way up the steep path to the summit of Wansfell Pike. After enjoying the panorama, we continue down to Robin Lane and follow this back into Ambleside where we can celebrate in one of the many pubs.

Highlight: Spectacular views from the summit of Wansfell Pike.

Day 4 Tarn Hows and Hawkshead

Option 1 - Hawkshead

Distance: 3½ miles (6km)

Ascent: 600 feet (180m)

In summary: Our walk today takes us to another picturesque Lakeland village. The walk begins ascending to the unspoilt beauty spot of Tarn Hows. From here we'll follow fields and open fell to Hawkshead. There is plenty to explore around the village including the Old Grammar School.

Highlight: Hawkshead with its myriad of narrow alleyways. The countryside that inspired Beatrix Potter.

Option 2 - Around Tarn Hows and Hawkshead

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Ascent: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: On this walk ascend to Tarn Hows and take our time walking around this popular beauty spot, admiring impressive views. We continue through fields and open fell to the picturesque village of Hawkshead. There will be time to explore the village or kick back and relax in one of the many tea shops.

Highlight: Hawkshead with its connections to both Beatrix Potter and William Wordsworth.

Option 3 - Hawkshead Circuit

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Ascent: 1,250 feet (380m)

In summary: As with option 1 and 2 our walk begins taking in beautiful Tarn Hows. We continue through fields and open fell to the lovely village of Hawkshead. Here we have a short amount of time to explore, before starting out on our return walk back to Monk Coniston via Hawkshead Hill.

Highlight: Picturesque views abound at Tarn Hows straight out of the pages of a Victorian tourist guide.

Day 5 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

DAILY WALK OPTIONS



Gentle walking grade 2

Full or half-day gentle walks on good paths, with plenty of time for rest stops, views, and places of interest. Typically, 3-5 miles (5-8km) with around 350ft (100m) of ascent with few or no stiles.



Gentle walking grade 3

Slightly longer walks, mostly on well-trodden paths, with some gentle gradients plus stiles and steps possible. Typically, 5-6 miles (8-10km) with around 650ft (200m) of ascent.



Moderate walking grade 5

Some walking experience needed. Full day walks which may include some short but steep ascents and descents throughout the day, and varied terrain. Regular stops. Typically, 8-9 miles (13-15km) with around 1,300ft (400m) of ascent.

ACCOMMODATION

Monk Coniston

With a desirable address overlooking Coniston Water (the inspiration for Arthur Ransome's 1930 novel, Swallows and Amazons), this characterful Grade II-listed house delights with lakeside and woodland walks from the doorstep, décor that stays true to the period feel, and plenty of Beatrix Potter references. While the children's author and illustrator did not live at the Monk Coniston estate (her beloved home was Hill Top, bought in 1905 with the royalties from The Tale of Peter Rabbit), she campaigned with the National Trust to save it from development. She then purchased the entire estate in 1930 and as the new owner she immediately sold half to the organisation, bequeathing them the other half in her will.

About

· 30 well-appointed guest rooms · Exclusive occupancy: 40 guests minimum · Check in from 4:00pm · For members check in from 2:00pm · Free Wi-Fi · Free on-site parking · Boot room and drying room · Travel cot · Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and information for self-guided walks · Books and games to borrow · Licensed bar · Lounge · Garden with putting green and croquet lawn · Activity barn · Electric vehicle charging point - Please note, you will need to bring your own cables to use this EV charging point

Then & now

Known as Waterhead House and later as Monk Coniston Hall, the Gothic-stye property dates from the 1770s. Successively the home of the Harrison, Ford, and Knott families, the 4,000-acre estate was purchased by wealthy Leeds industrialist James Marshall in 1836. Not only did Marshall hugely extend and improve the property, but it was his idea to join three smallish ponds in a boggy valley to create Tarn Hows – now a Lake District classic. He spent much time at Monk Coniston, pursuing his life-long interest in geology and entertaining eminent friends such as Thomas Carlyle, Adam Sedgewick, Alfred Tennyson, John Ruskin, and Lewis Carrol. The house remained in the family thereafter. Leased from the National Trust, it has been part of our HF Holidays line-up since 1945.

