

# 7 Night Northumberland Christmas & New Year Guided Walking Holiday

**Tour Style:** Guided walking

**Destinations:** Northumberland, United Kingdom & England

**Trip code:** ALXFW-7

1, 2 & 3



## HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

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All windswept coastline, castles, and cosy pubs decked out in Christmas colours, there's nothing like a winter walking holiday in Northumberland to get you in a merry mood. Make this Christmas truly memorable and spend the festive season at our country house in the heart of Alnmouth – the pretty coastal village treasured for its colourful cottages and superb walking routes. We pull out all the stops at this time of year and our houses welcome you with a sprinkling of festive cheer, seasonal food, and plenty of yuletide treats. So wrap up warm and step into Christmas with HF Holidays.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- Comfortable en-suite accommodation in our 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 up to three guided walks (on walking days)
- 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

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Getting into the festive spirit with a guided walking holiday
- A choice of winter walks with our experienced HF Holidays Leaders
- Discovering the stunning landscapes of Northumberland on foot
- Staying in our country house in the coastal village of Alnmouth
- Enjoying festive fare and leaving all the organising to us
- A celebration dinner with all the trimmings on Christmas Day and New Year's Eve

## TRIP SUITABILITY

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This trip is graded Activity Level 1,2 and 3. Our House Manager and leaders are busy putting together a unique programme of walks and social activities, and look forward to welcoming you on your holiday.

The walks are tailored to the time of year and will remain flexible to suit the weather conditions. Each day three grades of walk will be offered. Typically, easier walks are up to a maximum of 7½ miles (12½km), medium walks are up to a maximum of 10½ miles (17½km), while harder walks can be up to a maximum of 12½ miles (20km).

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Arrival Day

Enjoy a complimentary cream tea on arrival, served from 4.30pm.

### Day 2: Along The Northumberland Coast

#### Option 1 - Howick To Alnmouth

**Distance:** 6 miles (10km)

**Ascent:** 375 feet (110m)

**In summary:** Head south along this picturesque stretch of coastline from Howick to the old smugglers haunt of Boulmer then onwards to Alnmouth. Walk on the low cliffs and the beach, with fantastic sea views throughout.

**Highlight:** Explore the narrow channel of Mar Mouth between the rocks of Boulmer Haven and the smugglers past history which has marked the landscape in this gentle walk back to Alnmouth.

#### Option 2 - Craster To Alnmouth

**Distance:** 7½ miles (12.5km)

**Ascent:** 450 feet (140m)

**In summary:** Walk south along the coast from the quaint fishing village of Craster to Alnmouth. Walk on the low cliffs and the beach, with fantastic sea views throughout.

**Highlight:** Explore the atmospheric harbour at Craster, and let your nose lead you to famous kipper smokehouse.

### Option 3 - Dunstanburgh Castle

**Distance:** 11 miles (17½km)

**Total ascent:** 600 feet (180m)

**In summary:** Walk from Embleton to the iconic ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle, then follow the path all the way back along the beautiful Northumberland Coast to Alnmouth.

**Highlight:** Imagine yourself as a knight of the realm storming the crumbling remains of Dunstanburgh Castle on the headland at Castle Point.

### Day 3: Ingram Valley

#### Option 1 - Powburn & The Breamish Valley

**Distance:** 3½ miles (6km)

**Ascent:** 320 feet (100m)

**In summary:** A delightful valley walk surrounded by rolling hills from the village of Powburn following the River Breamish to Ingram.

**Highlight:** Walking through an area rich in wildlife

#### Option 2 - Wether Hill & Brough Law

**Distance:** 7 miles (11km)

**Ascent:** 1,100 feet (330m)

**In summary:** Discover two of the dominant Iron Age hillforts in the Breamish Valley, Wether Hill and Brough Law. In the Spring, oystercatcher and sandpiper nest on the river gravel and higher up on the hillsides, lapwing and curlew, true moorland birds are a common sight and sound. Scottish black-faced and the local Cheviot sheep graze the pastures as they have done for centuries.

**Highlight:** Great vantage points for views of the surrounding area.

#### Option 3 - The Breamish Valley

**Distance:** 8½ miles (13.5km)

**Ascent:** 1450 feet (450m)

**In summary:** The hillsides in the valley were terraced in the Bronze Age and the early occupants who lived here grew crops and raised livestock. Iron Age settlements and their circular hillforts can be found on both sides of the valley, reflecting a long history of occupation in this part of Northumberland.

