

# › Understand the Lake District

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Sixty years after its foundation, find out how Britain's largest national park is facing up to modern challenges such as environmental conservation, spiralling visitor numbers and climate change.

## **HISTORY . . . . . 192**

Step back in time and explore Cumbria's 5000-year history, encountering everything from Stone Age settlers to medieval monks, Victorian tourists and pioneering environmentalists.

## **THE LAKE DISTRICT'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT . . . . . 199**

Few British landscapes are more beloved than the Lake District. Take a stroll through some of its habitats and get acquainted with the flora and fauna you might meet along the way.

## **LITERARY LAKES . . . . . 203**

William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Beatrix Potter and Arthur Ransome are just some of the famous literary names to have called the Lake District home.

## **FOOD & DRINK . . . . . 207**

From hearty pies to sweet puddings and pints of real ale, the Lake District is definitely a place to indulge your tastebuds – especially once you've worked up an appetite on the fells.



## population per sq km

LAKE DISTRICT

CARLISLE

UK



1 person  
≈ 24 people

# The Lake District Today

## Sixty Years On

In 2011, the Lake District celebrated its 60th birthday as a national park, and while it certainly isn't without its detractors, there can be little doubt that national park status has had a broadly positive effect on the long-term health of the area: preventing development, prohibiting industrial expansion, preserving the environment and promoting the region as a tourist destination.

Over 15 million people now flock to the Lake District every year, contributing nearly £1 billion into the region's economy. While the cash is certainly welcome, tourism isn't without its downsides. Spiralling visitor numbers and thousands of extra boots on the fells have inevitably had consequences for the fragile Lakeland environment. Nearly nine out of every 10 visitors arrive by car, bringing traffic, noise, tailbacks and air pollution. And in many rural areas, local villages have found themselves swamped by holiday cottages and second homes, pushing up house prices and preventing locals from getting onto the housing ladder.

## The Changing Landscape

While tourism in the Lake District is booming, other industries are finding it increasingly tough to make ends meet. The fallout from the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in 2001, which led to the enforced slaughter of hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle and forced many farmers to the wall, raised serious fears for the survival of this age-old industry. Hill farming is more than just an industry in the Lake District – it's a way of life, and for many people the survival of farming is inextricably linked to the long-term welfare of the national park.

Many farmers have diversified in an effort to balance the books, embracing everything from cheese making and farm holidays to camping

» Area: 2292 sq km/885 sq miles

» Number of visitors per year: 15 million

» Highest point: Scafell Pike (978m/3210ft)

» Number of listed buildings: 1740

## Best Books

**Memoirs of a Fell Wanderer** (Alfred Wainwright) Recollections of a life spent among the fells.

**Swallows and Amazons** (Arthur Ransome) Relive your childhood in Ransome's classic tales.

**Grasmere Journals** (Dorothy Wordsworth) Wordsworth's

sister documents her life in the Lake District.

**Unruly Times** (AS Byatt) Highly readable account of Coleridge and Wordsworth's relationship.

**A Walk Around the Lakes** (Hunter Davies) Comic travelogue by Cumbria-born writer.

## Best Poetry

**Collected Poems** (William Wordsworth)

**Lyrical Ballads** (Wordsworth & Coleridge)

**Selected Poems 1940–1982** (Norman Nicholson)