Nowadays, it's the perfect base for exploring beauties such as Grasmere, the Langdales, and the Old Man of Coniston. You'll find a hidden walled garden, a putting green and croquet lawn, ornate public rooms, a converted barn with exposed beams, and a Discovery Point offering a wide range of local area maps, route guides, and easy-to-follow information for self-guided walks. There's a minstrels' gallery, a licensed bar, books and games to borrow during your stay, and a dining room for a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. Elsewhere, the house has 30 well-appointed guest rooms in three categories (Classic, Premium, and Superior), extensive gardens, and an arboretum with a collection of conifers – some planted in the early 19th century. In the hallway at the bottom of the main stairs, the large oil canvas painted by Beatrix Potter's brother, artist Walter Bertram, is a nice touch.

Check-In & Check-Out

You are welcome to check in from 4pm at the earliest. HF Members can check in earlier, from 2pm. On arrival, you'll enjoy a complimentary cream tea and get to meet your fellow guests, our HF Holidays Leaders, and the rest of the friendly team. Check out 10am.

FOOD & DRINK

Dining

Seasonal dining, tailored for you

Our team of skilled chefs design our dinner menus to showcase the best of each season, from warming winter comfort food to vibrant summer dishes, including vegetarian, vegan and high-protein options. We also source fruit and vegetables within a 40-mile radius of each house, open every break with a Chef's Special menu inspired by dishes and flavours of the local area, and are able to adapt dishes to suit special dietary requirements.

Welcome Cream Tea

What better way to start your stay than with a cream tea, served fresh on arrival to make you feel instantly at home. A quintessentially English tradition, our scones are baked in-house and served with preserves and clotted cream, providing the perfect opportunity to meet fellow walkers.

A hearty breakfast to start the day

Start the day with a freshly-prepared cooked breakfast and a wide choice from our continental buffet, including hot drinks, juices and fresh fruit. Our team offer a quick and friendly service, leaving you fuelled and ready for your day's adventures.

Our famous picnic lunch

Our personalised picnic lunches are perfect for a day out walking, ready to enjoy when hunger strikes. Choose from a large selection of fresh sandwiches and salads, freshly baked cakes and snacks, including the ever-popular Freddos chocolate bar! Everything is designed to fit neatly into your rucksack, and all of the packaging we provide is recyclable or compostable.

3-course evening meals

Our à la carte evening menus feature a wide choice of starters, mains, and desserts, made with seasonal ingredients and, wherever possible, herbs and vegetables from our own gardens. Shared around sociable tables, dinners are relaxed occasions, with drinks available to order at the table or from the bar, and a traditional Sunday roast to round off the week.

ROOMS

Your room at Monk Coniston

Designed with your comfort in mind, Monk Coniston has 30 well-appointed guest rooms available in three categories: Classic, Premium, and Superior.

Classic Rooms are comfortable en-suite guest rooms, ideal for a peaceful night's sleep. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, and shower gel), and a TV.

Premium Rooms are more spacious en-suite guest rooms*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

Superior Rooms are even more spacious en-suite guest rooms offering upgraded views of the surroundings*. Amenities include free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee-making facilities, toiletries (hand wash, shampoo, body lotion, shower gel), and a 32-inch TV. Extras include bathrobes, slippers.

We love: The rooms with a garden or lake view. We also love Room 9 on the first floor for its original features and beautiful views across the gardens and fields that slope down to the shores of Coniston Water.

The **Choose Your Room** service is available at our UK country houses, allowing you the option of choosing and confirming a specific room for an extra charge of £30 per room. This is subject to availability. Upgrade supplements apply.

Room supplements

Superior	Premium single	Premium double/twin
£25 pppn	£20 pppn	£20 pppn

*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

ACCESSIBILITY

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on 020 3974 8865 or view the accessibility information online for Monk Coniston

ABOUT YOUR STAY

A warm welcome
We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive. You'll find a welcome pack in your room with guest registration forms, menus, order forms for dinners and picnic lunches, the Wi-Fi password, and the front door code. Our houses are locked at night, so we recommend noting the Duty Manager's number on arrival in case of an emergency (or getting locked out).