**Highlight:** Discovering a prehistoric landscape.

### Day 4: Free Day - Northumberland

Discover more about [Nether Grange and the local area](#) for ideas on how to make the most of your free day.

## Day 5: Amble And Warkwarth

### Option 1 - Warkworth To Alnmouth

**Distance:** 6 miles (9.5km)

**Ascent:** 380 feet (120m)

**In summary:** Starting in historic Warkworth, follow in the footsteps of St Oswald along the coast to Alnmouth.

**Highlight:** Warkworth's medieval castle and the expansive views out to sea.

### Option 2 - Amble To Alnmouth

**Distance:** 8.5 miles (14km)

**Ascent:** 505 feet (155m)

**In summary:** We start at Amble crossing the harbour board walk before walking along the Northumberland Coastal Path through Warkworth with great views of the imposing castle, before finally returning to Alnmouth beach.

**Highlight:** The Amble harbour boardwalk gives spectacular views of Coquet Island wildlife sanctuary.

### Option 3 - Hauxley Nature Reserve To Alnmouth

**Distance:** 11 miles (17.5km)

**Total ascent:** 560 feet (170m)

**In summary:** From Northumberland Wildlife Trust's nature reserve at Hauxley, a varied walk all the way back to Alnmouth via the harbour at Amble and historic Warkwarth.

**Highlight:** Wildlife spotting at the nature reserve

## Day 6: Around Alnmouth

### Option 1 - Spy Law, Riverside And Countryside

**Distance:** 7 miles (11.5km)

**Ascent:** 560 feet (180m)

**In summary:** After leaving Alnmouth, meander alongside the River Aln and gently ascend to Spy Law with views on all sides of the countryside. The walk continues moving seawards displaying the Northumberland coast in front of you before returning through colourful cereal fields overlooking the Aln estuary and the once port of Alnmouth towards to sea.

**Highlight:** A chance to appreciate the variety of scenery that Northumberland has to offer.

### Option 2 - To High Buston Hamlet

**Distance:** 8.5 miles (13.5km)

**Ascent:** 600 feet (180m)

**In summary:** Walk around the historic village of Alnmouth and then visit the picturesque village of Lesbury

before meandering alongside the River Aln. The walk gives views of countryside and coast, and passes through the Hamlet of High Buston. Learn of the links of the Buston family to King John in 1209 and the traditional "dunking" of the local freemens' sons. The route returns through undulating countryside culminating in a sight of Alnmouth with colourful houses overlooking the estuary and the sea.

**Highlight:** An appreciation of how the land and seascape framed local life through the centuries.

### Option 3 - Coast, Railway And River

**Distance:** 10.5 miles (17km)

**Ascent:** 750 feet (240m)

**In summary:** This walk gives the visitor a chance to see traditional villages and hamlets of Northumberland and learn about life in this area at various times in the past. The trail passes through green countryside with river, inland and coastal views. The Shilbottle miners' route to the sea also forms part of this walk. The Hamlet of High Buston is visited along with the villages of Alnmouth, Lesbury and the route passes by the village of Shilbottle with substantial medieval and industrial records.

**Highlight:** Countryside walking steeped in history with inland and coastal views.

## Day 7: Northumberland's Early History

### Option 1 - Budle Bay To Bamburgh

**Distance:** 3.5 miles (5.5km)

**Ascent:** 130 feet (40m)

**In summary:** We head out to the coast along gently sloping paths with views of Budle Bay appearing and reappearing through the frames of huge dunes. Eventually reaching Bamburgh.

**Highlight:** If the tide is waning, keep your eyes peeled for a myriad of wading birds in Budle Bay, including oystercatcher, curlew and turnstone sifting through the sand and silt and rocks for their next meal.

### Option 2 - Beadnell To Bamburgh

**Distance:** 7 miles (11½km)

**Total ascent:** 300 feet (100m)

**In summary:** Enjoy an iconic beach walk from Beadnell to Seahouses with time to look at the harbour then it's on to Bamburgh and its castle.

