



Keswick & Derwentwater

Includes »

Keswick.....	113
Thirlmere.....	122
Bassenthwaite Lake.....	123
Back O' Skiddaw.....	124
Whinlatter, Lorton & Loweswater.....	125
Cockermouth.....	126
Borrowdale & Buttermere.....	129
Lodore, Grange & Rosthwaite.....	129
Stonethwaite, Seatoller & Seathwaite.....	132
Honister Pass.....	133
Buttermere & Crummock Water.....	134

Why Go?

Pocked with islands, fringed by pebbled shores and overlooked by the hulking dome of Skiddaw, there are few lakes with such an immediate wow factor as Derwentwater. Neither as touristy as Windermere nor as wild as Wastwater, it's a place that seems to encapsulate all the essential qualities of the Lake District landscape. If you like nothing more than cruising on the water or wandering the hilltops, there are few places where you'll be better served.

The lively market town of Keswick makes a convenient base. South of town are the twin valleys of Borrowdale and Buttermere, while Bassenthwaite Lake and its wild ospreys is a few miles north. To the west you'll find the conifer forests of Whinlatter, the peaceful fields of Lorton, and the market town of Cockermouth, thoroughly polished up since 2009's floods and now (nearly) as good as new.

Best Places to Eat

- » Pheasant Inn (p124)
- » Kirkstile Inn (p126)
- » Cottage in the Wood (p126)
- » Quince & Medlar (p129)
- » Morrel's (p120)

Best Places to Stay

- » Howe Keld (p118)
- » Swinside Lodge (p120)
- » Old Homestead (p128)
- » Winder Hall (p126)
- » Seatoller Farm (p132)

When to Go

In terms of festivals and events, May and June are definitely the best months to visit Keswick: the town hosts lively celebrations devoted to beer, jazz and mountain sports. July and August can be oppressively busy, although it's well worth catching the gruelling Borrowdale Fell Race in August if you can. Mid-September brings one of the region's largest country meets, the Borrowdale Show, when local farmers bring out their prize Herdwicks, and there are traditional wrestling contests, fells races, sheep-shearing competitions and even a classic tug-of-war to watch.

KESWICK

POP 5257

Nestled at the head of Derwentwater among a thicket of towering fells, Keswick is one of the handsomest of all the Lake District's market towns. Centred on a lively cobbled marketplace crammed with enough outdoors stores to launch an assault on Everest, the town is the northern Lakes' main commercial centre – so don't be surprised if you encounter some crowds in the summer.

Countless classic fell walks criss-cross the encircling hilltops, while barges and row boats scull out from the northern shores of the lake near Crow Park. And if the weather turns, you can always head indoors to browse the curious exhibits of the Keswick Museum, or settle in for some grub at one of the town's tempting pubs and cafes.

History

Keswick's name derives from the Old Norse *cese-wic* (cheese farm), and agriculture was an important industry throughout the Middle Ages, following the endowment of the town's market charter in 1276. The town later became an important industrial centre, especially for slate and graphite (then known as plumbago, or black lead), which was discovered at Seathwaite in 1555.

In 1864 a railway between Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith opened up the area to tourists and industrialists, leading to a building boom around Keswick, Hope Park and Fitz Park. The line was closed during the Beecham cuts of the 1960s and '70s, and now forms a lovely section of the Sea to Sea Cycle Route (C2C).

Sights & Activities

Derwentwater

LAKE

Studded with islands and ringed by scowling fells, Derwentwater is, for many people, the prettiest of all the Lakeland lakes. It stretches for 3 miles from the green expanse of Crow Park, a short walk from Keswick town centre, to the 90ft tumble of Lodore Falls at the lake's southern end.

The lake is famous for its islands: the largest is **St Herbert's**, named after the 'hermit of Derwentwater', who supposedly lived there in the 7th century, while the smallest is **Rampsholme Island**. In the northeastern corner is **Lord's Island**, formerly the property of local earls, while nearby **Derwent Island** was owned by eccentric aristocrat Joseph Pocklington, who built the island's

wonderful Italianate house (Wordsworth thought it was an eyesore and tried to get it pulled down). The island now belongs to the National Trust and is rented to tenants, who are required to open the house to the public five days a year. Phone ☎017687-73780 for details of the next opening days.

Paths wind almost the whole way around the shores of Derwentwater, but it's a long walk from end to end, so it's probably more sensible just to follow the first section to the famous viewpoint of **Friar's Crag**, 15 minutes' walk from the Keswick jetties.

As always, the best way to explore the lake is by boat, either motorised or paddle-powered. The **Keswick Launch Company** (www.keswick-launch.co.uk) calls at seven landing stages around the lake: Ashness Gate, Lodore Falls, High Brandlehow, Low Brandlehow, Hawse End, Nichol End and Keswick.

There are eight daily boats from mid-March to mid-November, dropping to three a day from mid-November to mid-March. A circular trip costs £9/5 per adult/child. You're free to hop off and walk to the next jetty if you wish; single fares to each landing stage are also available. In summer there's also a twilight cruise at 7.30pm, plus special Father Christmas cruises in December.

FREE Keswick Museum & Art Gallery

MUSEUM

(Station Rd; ☎10am-4pm Tue-Sat Feb-Oct) Tucked along Station Rd overlooking the orderly lawns of Fitz Park, this endearingly oddball museum has hardly changed since its opening in 1898. Glass display cabinets house a hotchpotch of exhibits including a Napoleonic teacup, a penny farthing bicycle, a rare fish pickled in a jar, a mounted golden eagle, a spoon made from a sheep's leg bone and a cluster of letters from Southey, Wordsworth, de Quincey and Ruskin.

But the museum's most famous exhibits are its mummified cat (allegedly 664 years old) and the Musical Stones of Skidaw, fashioned from hornfels rock in 1827 by stonemason Joseph Richardson. The stones' plink-plonk melody was a famous 19th-century tourist attraction, and even featured in a gala performance for Queen Victoria.

Cumberland Pencil Museum

MUSEUM

(www.pencilmuseum.co.uk; Southey Works; adult/child £3.75/2.50; ☎9.30am-5pm) Plumbago, or graphite, has been an important export for Keswick since the 16th century. Local