

Windermere - Coniston - Langdale drive

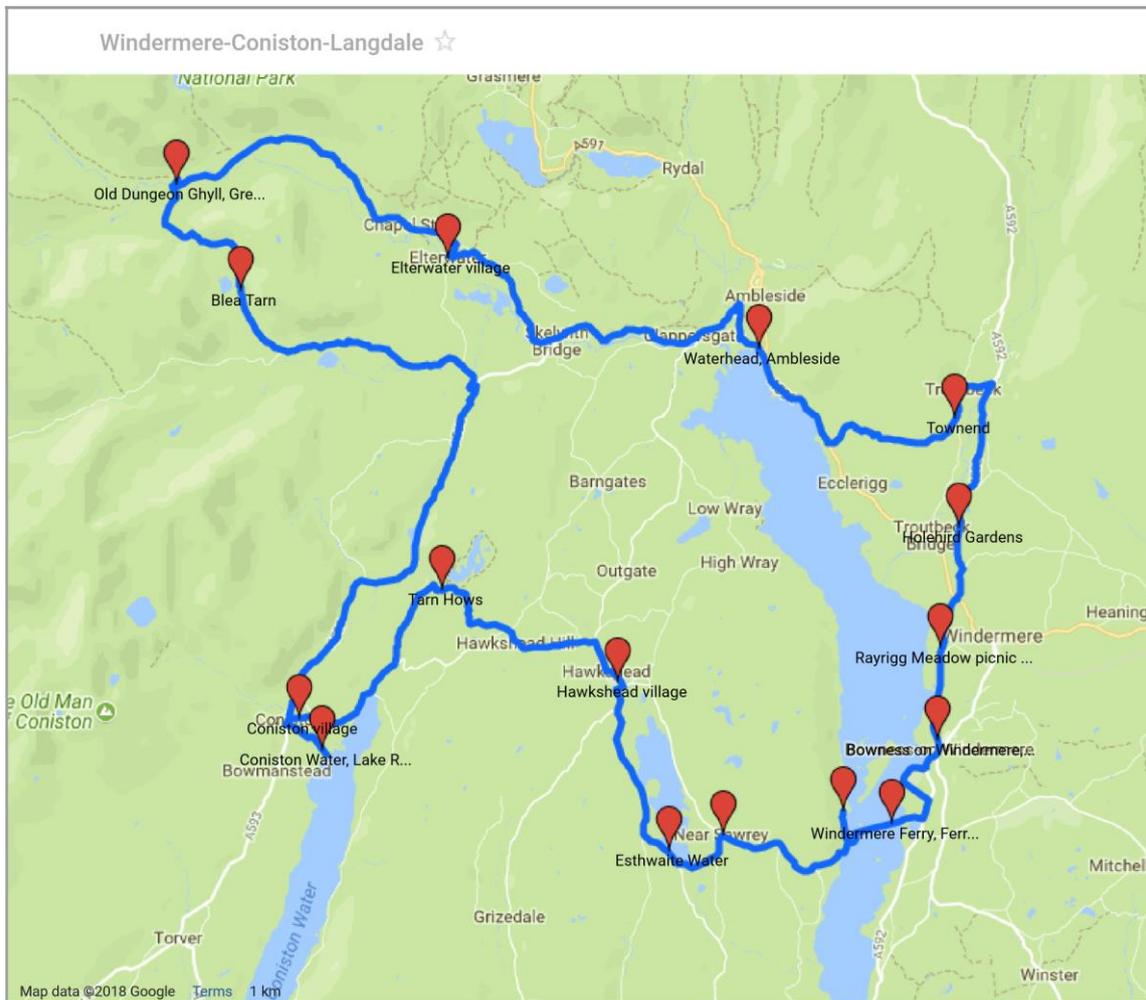


A drive around central Lakeland through some of the best scenery in the area. There is a Beatrix Potter theme, visiting a number of locations associated with the famous author. A short car ferry trip across Windermere lake is also included.



Tarn Hows

Route Map



Summary of main attractions on route (click on name for detail)

Distance	Attraction	Car Park Coordinates
0 miles	Bowness-on-Windermere	N 54.36591, W 2.91993
1.6 miles	Windermere Ferry, Ferry Nab	N 54.35423, W 2.93101
2.1 miles	Harrowslack, Windermere	N 54.35592, W 2.94245
4.0 miles	Hill Top, Near Sawrey	N 54.35247, W 2.97133
4.9 miles	Esthwaite Water	N 54.35029, W 2.98460
6.9 miles	Hawkshead Village	N 54.37410, W 2.99679
9.5 miles	Tarn Hows	N 54.38708, W 3.03905
11.8 miles	Coniston Village	N 54.36892, W 3.07347
12.5 miles	Coniston Water	N 54.36460, W 3.06779
20.3 miles	Blea Tarn	N 54.42939, W 3.08752
22.1 miles	Old Dungeon Ghyll	N 54.44420, W 3.10281
25.8 miles	Elterwater Village	N 54.43387, W 3.03789
30.2 miles	Waterhead, Ambleside	N 54.42116, W 2.96284
32.9 miles	Townend	N 54.41128, W 2.91571
35.3 miles	Holehird Gardens	N 54.39602, W 2.91472
36.6 miles	Rayrigg Meadow picnic site	N 54.37897, W 2.91924
37.6 miles	Bowness-on-Windermere	N 54.36591, W 2.91993

