

COAST TO COAST PATH (ENGLAND)

ST BEES TO ROBIN HOOD'S BAY

ITINERARY: 20 DAYS

Day 1

ARRIVE ST BEES

Arrive by local train from Lancaster or Carlisle to the tiny Cumbrian village of St Bees whose roots date back to the 9th century and is the official start point of the Coast to Coast. Meet at the local pub for a warm welcome and group introduction – tomorrow your walk begins on the shores of the Irish Sea. Alfred Wainwright recommends dipping your feet into the water to mark the start of your journey and collecting a pebble to carry with you to Robin Hood's Bay.

Day 2

ST BEES TO ENNERDALE BRIDGE (22.5KM)

The Coast to Coast walk starts with a day of varied scenery as we climb from the beach to follow the path up and over the dramatic red sandstone cliffs of St. Bees Head. The trail has three RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) viewing points and England's only cliff-nesting seabird colony, so keep a lookout for kittiwakes and guillemots on the wing. Before too long we leave the coast and head into the hills past the quiet villages of Sandwith, Moor Row and Cleator. If the weather is fine we will take lunch by the River Eden before our first challenging climb over Dent Hill (353m). As we head towards Nannycatch Beck and Ennerdale Bridge you will catch your first glimpse of the beautiful and breath-taking Lake District National Park. If time permits we can enjoy afternoon tea or ice cream at 'The Gather', a delightful community owned cafe and shop.

6–7 hours – total ascent 780m / descent 665m

Meals: B



Day 3

ENNERDALE BRIDGE TO ROSTHWAITE (24KM)

A long scenic day takes us along the shores of Ennerdale Water, a forgotten corner of the Lakes that gets far fewer visitors than the Central Lakes. Leaving Ennerdale, the trail is relatively flat but includes some scrambly sections as we make our way to the remote YHA at Black Sail. The youth hostel is an excellent place to break our journey before the dizzying ascent up Loft Beck where we climb up over the wild expanse of Honister Pass. There is a choice of routes to take today depending on weather conditions, both of which will take you down the long descent to the Borrowdale Valley. Take note that today's route passes through the area that records the highest rainfall in England, a country noted for its rain!

We pass through Seatoller village in the beautiful Borrowdale Valley before walking to Rosthwaite with its lovely pub and hotel. Down the road is the enchanting little hamlet of Stonethwaite, worth a look in for an evening pint at the charming country inn and to admire the storybook narrow lane and cottages.

7 hours – total ascent 765m / descent 785m

Meals: B

Day 4

BORROWDALE TO GRASMERE (14.5KM)

Today we head out of the lovely valley of Borrowdale and follow the path alongside Stonethwaite Beck, passing through fields of Herdwick and Swaledale sheep before starting our steep climb towards Eagle's Crag and great views back down the valley. From here the path takes us along Greenup Edge to the head of Easedale Valley. Here we have a choice of paths (weather dependent) one descends down into the valley and follows the line of Teasdale Gill (better for inclement weather), the other skirts along the top of the crags and provides wonderful views and walking in good weather. On this path we will pass by the iconic Lion and the Lamb rock outcrop by Helm Crag, which is well known to Lakeland motorists in the valley below.



We will enjoy fine views of the lake at Grasmere and a glimpse of tomorrow's walk before dropping down to Grasmere in the valley below.

6 hours – total ascent 750m / descent 760 via Helm Crag

Meals: B

Day 5

REST DAY IN GRASMERE

Grasmere is one of England's prettiest and most-loved villages. Home to poet William Wordsworth whose gravesite lies at the local church ground, and the famous Sarah Nelson gingerbread, spend your rest day exploring all its delights. There are plenty of tea shops where you can tuck into home-made cake and scones, or visit one of the many adventure stores for any last minute hiking supplies. If you have time take a tour of Dove Cottage and Wordsworth museum on the town's outskirts where you can immerse yourself a little in his day-to-day life.

Meals: B

Day 6

GRASMERE TO PATERDALE (13.5KM)

A vigorous and great day's walking is ahead of us as the day begins with a lovely climb up out of Grasmere past Raise Beck Falls which makes for a nice stop. There are wonderful views back over the valley below before tackling the last of the climb to the pass at Grisedale. Keep a lookout for the rock at 'Brother's Parting' where poet William Wordsworth inscribed some (now very faint) verses to his brother John at what was to be the point of their last farewell.