**Highlight:** Look out for seabirds and seals flying and bobbing about amongst the waves on this excellent coastal walk.

### Option 3 - High Newton To Bamburgh

**Distance:** 10 miles (16km)

**Ascent:** 400 feet (120m)

**In summary:** Follow the beautiful coast from High Newton along the sands to Beadnell's old harbour. Pass the busy port of Seahouses, with excellent views of the Farne Islands, before continuing on the beach to Bamburgh.

**Highlight:** The final leg along the sands to Bamburgh, with great views of the imposing castle that was once the

seat of early Northumbrian Kings.

## Day 8: Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Nether Grange

You can tell that you're in for something special at this former 18th century granary in the heart of Alnmouth – the postcard-pretty coastal village treasured for its colourful cottages, superb walking routes, and peaceful beach where the River Aln meets the North Sea (in its heyday, it was a working river-port, exporting grain, wool, coal, and even the odd pipe of Madeira wine). Not only will you be a 40-minute drive from Northumberland National Park, but also within easy travelling distance of several visit-worthy castles, including Alnwick, Lindisfarne, Dunstanburgh, and Warkworth. If the weather's nice, a boat trip to the Farne Islands that lie just offshore midway between the villages of Seahouses and Bamburgh rewards with sightings of England's largest grey seal colonies.

## Country House Accommodation

### Rooms

Designed with your comfort in mind, Nether Grange has 36 well-appointed guest rooms available in two categories: Classic and Premium.

**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, and comfortable mattresses.

**We love:** The sea-facing rooms are especially lovely.

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.

### Check in & check out

You are welcome to check in from **4:00pm at the earliest**. 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.

On the day of departure, we kindly ask all guests to check out by **10:00am**. You'll be asked to settle your bill prior to leaving. You may, of course, make a charitable donation to our HF Holidays Pathways Fund if you wish. Please note that we only accept card payments.

### Room supplements

Premium single	Premium double/twin	Choose your room
£20 pppn	£20 pppn	£30 per room

\*Views and layout reflect each properties unique character and location

## 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, the HF Holidays Big Pub Quiz held after dinner on Wednesdays is a weekly staple. Your HF Holidays Leader may be around for tips on guided and self-guided walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

### Walks talks

Our HF Holidays Leaders host guided walking information briefings before dinner on arrival days. This is followed by a group Walks Talk for information on the following day's walking delights (held before dinner every evening). Self-guided walking guests are, of course, welcome.

### The walking day

Prior to setting off on walks, your HF Holidays Leader will run you through a short safety briefing. There's also an up-to-date weather forecast on display at the house to ensure you 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.

## Food & Drink

Led by experienced chefs, we serve a wide range of dishes made with fresh and seasonal ingredients. We always aim to source the best produce available and use home-grown herbs and vegetables from our own gardens whenever possible. Additionally, we have a licensed bar with beers, soft drinks, and a superb selection of spirits. Full-board comes as standard and includes a cream tea on arrival and a hearty breakfast on departure day.

HF Holidays understands the importance of managing allergens effectively to ensure food is safe for guests with food allergies. Whilst we are always able to confidently inform guests which allergens are present in our ingredients and dishes, we are unable to guarantee absolute freedom from the 14 main allergens in our kitchens. Vegetarian and vegan menu choices are available. If you have allergies, food intolerances, or any special dietary requirements, please inform our reservation team at the time of booking.

## Accessibility

For accessibility and assistance information, please contact our expert team on [020 3974 8865](tel:02039748865) or view the accessibility information online for [Nether Grange](#)

## TRAVEL DETAILS

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### Address

Nether Grange  
Alnmouth  
Alnwick  
Northumberland NE66 2RZ

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 830431](tel:+44(0)1665830431)

## By Train

The nearest station is Alnmouth, on the main east coast line between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

Check National Rail for train times and routes.

## By Taxi

The 1.5-mile journey from Alnmouth railway station to Nether Grange is about five minutes by taxi. Taxis are in limited supply in Alnmouth, so we recommend pre-booking as early as possible.

For pricing, please contact the taxi company directly.

