



The Lake District & Cumbria

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

If it's grandstand views you're looking for, nowhere in England can match Cumbria. It's a place where the superlatives simply run dry – home to the nation's longest and deepest lakes, as well as its smallest church, steepest road, highest town and loftiest peak. The glaciers that carved out this landscape during the last ice age have long since melted, leaving behind a string of crags, fells and sparkling tarns that form the core of one of England's oldest national parks – the stunning Lake District, founded in 1951 and still considered by many to be the spiritual heartland of English hiking.

But there's much more to this region than just fine views. With a wealth of literary and artistic connections, a history stretching back over 5000 years and some of the halest and heartiest cooking anywhere in England, it's packed with more natural appeal than almost anywhere else in Britain.

When to Go

Cumbria's largest mountain festival is held in Keswick in mid-May, while the Beer Festival in June welcomes ale aficionados from across the globe. Ambleside's traditional sports day on the last Saturday in July features events such as houndtrailing and Cumbrian wrestling; Grasmere's annual sports day takes place on the August Bank Holiday. In November, the world's greatest liars congregate on Santon Bridge for their annual fibbing contest.

The Lake District & Cumbria Highlights

- 1 Slogging to the top of England's highest mountain, **Scafell Pike** (p712)
- 2 Cruising across the silvery waters of **Coniston Water** (p708)
- 3 Visiting the former homes of William Wordsworth at **Dove Cottage** (p704) and **Rydal Mount** (p703)
- 4 Drinking in the dramatic fell views from **Wasdale** (p711)
- 5 Spotting England's only resident ospreys on **Bassenthwaite Lake** (p718)
- 6 Exploring the outdoor art and wooded trails of **Grizedale Forest** (p707)
- 7 Staring out from the red-brick battlements of **Carlisle Castle** (p727)
- 8 Hopping aboard the miniature steam trains of **La'al Ratty** (p725) in Ravenglass