The Drive

Distance: 0 miles

Location: Bowness-on-Windermere, Rayrigg Road car park

Coordinates: N 54.36591, W 2.91993

Bowness is an attractive and very popular tourist town on the shores of Windermere lake. Until the mid-1800's it was a small peaceful village but all that changed with the opening of the railway line from Kendal to nearby Windermere town in 1847. Victorian tourists started pouring in to the area and the towns of Windermere and Bowness grew massively to meet the tourist demand. Nowadays the two towns merge together and are regularly filled with tourist crowds but Bowness still retains a lot of charm by the lake with plenty of attractions and is worth exploring.

One of the most popular attractions is [The World of Beatrix Potter](#), opposite the car park. The famous children's author wrote 23 enchanting little books in the early 1900's, with characters such as Peter Rabbit, Squirrel Nutkin and Jemima Puddle-Duck still much loved across the world. This popular family attraction recreates 3D scenes from the stories which mesmerizes children and adults alike. The town centre itself is nearby and has numerous shops, cafes and pubs where you can easily spend some time exploring before wondering down past [St Martin's Church](#) to the nearby lakeside area.



Bowness-on-Windermere centre



Bowness-on-Windermere lakeside

The picturesque lakeside area overlooking Bowness Bay is slightly separate to the town centre but often just as busy. There are a number of jetties where you can catch one of the many [Windermere Lake Cruises](#). Beyond the jetties is Glebe Road which forms a popular loop along the lake shore. Within this loop is a large open recreational area known as The Glebe. The grassy area provides lovely views up the lake and there are various activities available such as mini golf and tennis. Beyond The Glebe is Cockshott Point which also has some good open grassy areas with shingle beaches and a [footpath](#) along the attractive lakeshore. There are a number of shops, kiosks, cafes and pubs around the lakeside area. Rayrigg Road car park is pay and display with toilet facilities.

Travelling:

Leave the car park at the exit and turn right on the minor road, then soon right again on the A592 towards Bowness centre. Shortly, approach a mini-roundabout and turn right towards the lake, still the A592. Drop down the hill to enter the lakeside area. After a short distance the main road turns away from the lake but you can take the right turn here and follow the Glebe Road loop which gives some good views of the lake as you pass various shops and cafes. Additional parking is available here. The road soon brings you back to the A592 where you turn right. Shortly, take the first right turn on the B5285 towards the ferry which leads past a car park and some public toilets on the right before reaching Ferry Nab where the Windermere ferry departs.

Distance: 1.6 miles

Location: Windermere Ferry, Ferry Nab

Coordinates: N 54.35423, W 2.93101

The [Windermere ferry](#) travels across the middle of the lake between Ferry Nab and Ferry House, thus saving a journey of about 15 miles on roads around the top or bottom of the lake. There has been a ferry here for over 500 hundred years. Early boats were rowed across the lake before a steam ferry was introduced in the 19th century and more recently the ferry is diesel powered. There are plans to introduce an electric ferry in the future. The current vessel 'Mallard' was built in 1990 and can carry up to 18 cars and over 100 passengers. It uses fixed underwater cables to steer across the lake, although in rough weather services are often suspended and technical issues can also sometimes prevent it running. To confirm if the ferry is running call 07860 813427, or check the live [webcam](#) at Ferry House. There is a service from each side approx every 30 minutes from early morning until late evening, although waiting times can be lengthy at peak periods. There are toilet facilities and limited refreshments on both sides.



Windermere ferry

Travelling:

From the ferry, the road passes public toilets on the left and continues on a narrow headland for a short distance to a right turn towards Harrowslack which you take. Pass 'The Cafe in the Courtyard' on the left and continue along the tree lined lakeshore to cross a cattle grid and Harrowslack car park is on the left.