Taxi companies in the area include:

### **Sovereign Taxis\***

Tel: [+44 \(0\)7553 360662](tel:+44(0)7553360662)

### **Wizard Taxis\***

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 663709](tel:+44(0)1665663709)

### **AA Taxis\***

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1665 606060](tel:+44(0)1665606060)

Some taxi companies have school runs so taxis may be in short supply between 9:00am and 10:00am. It is advisable to book your return taxi when you book your arrival taxi.

\*HF Holidays does not own or manage any of the above taxi companies.

## By Car

Before travelling by car, note that there is no car park at Nether Grange and there's very limited on-street parking.

Exit the A1 onto the A1068 towards Alnwick. At the roundabout turn right (it's not well signposted), following the A1068 towards Alnmouth. Go straight ahead at the first roundabout then left at the second roundabout onto the B1338.

As you approach Alnmouth, turn right at the next roundabout, then left into The Wynd. Follow to Marine Road into Northumberland Street. After 100 yards turn right into Pease's Lane. You'll find Nether Grange on the left.

## By Air

The nearest airport is Newcastle International Airport. Take the metro to Newcastle Central station, then the train to Alnmouth - a straightforward journey taking just over an hour.

## LOCAL AREA

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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 Nether Grange.

### **Alnmouth**

This pretty coastal village is adored for its colourful cottages, superb walking routes, peaceful bays, and deserted sandy beaches where the River Aln meets the North Sea. There's a small tidal harbour, a handful of small shops, and several pubs and cafés.



## Alnwick Castle

A 15-minute drive away, the market town of Alnwick is dominated by the second-largest inhabited castle in the country. Home to the Duke of Northumberland's family for over 700 years, it has featured in *Harry Potter* films and *Downton Abbey* specials.

## Alnwick Gardens

The castle's 12-acre garden is home to a collection of over 4,000 plant varieties. Highlights include the world's largest Tai Haku Cherry Orchard, a cascade comprising of 120 water jets, and the world's largest treehouse restaurant set 18 metres above ground level.

## Bamburgh Castle

Home of the Armstrong family since 1894 and crowning nine acres of the Great Whin Sill, this so-called king of castles has stood guard above the Northumberland coast for thousands of years. The site is by the seaside village of Bamburgh, a 35-minute drive away.

## Farne Islands

Located off Northumberland's coast in the North Sea, this groups of islands is home to a breeding colony of thousands of seabirds and grey seals. Between March and October, regular boat trips run from Seahouses harbour - a 45-minute drive away.

## Lindisfarne (Holy Island)

An hour's drive away, this sacred place is where you can follow in the footsteps of the ancient monks who built their priory here nearly 1,400 years ago. Don't miss the museum for a chance to learn more about the 8th century manuscript known as the Lindisfarne Gospels.

## Warkworth Castle

Crowning the hilltop above the River Coquet, Northumberland's hilltop fortress and hermitage was used by William Shakespeare as the setting for several scenes of his *Henry IV* plays. Located in the village of Warkworth, it's just a 10-minute drive away.

## Cragside House

A 40-minute drive away, this National Trust-owned house was the first in the world to be lit by hydroelectric power. Highlights include one the largest rock gardens in Europe, a rhododendron-filled garden, and over 40 miles of lovely lakeside and woodland walks.

## Seaton Delaval Hall

Designed by acclaimed Baroque architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, this National Trust-owned mansion is a 40-minute drive away. The grounds are gorgeous, especially the formal rose garden that was created in the 1950s and 1960s by Lady Hastings.

## Hadrian's Wall

A 90-minute drive away, this World Heritage Site built in AD 122 extends for 73 miles. Don't miss the Roman Vindolanda Fort & Museum for fascinating artefacts, reconstructed turrets and temples, and insight of daily life in a Roman garrison town.

## Edinburgh

Scotland's capital is just a one-hour train ride from Alnmouth station and worth the effort for its wealth of attractions. Must-dos include visiting Edinburgh Castle, spending time at the National Museum of Scotland, climbing Arthur's Seat, and strolling through Holyrood Park.

## Newcastle-Upon-Tyne

Simply known as Newcastle, this vibrant city is an hour's drive away. Highlights include admiring the iconic Tyne Bridge, relaxing at Newcastle City Baths, crossing the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, and visiting Gateshead's Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art.

## USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

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### Essential 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. Fleeeces 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

#### Recommended

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

## Safety On Your Holiday

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 while 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.

## TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

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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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