

Best of Hadrian's Wall Guided Walking with Sightseeing

Trip style: Walking with sightseeing

Destination: ☺ Northumberland

Trip code: XAJ06-LDW11

Trip Walking Grade: 3

Carbon Footprint: 125kg CO2



Holiday Overview

Walk the best-preserved sections of Hadrian's Wall starting in the market town of Brampton and ending in historic Corbridge. Let our experienced HF Holidays Leaders take care of all planning and navigation as you spend time at Housesteads Roman fort, explore the southern part of Northumberland National Park, and visit Vindolanda – an archaeological site that boasts carefully reconstructed towers and temples, excavated ruins, and a museum home to some of the oldest surviving handwritten documents ever found in Britain.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Walking along a sections of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail
- Visiting Roman forts including Vindolanda, Birdoswald, Housesteads, and Chesters
- Exploring Aydon Castle, Thirlwall Castle, and Lanercost Priory
- Staying in one of our carefully-selected partner hotels
- Sharing the experience with a group of like-minded walkers
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary

Please note - Entrance fees are not included. See Essential Info tab for details.

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

This Best of Hadrian's Wall Guided Walking /Hiking Trail is graded 3 which involves walks /hikes on good paths with some significant assents, often quite a distance each day. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday. A sustained effort is required to complete this walk and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the daily mileage and ascent as listed. The walking day is normally 6-7 hours. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace. It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

Your fitness

Having a solid base of fitness before your holiday will ensure you've the best chance of completing the holiday and enjoying it to boot. Here's a few simple tips to help you get fit and ready for your challenge:

- Get out walking - whether the weather, get out there, and start building your fitness months before your holiday
- Build your distance gradually and get a number of 6-8hr hill days in
- Ideally, try and do two consecutive days training if possible
- Take the stairs every time
- Train on different terrain
- Train with your day pack and your walking boots too, to ensure they're well worn in before your holiday
- Other sports help improve your walking fitness too. The best ones are jogging, cycling, swimming, which will build your stamina, and yoga which will help strengthen your core and improve balance
- Time training will help ensure you enjoy your holiday to the max.

ITINERARY - GUIDED TRAIL

Day 1 Arrival Day

Check in at the hotel is available from 3pm. Your leader will be at reception at 18:00 to meet the group and for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner.

Day 2 Brampton to Gilsland

Our starting point is the historic market town of Brampton, the headquarters of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. Leaving the town we follow a footpath through open fields, which leads us towards the evocative setting of Lanercost Priory, built in 1166 with red sandstone taken from Hadrian's Wall. Soon after leaving the priory we have our first meeting with the Wall from where we can look back over our route so far. We follow the course of Hadrian's Wall, passing various Turrets and Signal Towers before we reach the 2,000-year old Birdoswald Roman Fort, once home to over 1,000 soldiers. The visitor centre here provides a good introduction to the history of Hadrian's Wall. Descending to the River Irthing, we have the opportunity to explore the Roman remains at Willowford, one of the most photographed sections of the Wall, before arriving in the historic village of Gilsland.

9 miles (14.5km) with 1,300 feet (400m) of ascent

Please note, entrance to the various attractions on this holiday is payable locally, and not included in the holiday price as many of you will be entitled to free or discounted entrance. Please find further details in the "Trip Information" section of the trip notes, under "Admission Costs".

Day 3 Gilsland to Once Brewed

From Gilsland our route becomes more dramatic, as a craggy landscape rises ahead. We briefly cross the intersection with the Pennine Way before we reach the impressive ruins of Thirlwall Castle. The castle was built in the 14th century by John Thirlwall to protect his family from the violent cross border raids between England and Scotland. On leaving the castle the walking becomes more rugged as we cross a splendid section of wild and invigorating countryside, which includes Cawfield Crag and Milecastle 41. The location of the Milecastle commands superb views over a wide expanse of countryside. As well as a superb stretch of walking, this section of the Wall is particularly impressive - an unbeatable combination. Crossing Windshields Crag we reach the trig point at 345 metres, the highest point on the entire Wall.

10 miles (16km) with 1,300 feet (400m) of ascent

Day 4 Once Brewed Circuit

Today's circular walk gives us the opportunity to visit Housesteads - the most complete Roman fort in Britain - and the ruins of Vindolanda, a Roman town with its own fort. Leaving Once Brewed, we'll climb along Steel Rigg and follow a stunning route that enjoys magnificent views over Crag Lough. As we walk, we'll also see Hadrian's Wall snaking into the distance, following the high ground to take advantage of the natural defences of this dramatic landscape. A little further on we'll pass by the spot where the famous "Robin Hood's" tree at Sycamore Gap once stood, before ample time to explore the impressive site of Housesteads Roman Fort and the gardens at Vindolanda.

5 miles (8.1km) with 570 feet (175m) of ascent.