Harrowslack, Windermere

Distance: 2.1 miles

Location: Harrowslack, Windermere

Coordinates: N 54.35592, W 2.94245

This National Trust car park gives access to the wonderful west shore of Windermere. This shore is much less developed and busy than Bowness across the lake and makes a good escape from the crowds. Across the road from the car park is Coatlap Point, an open area of grass and shingle shore with fabulous views across the lake, including [Belle Isle](#) in the near distance which is the largest island in the lake. The narrow dead end road runs approx 0.7 miles northwards following the attractive lakeshore and

makes a pleasant [walk](#) with plenty of opportunity for a picnic and paddle. Beyond that a rough track continues northwards towards Wray Castle.

Back towards the ferry from the car park is [Claife Viewing Station](#), built in the 1790's it provided a wonderful viewpoint over Windermere lake and was a popular tourist attraction before falling into disrepair at the end of the 19th century. It has recently been tastefully restored and again provides wonderful and peaceful views over the lake with free entry. The Station is a short uphill walk from the road and from [Joey's Cafe](#) which provides refreshments. National Trust pay and display car park, toilet facilities at Ferry House.



Windermere from Claife Viewing Station

Travelling:

Retrace your steps back past Joey's Cafe and turn right at the T junction towards Sawrey. The tight road follows the lakeshore for a short distance and passes the National Trust car park at Ash Landing on the right before climbing steeply away from the lake. Once over the top, there are some lovely views over lush pastures and wooded hills towards distant mountains, with the isolated [St Peter's Church](#) nearby on left. Soon, you pass through the small village of Far Sawrey, with the [Cuckoo Brow Inn](#) on the right where you could get refreshments. Shortly, enter the neighbouring village of Near Sawrey, passing the pedestrian entrance to Hill Top and the Tower Bank Arms on the left. The car park for Hill Top is just beyond the pub on the left.



Hill Top house

Distance: 4.0 miles

Location: Hill Top, Near Sawrey

Coordinates: N 54.35247, W 2.97133

[Hill Top](#), in the attractive village of Near Sawrey, was once the home and sanctuary of Beatrix Potter and is still kept exactly as it would have been when she lived and worked there.

Born in London in 1866, Beatrix Potter is known across the world nowadays as the famous children's author who produced 23 little story books with much loved characters such as Peter Rabbit and Jemima Puddleduck. What many

don't realise is just how talented and influential she was in many other varied fields, from land conservation and sheep farming to the science behind fungi.

Hill Top was bought by Beatrix in 1905 with profits from her early work. At that time she still lived in London, this was her bolthole and sanctuary where she could escape to write her books. Even when she married in 1913 and moved in to nearby Castle Farm she continued to use Hill Top for her personal work and pleasure. Today the house is kept very much as she left it when it was donated to the National Trust after her death in 1943. Very atmospheric and filled with her personal possessions, you can get a real sense of her life and guides will tell you more. The garden is also wonderful and, along with the house and other nearby locations, provided Beatrix with many illustrations used in her books.

Hill Top is a short walk along the road from the car park. The house is open daily, except Fridays, from February to November, plus Fridays in school holidays. Closed in winter. There is an admission fee to house and gardens, free for National Trust members. The ticket office is in the car park. The house can be busy so entry is by timed ticket and booking recommended. Outside there are attractive gardens, a small gift shop, toilets and occasionally a pop up cafe. The small car park is free for visitors to the property. The [Tower Bank Arms](#) next door is a quaint looking pub which also has connections with Beatrix Potter.

Travelling:

Turn left out of the car park and take the immediate left towards Lakeside. The narrow road descends with views towards Esthwaite Water ahead. Continue towards Lakeside and soon cross Cunsey Beck which is the outflow from Esthwaite Water. Follow the wooded lakeshore a short distance to a T junction and turn right towards Hawkshead. Esthwaite Water car park is a short distance on the right.

Distance: 4.9 miles

Location: Esthwaite Water visitor centre

Coordinates: N 54.35029, W 2.98460

Esthwaite Water is one of the lesser known Lake District lakes, probably due to it being the only privately owned one with very little public access. However, it is still very attractive and is worth some exploring. This small visitor centre, set in woodland on the lakeshore with lovely views up the lake, offers a number of attractions for visitors and has developed from the original trout fishery. It remains a popular venue for [fishing](#), boats and kit can be hired for this activity. Also on offer is an [Osprey Safari](#) where you can self-drive a small electric boat around the lake looking for the Ospreys that are normally in residence between April and September. At any time of year the boat ride gives a great view of the different wildlife on and around the peaceful lake.



Esthwaite Water

The lake was a treasured place for Beatrix Potter, being so close to her house at Hill Top, and for the famous poet William Wordsworth, who went to school in nearby Hawkshead. No doubt the lake and surroundings gave them both plenty of inspiration for their interests as they explored it.