Arriving at the head of the Grisedale Tarn (539m) we have a choice of 3 possible routes; one leads up and over St Sunday Crag (841m), which is a ridge walk along this Monolithic block of stone with tremendous views. The central path follows the valley down to Patterdale and is the best option for poor weather. The most challenging route leads to the left up to the summit of Helvellyn (950m) and from there down onto the infamous spine of the Striding Edge – so called because of the precipitous drop off either side of the narrow path. It's frequently used in photographs of the Coast to Coast and probably England's best known stretch of mountain. It is not for the faint of heart and involves some scrambling



up and down rock pitches, though that does not deter walkers and on a busy summer day you'll even see people hoisting their dogs up and down these pitches along the ridge!

All three routes lead to Patterdale and so our choice is largely dependent on weather conditions, stamina or head for heights. Patterdale is a lovely village with a serene location at the head of Ullswater Lake; it's well worth a stroll out in the evening before you call in at one of the local pubs or hotels for dinner. The local shop here is a mine of information and supplies for Coast to Coast walkers so it's worth sticking your head in.

5 hours – total ascent: 900m / descent 805m via the recommended route over St Sunday Crag – extra 3km and 2 hours if including the detour via Helvellyn and Striding Edge

Meals: B

Day 7

PATTERDALE TO SHAP (25KM)

A long but enjoyable day ahead as we leave the Lake District behind and head outside the National Park to the tiny town of Shap on its fringes. The path first climbs out of the Patterdale valley with splendid views back over Ullswater and the tall mountains we walked over yesterday. The trail weaves its way between the crags passing the delightfully pretty Angle Tarn to continue its climb to Knott (739m) and onto Kidsty Pike (780m) – the highest point of the Coast to Coast Path. After the summit we begin our descent to quiet Haweswater Lake in the valley below.

Haweswater is the most remote of the lakes and has a markedly different feel to the central lakes, for many people it is their favorite and the walk takes us along the length of Haweswater close to the water's edge. Look out for shy red squirrels whose habitat is threatened by the non-native grey squirrel. One of the Lake District's most famous residents was Beatrix Potter who made red squirrels famous in her book *A Tale of Squirrel Nutkin*.

Before we arrive at Shap we pass one of the highlights of the Coast to Coast walk – the evocative ruins of Shap Abbey dating back to the 12th century. Henry VIII



dissolved the abbey, along with other monastic orders in 1540. We also pass the remains of an ancient stone circle which was plundered for its stone by the monks who built Shap Abbey!

7–9 hours – total ascent: 1174m / descent 1009m

Meals: B

Day 8

SHAP TO ORTON (13KM)

Today's scenery is quite different from other stages of the trail, with limestone escarpments, moorland, pasture and scattered farmhouses. The limestone plateau east of Shap yielded many archaeological finds from over 200 sites with ancient relics dated from 2,000 to 9,000 years ago. The finds include axe heads, arrows and seed deposits from the Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples prior to the arrival of the Romans. Near Oddendale are the remains of two concentric stone circles that date back almost 6,000 years. The pretty village of Orton has amongst its attractions Kennedy's chocolate factory – a wonderful treat for those inclined to sweet tastes after your walk, they even have a Coast to Coast chocolate bar!

4 hours – total ascent 535m / descent 655m

Meals: B

Day 9

ORTON TO KIRKBY STEPHEN (20KM)

Our walk today leads us into one of the least populated parts of England, up over wild moorlands to take us into a landscape of the dramatic remains of Victorian rail engineering. This is a longer day but with easy gradients and glimpses of a prehistoric past when these lonely places were once busy with human life, make it very pleasant. We will pass by Sunbiggin Tarn, a beautiful isolated lake and designated SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) important for its rich variety of birdlife and flora. From here we drop into the Lune Valley and Smardale Bridge where we will look out for 'pillow mounds' – prehistoric sites whose purpose remains unclear. After walking up Smardale Fell we drop down to the welcome sight of Kirkby Stephen, a lively town well worth exploring.



