



Cumbrian Coast

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

Most visitors to the Lake District never stray far beyond the boundaries of the national park, but they're missing out on one of the county's forgotten gems – its bleakly beautiful coastline, a gentle panorama of sandy bays and grassy headlands stretching from Morecambe Bay to the shores of the Solway Coast.

Historically, Cumbria's ports developed to serve the local mining, quarrying and shipbuilding industries, and while scattered pockets of industry still remain (principally around Barrow-in-Furness and the nuclear plant at Sellafield), much of the rest of the coast is as ruggedly beautiful as the rest of the Lakeland landscape. Wander the landscaped grounds of Holker Hall, spot seabirds from the RSPB reserve at St Bees Head, admire the views from the top of Black Combe and then wrap things up with some Michelin-starred dining in the medieval village of Cartmel.

When to Go

The Cumbrian Coast receives far fewer visitors than the national park, so it's usually light on crowds even in peak season – although attractions such as the South Lakes Animal Park, The Beacon and the beaches around Millom and Haverigg get busy during the summer holidays. Holker Hall and St Bees Head are best in spring and early summer, while September sees the annual World Gurning Competition in Egremont, a face-pulling contest dating back to the 12th century, when the lord of the manor supposedly handed out sour crab apples to his workers.

Cumbrian Coast Highlights

- 1 Explore the grand rooms and even grander gardens of **Holker Hall** (p154)
- 2 Sample the stellar food at Simon Rogan's two restaurants in **Cartmel** (p153)
- 3 Watch one of the northwest's largest seabird colonies at **St Bees Head** (p165)
- 4 Delve into the seafaring and rum-running heritage of **Whitehaven** (p160)
- 5 Pay homage to Ulverston's best-known son at the **Laurel and Hardy Museum** (p157)
- 6 Step back into the past at the tumbledown **Furness Abbey** (p159)
- 7 Enjoy a panoramic view across the Cumbrian Coast from the summit of **Black Combe** (p155)

