

7 Night Southern Lake District Christmas & New Year Guided Walking Holiday



Trip style:
Festive breaks

Destination:
📍 Lake District

Walking Grade
all 5, 6 & 8

Carbon Footprint:
🌿 215kg CO2

Holiday Overview

The Lake District has always conjured up an effortless sense of romance. But in winter, the whole place has an added sprinkling of magic. Spend the festive season amongst the much-loved walking trails and chocolate-box villages of the Southern Lake District. Our characterful country house at Monk Coniston will be at its festive best, making it a merry base from which to take wintry walks and much more. We pull out all the stops at this time of year and 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 YOU'LL LOVE

- 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 Southern Lake District on foot
- Staying in our charming country house overlooking Coniston Water
- Enjoying festive fare and leaving all the organising to us
- A celebration dinner with all the trimmings on Christmas Day

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 - CHRISTMAS

Day 1 Christmas 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 Ambleside Fells

Option 1 - Loughrigg Circular

Distance: 6 miles (9.5km)

Ascent: 1,100 feet (330m)

In summary: A delightful contouring circuit of Loughrigg Fell with extensive views of four lakes and the surrounding mountains. This walk finishes in the popular Lake District town of Ambleside.

Highlight: The immense Rydal caves, with their wonderful views over Rydal Water and Nab Scar beyond.

Option 2 - Wansfell Pike and Troutbeck

Distance: 6.5 miles (10.5km)

Ascent: 2,050 feet (620m)

In summary: A circular walk from Ambleside, this walk starts with a steep ascent up the side of Wansfell Pike. From here it is generally downhill to Troutbeck and then back around the corner of the fell to Ambleside via Skelghyll woods and Jenkins Crag.

Highlight: The views on a clear day from the top of Wansfell Pike are stunning. Almost all of the ten miles of lake Windermere are visible to the south, and the ridges of Red Screes and Fairfield extend to the north, a real feeling of being amongst some of the big giants of the Lake District fells.

Option 3 - Dove Crag and Scandale

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Ascent: 2,750 feet (840m)

In summary: Starting in Ambleside, we head north, over Low Sweden Bridge and up onto a fine rising ridge, taking in Low Pike, then High Pike, en-route to the broad summit of Dove Crag. From there, we start our return, with an option to take in Little Hart Crag, en-route to Scandale Pass. Onwards, we head down the valley, near Scandale Beck and eventually back into Ambleside town.

Highlight: The chance to 'bag' four Wainwrights and enjoy great skyline panoramas on a clear day.

Day 3 Tarn Hows and Coniston Old Man

Option 1 - Tarn Hows and Yew Tree Farm

Distance: 6.5 miles (10km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (260m)

In summary: Explore the charming countryside surrounding Monk Coniston and visit the picturesque Tarn Hows, a famous beauty spot.

Highlight: The picturesque views around Tarn Hows look like they are straight out of the pages of a Victorian tourist guide.

Option 2 - Black Crag and Tarn Hows

Distance: 8.5 miles (14km)

Ascent: 1,750 feet (540m)

In summary: Walking from the House, we cross woods and fields up to Iron Keld Plantation. We then traverse an open fell to Black Crag summit which commands a great viewpoint. Continuing on via Hollin Bank, we join the Cumbria Way, returning to Monk Coniston via the picturesque Tarn Hows.

Highlight: The summit of Black Crag is one of the best panoramic viewpoints in the Southern Lake District.

Option 3 - Coniston Old Man

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Ascent: 2,800 feet (860m)

In summary: Head up to Coniston Old Man via the Coppermines Valley and the old slate miners track. From the summit descent via Goats Water to view the magnificent eastern crags of Dow Crag.

Highlight: The view from the top of Coniston Old Man.

Day 4 Coppermines and Wetherlam

Option 1 - Coppermines Valley

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 1,250 ft (380m)

In summary: Walk in the historic Coppermines valley and the lower slopes of Coniston Old Man.

Highlight: The history of mining in the area and feeling of being in among the fells.

Option 2 - Coppermines Valley and Levers Water

Distance: 8.5 miles (13.5km)

Ascent: 1,700 feet (520m)

In summary: We walk from the house into the historic Coppermines Valley. We make our way to the shores of Levers Water passing remains of a once vibrant mining industry.