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

5.5 hours – total ascent 535m / 723m descent

Meals: B

Day 10

KIRKBY STEPHEN TO KELD (21KM)

There are a few variations on the walk today which could be put in place when the tracks become too eroded and muddy or when a grouse shoot is taking place.

Any diversions and periods during which Coast to Coast walkers are asked to follow them over Nine Standards Rigg are indicated on notice boards at Hartley Fell (milepost 87). Your guide will make a decision around which route to take based on current information and conditions.

Leaving the sheltered valley of Kirkby Stephen the climb begins to the wild moors of the Pennine mountain range – the spine of northern England. Today also marks a watershed on the Coast to Coast as all waters from Nine Standards Rigg (an arrangement of dry stone obelisks whose purpose remains a mystery) onwards, begin to flow eastward towards the North sea, your final destination.

Three seasonal routes have been introduced to help protect the delicate biodiversity of the area from thousands of walking boots. One thing you will notice is the peat bogs, they are almost unavoidable and we recommend gaiters for this section if you have them. After Nine Standards Rigg the moors become increasingly gentler as the path continues into the tiny hamlet of Keld with its many waterfalls and old stone barns.

6 hours – total ascent 780m / descent 575m

Meals: B

Day 11

KELD TO REETH (18.5KM)

Keld sits at the head of the Swaledale Valley and here the Coast to Coast dissects the longer northbound Pennine Way. Keld is now a tiny hill village but in the mid-19th century it was the heart of a thriving lead mining industry and today's walk leads us through the remains and legacy of those boom times. The area is littered with mining ruins. In some parts the ground has been stripped away



completely to leave a scarred and desolate landscape. There is a choice of routes and in poor weather the lower level walk via Swaledale is a pretty alternative route to the high route via the mines. There is also a good village pub in Gunnerside on the lower route. The walk finishes in Reeth with its variety of pubs and tea shops to recuperate, plus a village green if the weather is fine.

5 hours – total ascent 838m / descent 911m via the higher route

Meals: B

Day 12

REETH TO RICHMOND (18KM)

Today we leave the Pennines behind and enter into the Yorkshire Dales passing through lovely farmland countryside and small villages. This morning's walk follows the River Swale – as you walk you begin to understand why the Dales is a much-loved walking destination. The path follows the Nun's Steps through gorgeous woodland tracts and the lovely villages of Swaledale, Marske and Marrick. Marrick Priory, now an outdoor education centre, was once a Benedictine nunnery in use from 1140 to 1160 and is considered one of the best preserved in the UK. Notice the changing geology as you pass the limestone crags and cliffs for which the Yorkshire Dales is famous.

5 hours – total ascent 395m / descent 510m

Meals: B

Day 13

REST DAY IN RICHMOND

Explore the shops and sights of one of the Coast to Coast's busiest towns. Richmond is an attractive market town with its own Norman castle dating back to the 11th century, a wonderful Georgian theatre and cobbled market square from which lead many winding alleys known locally as 'wynds'.

Meals: B



Day 14

RICHMOND TO DANBY WISKE (22.5KM)

A lovely day of mostly rural walking. We walk from Richmond beside the River Swale and across fields before passing under the busy A1 road to Catterick Racecourse which was built on a Roman fort. We continue onto Bolton-on-Swale where the churchyard holds a memorial to Henry Jenkins, who supposedly lived to 169! On leaving Bolton Beck we encounter the longest stretch of road walking for the entire Coast to Coast. Nonetheless, the walk along quiet country roads and through pretty farmland is very pleasant and enjoyable. Our stop for today is the tiny village of Danby Wiske with its Norman church, village green and single pub. Depending on B&B availability we may transfer by taxi to our accommodation in a nearby town.

5.5 hours – total ascent 138m / descent 142m

Meals: B

Day 15

DANBY WISKE TO INGLEBY CROSS (15.5KM)

Crossing the bridge just outside Danby Wiske you can see the outline of the Cleveland Hills into the distance towards Ingleby Cross. Today is mostly road walking through rural areas and the lowest point of the Coast to Coast through the Vale of Mowbray. Make sure you treat yourself to coffee and cake at the Joiners Shop Cafe in the idyllic village of Ingleby Arncliffe before settling in for the night to prepare yourself for tomorrow's stunning climb to the gorgeous North York Moors.