Evening entertainment

While evening entertainment varies from house to house, HF Holidays Inter-House Quiz night held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided waking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Helping you enjoy the Great Outdoors - A natural focus on walks

Walks talks and Discovery Points
Our founder, country pastor turned social innovator, Thomas Arthur Leonard, was passionate about encouraging people to explore the countryside. His legacy continues in HF's continued focus on walking. Many guests choose to travel with us on guided or self-guided walking holidays, and as such, evenings at our houses are often busy with walk leaders hosting various briefings and talks. On guided walking holiday arrival days, there are walking information briefings before dinner, and for the duration of any guided walking holiday there will be a Walks Talk before (or on occasion after dinner), to go through the following day's walk options. Self-guided walking guests, and those on special interest holidays (where there is free time to explore independently), are of course welcome to also join in these Walks Talks - please talk to the team locally if you have any queries. Our Discovery Points are filled with handy maps and route notes, designed to ensure everyone, not just those booked on a guided walking holiday, can enjoy the beautiful countryside settings that our HF houses enjoy.

The walking day
Prior to setting off on guided walks, our HF Holidays Leaders run through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure walkers have appropriate clothing and footwear. If you choose to do your own walks or are on a self-guided walking holiday, we ask that you please complete an Independent Walker Card each day. These can be found near the Discovery Point in the house.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Address

Monk Coniston
Coniston
Cumbria LA21 8AQ

Tel: +44 (0)1539 441566

By train

The West Coast mainline runs to the east of the Lake District, connecting Oxenholme (which is near Kendal), Penrith and Carlisle with London and Glasgow. A direct train runs from Manchester to Windermere. Local trains from Oxenholme call at Kendal, Staveley and Windermere.

The nearest station to Monk Coniston is Windermere. From Windermere you can take a taxi or bus to Monk Coniston (see below).

Check National Rail for journey times and routes.

By taxi

The journey from Windermere train station to Monk Coniston is 10 miles.

From Oxenholme, it's double that at 23 miles.

For pricing, please contact Ace Taxi directly.

Ace Taxi
You can pre-book a taxi from our recommended company, Ace Taxi*. We recommend booking your taxi at least seven days in advance by contacting:

Tel: +44 (0)1539 445445
Email: acetaxiwindermere@gmail.com

A return journey can be arranged on your behalf by the HF Holidays House Manager at Monk Coniston.

*Ace Taxi is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

By bus

From Windermere station catch the 555 or 599 to Ambleside Kelsick Road. Change here onto the 505 to Monk Coniston. The stop is right outside our country house.

Check Stagecoach for bus times.

National Express also run coaches to Lancaster, Penrith and Carlisle where you can catch an onward bus connection into the Lake District.

By car

Car parking is available at Monk Coniston.

Leave the M6 motorway at junction 36. Follow the A590 to Greenodd Roundabout, take the second exit and follow the A5092 before turning right onto the A5084 signposted to Torver. At the T junction turn right onto the A593 and follow into Coniston village. Turn right onto the B5286 and follow for 1.5 miles. The entrance to Monk Coniston will be on your right.

By air

The nearest airport is Manchester International Airport.

There are direct trains every hour to Oxenholme with the journey time around 90 minutes. From here you can change to Windermere or get a taxi (we recommend pre-booking one).

National Rail have up-to-date information on times and routes.

Flying to London Heathrow airport is another option, but it'll take you at least four hours to reach Oxenholme. Take the train to London Paddington station, then the London Underground to London Euston where you can connect to the main line train to Oxenholme. The journey from here is 2.5 hours.

LOCAL AREA

Places to visit in the Lake District

Whether you're enjoying a guided or self-guided walking holiday, there's always the opportunity to linger for longer. Here's our pick of the very best things to see and do within easy travelling distance of Monk Coniston.

Coniston

About a mile from the house and easily accessed from a direct path, this small village charms with a superb position at the foot of the Old Man of Coniston and by the western shore of Coniston Water. The small town of Ambleside is a 20-minute drive away.