Highlight: The long and fascinating history of mining and admiring the surrounding mountains from Levers Water.

Option 3 - Coppermines Valley and Wetherlam

Distance: 9½ miles (15km)

Ascent: 2,700 feet (825m)

In summary: Walking from the House, we head into the Coppermines Valley, ascending via old mine shafts and wheel pits, en-route to the col at Swirl Hawse. From there, we head up to the summit of impressive local peak Wetherlam. Our descent takes us south to Hole Rake and over the Miners Bridge, on down to Coniston village. We then take the footpath back to the House.

Highlight: A walk full of mining history, with a great summit and hopefully the chance for a drink in the Sun Inn in Coniston village near the end.

Day 5 Free Day - Southern Lake District

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

Day 6 Tarn Hows and Hawkshead

Option 1 - Hawkshead

Distance: 7.5 miles (12km)

Ascent: 1,250 feet (380m)

In summary: A figure of 8 walk visiting the iconic beauty spot Tarn Hows, then across fields and open fell to the pretty village of Hawkshead.

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

Option 2 - Coniston to Hawkshead via Grizedale

Distance: 8 miles (13km)

Ascent: 1,500 feet (460m)

In summary: Walk to Hawkshead village via Grizedale Forest and return over fields and open fell to Tarn Hows.

Highlight: Hawkshead with its myriad of narrow alleyways and connections with Beatrix Potter and William Wordsworth.

Option 3 - Hodge Close, Black Crag and Tarn Hows

Distance: 8.5 miles (13.5km)

Ascent: 1,950 feet (600m)

In summary: We start with elevated views along Conistonwater, then descend to Yew Tree Farm. Ascending again we cross Uskdale Gap on the craggy Holme Fell, then descend again to view Hodge Close Quarry. We reach the widely panoramic summit of Black Crag. Finally a gentle descent takes us past picturesque Tarn Hows on our return to the house.

Highlight: A walk full of interest including Yew Tree Farm where the Beatrix Potter movie was filmed and the vast hole of Hodge Close Quarry.

Day 7 Langdale

Option 1 - Langdale Waterfalls

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Ascent: 700 feet (220m)

In summary: Follow the Langdale Valley past Elterwater village, to the new Dungeon Ghyll Hotel through increasingly grand scenery.

Highlight: Spectacular waterfalls of Colwith Force and Skelwith Force.

Option 2 - The Langdale Valleys

Distance: 7.5 miles (12km)

Ascent: 1,250 feet (375m)

In summary: Walk along the peaceful valley of Little Langdale with its waterfalls and iconic Slaters Bridge. We pass Blea Tarn, then descend into the larger neighbouring valley of Great Langdale.

Highlight: Beautiful Blea Tarn, with its impressive views of some of the Lake District's most famous peaks.

Option 3 - Lingmoor Fell

Distance: 8.5 miles (14km)

Total ascent: 1,950 feet (600m)

In summary: Ascend to the great viewpoints of Side Pike and Lingmoor on the Langdale skyline. We descend to Elterwater Village to join the Cumbria Way along the base of this immense glacial valley.

Highlight: The classic view of the Langdale Pikes from the summit of Lingmoor Fell.

Day 8 Departure Day

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast before making your way home.

Daily Walk Options



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.



Challenging walking grade 8

Challenging walks for fit, experienced walkers. Expect rugged or mountainous terrain, or some longer distances than typical for this grade. Typically, 12-13 miles (19-21km) with around 2,300ft (700m) 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.

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.

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



Food & drink

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

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](tel:02039748865) 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 walking routes as well as visit-worthy local attractions.

Walks talks

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

The walking day

Prior to setting off on guided 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.

Accessibility

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

Travel Details

Address

Monk Coniston
Coniston
Cumbria LA21 8AQ

Tel: [+44 \(0\)1539 441566](tel:+44(0)1539441566)

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](tel:+44(0)1539445445)

Email: This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it.

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

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

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. Fleeces 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 insect repellent and tick remover tool
- Sit mat
- Waterproof pouch for valuables
- Rubbish bag (remember to always leave no trace)
- Wallet/purse
- Camera
- Walking poles

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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