Day 5 Housesteads to Chollerford

Leaving Housesteads we follow an attractive stretch of footpath along the Wall where woods perch on the rocky slopes of Sewingshields Crag. We can admire the great views of the Wall zigzagging ahead of us, before we pass a white cairn and Sewingshields Turret. Here we descend to follow a long line of roadside Wall, passing the site of the fort Brocolitia and the remains of the Temple of Mithras en route. Entering the Northumberland National Park an excellent stretch of walking provides stunning views of open countryside. Towards the end of our day we reach Chester's Fort, which was originally the grounds of a country house, home to John Clayton the man responsible for the initiation and restoration of the wall around 1832. The museum here displays his finds at various sites along the Wall and is a memorial to his efforts.

10 miles (16km) with 500 feet (150m) of ascent

Day 6 Chollerford to Corbridge, via Aydon Castle

At Chollerford we cross a fine bridge, built in 1775 following the great flood of 1771, which demolished its predecessor. The Roman ditch is unmistakable and very deep on this stretch and we are surrounded by calls of the skylark, lapwing and curlew. Passing through a thick forest we emerge to a different world of arable farmland and enjoy pleasant walking through fields. The Wall stretches in a straight-line ahead of us, aligned along the Dere Street Roman Road from Corbridge. At the Onnum Roman Fort we bid our final farewells to the Wall and walk south to the peaceful village of Halton and its ruined castle. From here we continue to Aydon Castle, one of the finest surviving examples of a medieval manor house in England and the setting for the film 'Ivanhoe'. We have the opportunity to explore this delightful castle before following a bridleway to the finish of our Hadrian's Way holiday at Corbridge Roman Town.

9½ miles (15km) with 800 feet (240m) of ascent

Day 7 Departure Day

Daily Walk Options



Medium Walks

Walks follow well-defined paths, though often in hilly or upland areas, or along rugged coastal footpaths. These may be rough or steep in sections and will require reasonable fitness.

Accommodation

Centre of Britain Hotel, Haltwhistle - Best of Hadrian's Wall

We love the Centre of Britain Hotel in Haltwhistle. It's one of the region's oldest buildings and part of the hotel was once a 15th century Pele Tower used by the Border Reivers. Later it became a Manor House, excise office, and a coaching inn. Comfortable rooms come kitted out with TV, radio, tea and coffee making facilities, as well as a hairdryer and safe. Drying and washing facilities are available, too. And to really get you into the Hadrian's Wall spirit, the hotel usually organises a Roman banquet-themed meal for your final evening. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

Food & drink

Your stay is full-board. This includes daily breakfasts, packed lunch options, and evening meals. Vegetarian choices and dietary requirements can be catered for (please give advance notice when booking).

Packed lunches

Our packed lunches will be too much food for some and not enough for others; if you feel you might need more food during the walk, please bring a supply of snacks to supplement this – it won't always be possible to buy these on the route. Your packed lunches will include: a bread sandwich or roll with a choice of filling; some fresh fruit; fruit cake/ flapjack or similar, crisps and/or biscuits. For those of you tackling a level 4 or above holiday, we would highly recommend bringing some trail mix or something similar to ensure you've some fuel in reserve should you need it.

Dietary requirements

Our partner hotels can cater for most dietary requirements, but it is important you advise us of any allergies and dietary restrictions you have at the time of booking.

Travel Details

By car

It is possible to leave your car in the Centre of Britain Hotel car park for the duration of the holiday. The hotel is located in the centre of Haltwhistle, on the main street.

By rail

For train times and route planning by train visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or call +44 (0)3457 484950. Our hotel is located only ½ a mile from Haltwhistle railway station. The hotel can collect you on request from the station, but please ensure that you give the hotel a call the day before your arrival to arrange this free service.

By air

There are a number of low-cost flights from around the UK, to Newcastle and Manchester. If you are flying from overseas there are international flights to Manchester Airport and Newcastle Airport.

Useful Holiday Information

The UK has a famously unpredictable climate so it's best to be prepared for weather that's sunny one minute and raining the next. To make it easier, here's a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Suitable footwear such as waterproof walking boots that provide ankle support and good grip
- Waterproof and windproof jacket
- Comfortable clothing (jeans & waterproof capes are not suitable)
- Mid-layer(s) to keep you warm. Fleece(s) make a good choice
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Gloves and a warm hat
- Rucksack with waterproof liner
- Flask for hot drinks
- Water bottle (at least 1 litre capacity)
- Sunscreen
- UV sunglasses

For holidays operating October through to the end of March, please also bring the following on your walks:

- spare warm clothing
- spare high energy food
- head torch and spare batteries
- please note for the October to March season your waterproof jacket needs to offer a high level of waterproofing and wind resistance, and a hood. Look for a waterproof jacket with sealed/taped seams and a minimum HH (hydrostatic head - this is the rating given on waterproof jackets) of 10,000mm+

Recommended

- Several base layers (long-sleeve or short-sleeve)
- Cushioned walking socks to avoid blisters
- First aid kit, including plasters and midge repellent/net and tick remover tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- Walking poles
- Midge net

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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