4 hours – total ascent: 220m / descent 120m

Meals: B

Day 16

INGLEBY CROSS TO CLAY BANK TOP (20KM)

The North York Moors National Park offers wide open expanses of heather moorland covered with a carpet of purple flowers in the summer months. It is an area both brooding and beautiful and makes for very pleasant walking. Today we will enter into the beautiful wide open spaces of the North Yorkshire Moors to experience some hill walking after the flat terrain of the last couple of days. A steep climb through Scarth Wood onto the open expanses of the North York



Moors with heather clad hills and patches of forest. The Coast to Coast Path joins the Cleveland Way leading to a long ascent up Live Moor and Carlton Bank (408 m) before descending to the welcome sight of Lord Stones Café. We continue on the Cleveland Way following a succession of hilly ascents and descents with Cringle Moor, Broughton Bank and White Hill all at or over 400m. There are great views today all the way back to the Pennines before we arrive at Clay Bank Top where we deviate from the trail to our accommodation at nearby Great Broughton.

6 hours – total ascent: 1130m / descent 1015m

Meals: B

Day 17

CLAY BANK TOP TO BLAKEY RIDGE (13.5KM)

Today's walk takes us high onto moorland where on a clear day you will get your first view of the North Sea. We pass Urra Lookout and the 'Face Stone', one of several old standing stones, some marked with inscriptions, which were used as way-markers in their day. Then cross over Round Hill (454m) to follow the line of the old dismantled Rosedale railway line to the Lion Inn at Blakey. The railway was built to exploit the ironstone (a type of iron ore) on which this area prospered in the 1800s but closed in 1929. In good weather there are nice views into the upper valleys of Farn and Esk Dales – if it's a rainy or overcast day it can be a bit bleak and gloomy, which makes the arrival at the ancient but welcoming Lion Inn eagerly anticipated.

4.5 hours – total ascent 505m / descent 375m

Meals: B

Day 18

BLAKEY RIDGE TO EGTON BRIDGE (18.5KM)

High on Blakey Ridge we can take in the surrounding expanse as we meander into the Esk Valley, firstly passing the medieval stone markers of Young Ralph and Fat Betty. There are numerous myths and legends around Fat Betty including the cross marks the place where two nuns from nearby Rosedale Abbey lost their lives. We will enjoy a fine day's walk along flat easy paths into idyllic countryside and the villages of Glaisdale and Egton Bridge, a walker's



favourite on the Coast to Coast. This is the area where the TV series 'Heartbeat' was filmed and it corresponds to most people's expectations of timeless English rural life.

4 hours – total ascent 265m / descent 616m

Meals: B

Day 19

EGTON BRIDGE TO ROBIN HOOD'S BAY (28KM)

Our last day on the Coast to Coast is a suitably long one with many highlights – and ups and downs! This morning we begin by following a private road to the village of Grosmont where we hope to see one of the local steam engines of the North Yorks Moors railway pull out for its run to Pickering. Truly a grand sight from a bygone age the train was most recently featured in the Harry Potter movie series. After Grosmont the trail climbs steeply with views across to Whitby and its elegant abbey. The path crosses a main road onto heather moors before passing the five standing monoliths of High Brides Stones before dropping down to the lovely forest of the Beck Valley and the village of Littlebeck. We stop just past here to enjoy a break at the delightful garden cafe next to the 20m high Falling Foss Waterfall. A final section of high moor at Greystone hills finally brings us to the coast, where the last 5km is walked on the coastal cliff path to Robin Hood's Bay, which is concealed until the last moment. This is a charming village of red roofed houses and narrow alleyways clustered around a fine harbour. We will celebrate the end of our 192 mile crossing of England with a drink at Wainwright's Bar, and as tradition dictates, dip our toes into the North Sea and throw away the pebble we've carried from St Bees.

7 hours – total ascent 775m / descent 770m

Meals: B L D

Day 20

DEPART ROBIN HOOD'S BAY

You are free to check out anytime today before 10am.

Meals: B

