



Western Lake District

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

In many ways this is the quintessential Lakeland landscape. Studded with silvery lakes, mist-shrouded fells, country pubs and hill farms, this side of the national park feels much rawer and wilder than its more pastoral neighbour to the east. It's a place saturated with superlatives: home to England's smallest church (St Olaf's in Wasdale), highest mountain (Scafell Pike), deepest lake (Wastwater) and steepest roads (Hardknott and Wrynose), not to mention some of its wildest scenery.

As always, the best way to appreciate the landscape is to get out and explore. A string of high fells stand like sentinels across the western reaches of Ennerdale and Wasdale, including Great Gable, Scafell and Scafell Pike, providing irresistible targets for peak-baggers. If you prefer to hike alone, however, you might prefer to head for the little-visited Duddon Valley, where you can walk for hours with only the odd Herdwick sheep for company.

When to Go

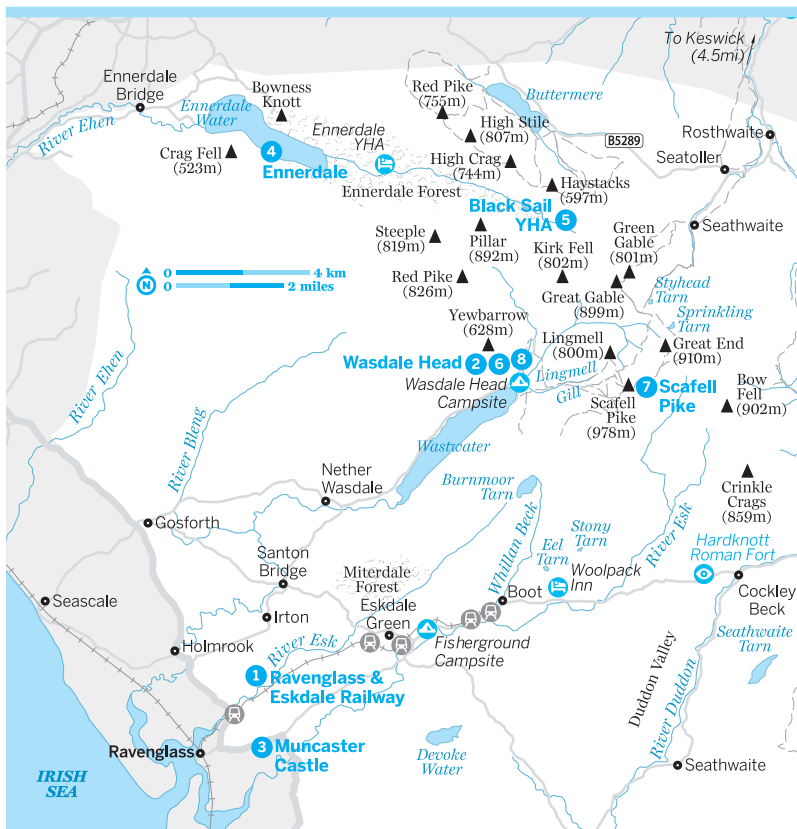
Wet weather and low cloud can make it hard to appreciate the views in this part of the Lake District, so most people visit in summer – but it's worth avoiding half-terms and school holidays if you'd prefer to climb Scafell Pike in peace. Early autumn can be a good time to visit, with relatively few crowds and fairly settled weather.

The Santon Bridge Inn holds its famous World's Greatest Liar Competition in November, and Muncaster Castle offers special twilight walks and Victorian-themed Christmas tours in late November and early December.

RAVENGLASS & AROUND

Flung out on the western border of the national park, the little harbour of Ravenglass is quiet these days, but a couple of millennia ago it was home to the thriving naval base of Glannaventa, one of the most important Roman ports in northwest England.

Few traces of the Roman occupation now remain, save for the ruins of a Roman bathhouse just behind the harbour. Most of present-day Ravenglass dates back to the 19th century, when the harbour was redeveloped as a link between northern England's thriving industrial ports and the iron-rich Eskdale mines to the east, accessed via the miniature trains of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.



Western Lake District Highlights

- 1 Ride the miniature choo-choos of the **Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway** (p100)
- 2 Drink in the wraparound views from **Wasdale Head** (p107)
- 3 Go ghost-spotting at one of England's most haunted castles, **Muncaster** (p100)
- 4 Leave the crowds behind in the unspoilt valley of **Ennerdale** (p110)
- 5 Sleep out in the wilds at the **Black Sail YHA** (p111)
- 6 Discover hiking history and home-brewed beers at the **Wasdale Head Inn** (p109)
- 7 Stand on top of the roof of England, **Scafell Pike** (p108)
- 8 Duck under the ancient roof-beams of England's most minuscule church, **St Olaf's** (p107)