

Discover More along Hadrian's Wall

Trip style: Small group holidays

Destination: ☺ Northumberland

Trip code: XAJ06-HCH11



Holiday Overview

Step back in time with an in-depth tour of Hadrian's Wall – a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Britain's most spectacular ancient landmarks. Find out what life was like in Roman Britain as we explore top visitor attractions and award-winning museums along the wall including Housesteads – the best-preserved Roman fort in Britain – and Vindolanda, an archaeological site that boasts carefully reconstructed towers and temples, excavated ruins, and a museum home to some of the oldest surviving Roman artefacts ever found in Britain.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Viewing the very best sections of the UNESCO-listed Hadrian's Wall
- Visiting Roman forts including Vindolanda, Birdoswald, Housesteads, and Chesters
- Exploring Tullie House, Lanercost Priory and the Great Museum of the North
- Staying in one of our carefully-selected partner hotels
- Sharing the experience with a group of like-minded people
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation
- 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
- All entrance fees (other than National Trust & English Heritage properties)

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

Our Discovery holidays give you the opportunity to immerse yourself in the culture of the local area through active sightseeing. On each Discovery day, you will be walking throughout the course of the day as you explore the venues and locations we visit. You'll also be hopping on and off the coach throughout - you should expect to spend the majority of the day on your feet. Most of this walking will be at attractions but some may be across country tracks or footpaths so be sure to bring sturdy shoes. There will also be stairs to climb in the majority of the venues you visit, though other more accessible options may be available. At some venues, there may also be uneven surfaces, such as cobbles or rocky paths.

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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.

Please note: If you are not already a member of English Heritage, we would recommend joining. Many of our members are already members of English Heritage too, so we have not included the entrance to English Heritage or National Trust properties in this programme, as they will receive free entrance to these properties when they show their membership card. It is often cheaper to be a member than to pay entrance to the sights individually.

For those of you with English Heritage and/or National Trust membership – please bring your membership cards with you.

Day 2 The Border City - Carlisle

Known as Lugavallium by the Romans, the city of Carlisle is steeped not only in Roman history but in stories of the Border Reivers and the Anglo-Scottish wars, too. We'll begin with a walking tour of the city's historic centre. We'll pass Carlisle Castle, St Cuthbert's Church, Guildhall and the town walls. Alternatively, you can explore independently and take time to visit the castle (English Heritage members receive free entrance). We then visit Carlisle Cathedral (entrance included) to admire its medieval paintings and stained glass, before our final visit of the day to Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery (entrance included) where we'll learn about the city's cultural and historical significance.

Day 3 Lanercost, Birdoswald & Walltown

Today begins with a visit to Lanercost Priory (English Heritage property - entrance not included) which was built in 1166 with red sandstone taken from Hadrian's Wall. There's a short photo stop at one of the best-preserved sections of Hadrian's Wall – Banks East Turret – before arriving at 2000-year-old Birdoswald Roman Fort (English Heritage property - entrance not included). Once home to 1000 soldiers, the exhibitions here give us a good introduction to the history of Hadrian's Wall.

A short walk (approx. 1 mile) from Birdoswald to Gilsland, takes us along a fabulous section of the wall, before our coach transfers us to the Roman Army Museum (entrance included) at Walltown. Enjoy the short film, *The Eagles Eye*, for a fascinating glimpse into life as a Roman soldier.

Alternatively, if the weather is nice, there's also the option of visiting Walltown Country Park to stretch your legs and enjoy the views.

Day 4 Housesteads & Vindolanda

Our first stop today is Steel Rigg – the most photographed section of Hadrian's Wall. It's a striking landscape of crags and loughs, with the Roman wall running dramatically along the ridge. We'll then stop at The Sill National Park Centre to learn about the area's geology and ecology in its small but fascinating exhibition.

Next, we visit Housesteads – the most complete Roman fort in Britain (an English Heritage/National Trust property; entrance not included). There's plenty of time to explore before we move on to what many consider the highlight of the day – Vindolanda (entrance included). Alongside the impressive fort remains, Vindolanda boasts beautiful gardens and a world-class museum displaying remarkable finds, including Roman writing tablets, shoes, ceremonial horse masks, and even wigs. Don't miss the Vindolanda Tablets – they're some of the oldest surviving handwritten documents ever found in Britain and even contain a birthday party invite from 100AD.

Day 5 Chesters & Corbridge

Chester's cavalry fort (English Heritage property; entrance not included) boasts a scenic setting on the banks of the River Tyne and is ours to explore this morning. Chesters 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 Hadrian's Wall and is a memorial to his mammoth efforts.

From Chesters we head to Hexham, recently voted as one of the happiest places to live in Britain. We've time here to enjoy our lunch and stroll around the shops and galleries, or to visit Hexham Abbey, or its historic Gaol.

We'll move on to Corbridge for a visit to the ruins of a once-thriving Roman garrison town (English Heritage property; entrance not included), and the chance to explore this pretty village. Alternatively, sit and relax with a drink or two in one of its many pubs or tearooms, or even in a converted Pele Tower.

Day 6 Segedunum & Newcastle-upon-Tyne

We travel to the east coast for our final day, following the route of Hadrian's Wall to the rather aptly-named Wallsend, and its Roman fort – Segedunum (entrance included). Explore the fascinating exhibits and climb the 35metre viewing tower for the best views over the site.

From here our coach takes us into Newcastle-upon-Tyne, locally known as the “Toon”, for a visit to the Great Museum of the North (free entrance). After the visit there's the option to explore independently, or your leader will offer a short walking tour of the town.

Day 7 Departure Day

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](tel:+44(0)3457484950). 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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