The John Ruskin Museum

Coniston's John Ruskin Museum charts the history of the village through exhibits focused on the people who have lived and worked here throughout the ages. It's newest treasure is the restored Bluebird K7, Donald Campbell CBE's world-record breaking Jet Hydroplane. Mr Campbell broke 4 World Water Speed records on Coniston Water and tragically died attempting his 5th when Bluebird somersaulted in January 1967. The wreckage lay at the bottom of the lake for 34 years until it was raised in 2001, finally returning home to Coniston in 2024.

Steam Yacht Gondola

Manged by the National Trust, this restored steam-powered yacht on Coniston Water was built by the Furness Railway Company in 1859. It stops at the Monk Coniston jetty at the bottom of the meadow below the house and calls at Coniston and Brantwood House.

Brantwood House

A couple of miles away, this 250-acre Lakeland estate was once home to English writer, philosopher, art critic, and social revolutionary, John Ruskin. The eight beautiful gardens were created by Ruskin, his cousin Joan Severn, and head gardener Sally Beamish.

Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

Known locally known as La'al Ratty meaning 'little railway', this is one of England's oldest and longest narrow gauge railways dating back to 1873. A trip here can easily be combined with a walk over Muncaster Fell or to the Stanley Ghyll Waterfall.

Blackwell House

Designed by esteemed architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott between 1898 and 1900, this Grade I-listed building is one of the UK's finest examples of Arts & Crafts architecture. Don't miss the well-preserved interiors and the formal terraced garden.

Tarn Hows

Just a short walk away, this man-made lake was created in the mid-19th century by one of Monk Coniston's former owners, James Garth Marshall. The 1.5-mile path around the lake has been well maintained by the National Trust and is suitable for wheelchair users.

Grizedale Forest

Set right in the heart of the Lake District between Windermere and Coniston, this vast woodland is perfect for walking, mountain biking, and swinging through the trees on a Go Ape course. There's also a visitor centre with a gift shop, tearoom, and playground.

Levens Hall & Garden

A 50-minute drive away, this privately-owned Elizabethan mansion is cherished for its award-winning topiary gardens – the oldest in the world. Inside, there's fine oak panelling, ornate plasterwork, leather wall coverings, and the earliest examples of English patchwork.

Grasmere

Best known for its William Wordsworth connections, this impossibly pretty village is a 30-minute drive away. Highlights include Grasmere Lake, Allan Bank, and the 17th century Dove Cottage - home to the Wordsworth Museum.

Windermere

The largest natural lake in England, this watery wonder measures 10.5 miles long, one mile wide, and 220 feet deep. Ferries connect Ambleside in the north to Bowness and Lakeside in the south, where you can board the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway.

SAFETY ON YOUR HOLIDAY

Walking safety

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Packing list

Weather conditions in the UK can vary throughout the day, and conditions in the mountains may be cold and windy even in summer. Use the following list as a guide when preparing for your holiday.

Essentials

- Suitable waterproof walking boots with ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof, wind-resistant jacket with a hood, taped seams and a hydrostatic head rating of at least 10,000 mm
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Spare warm clothing, such as a synthetic insulated jacket
- Comfortable walking clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Warm mid-layers, such as fleeces
- Gloves and a warm hat, even in summer
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner
- Water bottle with a capacity of at least 1 litre
- Flask for hot drinks
- Sunscreen
- UV-protective sunglasses
- Spare high-energy food
- Head torch and spare batteries for holidays between October and March
- Passport (if applicable)
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy

Recommended

- Several base layers, with long or short sleeves
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First-aid kit, including plasters, insect repellent, a midge net and a tick-removal tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bags
- Wallet or purse

- Camera
- Walking poles
- Sun hat
- Gaiters
- Mobile Phones
- Swimwear (please see accommodation information for hotel facilities)
- Membership cards for English Heritage, the National Trust or similar heritage organisations in Scotland and Wales, if you are a member. These may be useful when visiting attractions during your itinerary or on your free day.

TRIPNOTE VALIDITY

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred. In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary. The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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