The visitor centre is a 2 minute walk from the main car park along the shingle shore and there are a few picnic tables around the car park. The small [Boathouse cafe](#) at the visitor centre provides refreshments with an attractive terrace overlooking the lake and nearby toilets. Open all year. The car park is pay and display.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park, past the visitor centre, climbing away from the lake. The trees soon thin out and good views open up over surrounding countryside, including glimpses of Esthwaite Water and Lakeland mountains in the far distance. The road is never far from the western shore of Esthwaite Water and after approx 1.8 miles you enter the outskirts of Hawkshead village. The road turns sharply to the right and just beyond, take the left turn to Hawkshead, then very shortly the next left which leads to the village car park on the left.



Hawkshead Village from the churchyard

Distance: 6.9 miles

Location: Hawkshead Village car park

Coordinates: N 54.37410, W 2.99679

Hawkshead is one of the most charming villages in the Lake District and worth a stop to explore its historic centre. The village dates back to medieval times, originally a prosperous wool market run by the monks of Furness Abbey which was near Barrow-in-Furness. There are a number of historic buildings around the village, including [Hawkshead Grammar School](#) which was founded here in 1585 and educated a number of notable pupils, including the famous local poet

William Wordsworth who was sent here in 1778, aged 8, after his mother died. The school eventually closed in 1909 and the building is now a museum dedicated to its interesting history.

Also in the centre of the village is the National Trusts [Beatrix Potter Gallery](#), a 17th century building housing displays of her famous watercolour illustrations and more about her work. The building was once the office of the solicitors W.H Heelis & Son, where William Heelis worked when he married Beatrix in 1913. No doubt Beatrix would have spent a great deal of time in and around Hawkshead when she lived nearby at Hill Top. Other notable buildings in the village include [St Michael and All Angels church](#), most of which dates back to the 16th century and sits on the small hill overlooking the village. There is a lovely churchyard where you can find some peace and enjoy the surrounding views. Also, in the main village square is the old Market Hall which dates from the late 18th century when the village thrived as a local market.

It makes an enjoyable stroll around the timeless and mostly car-free village centre with its jumbled collection of whitewashed houses, archways and alleyways, courtyards and squares. There are a number of tourist shops, cafes and pubs. The car park is pay and display with nearby toilets and tourist information centre.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the village car park, then quickly left at the T junction on the B5285 towards Ambleside. The road soon leaves the village behind and after approx 0.5 miles, take the left turn (still the B5285) towards Coniston. Continue up the hill through pleasant countryside for approx 0.8 miles to the small village of Hawkshead Hill where you take the minor right turn to Tarn Hows. After approx 200m, there is a T junction where you turn left and then immediate right towards Tarn Hows again. This minor road winds up through the trees for approx 0.7 miles before a wonderful panorama opens up with the tarn down below and various Lakeland peaks in the distance. Just as you leave the trees, there is a small free car park on the right which provides a fabulous view from the car. The main car park is a short distance beyond the tarn on the left.

Distance: 9.5 miles

Location: Tarn Hows

Coordinates: N 54.38708, W 3.03905

[Tarn Hows](#) is one of the wonders of Lakeland and a beauty spot not to be missed. Historically the area was rough open common grazing land with three smaller natural tarns but in 1862 the local estate at Monk Coniston gained possession of all the land and started improving it. This included landscaping and building a dam at the lower tarn which raised water levels so the three tarns became the one you see today.



Tarn Hows

In 1930 the 4000 acre Monk Coniston Estate came up for sale and was bought by Beatrix Potter who was keen to buy local land so she could save it from unwanted development and preserve it for future generations. She soon sold the part containing Tarn Hows to the National Trust who have further improved the area over the years.

The [main path](#) around the tarn is well made and well worth an hour of your time. Higher paths on the eastern side give some fabulous long distance views towards the Lake District mountains. The main car park is National Trust pay and display with toilets and an information display.

Travelling:

From the car park, turn left and continue on the picturesque minor road which is now one-way. This road descends and loops back to the B5285 Coniston road. Turn right on this road and soon meet the tree-lined shores of Coniston Water on the left. Nearby is parking and lake shore access at Monk Coniston. The road then bends away from the lake, past [The Coniston Inn](#) on the left and soon enters Coniston village. Once in the village, take the first left turn and the car park is immediately on the right.



Coniston Village

Distance: 11.8 miles

Location: Coniston Village car park

Coordinates: N 54.36892, W 3.07347

The village of Coniston is in a picturesque location nestled between Coniston Water and The Old Man of Coniston, the mountain directly behind. Historically, it grew up due to the local copper and slate mines which flourished from the 17th century with workers being housed in the village. In 1859 a railway line was opened to the village from the main Cumbrian Coast line near Broughton in Furness. The main purpose of this at the time was to transport the copper ore, but as copper demand declined in the late 19th century the railway line became more popular with Victorian tourists. A local tourist industry soon grew up which has become more and more popular over time. The railway closed in 1962 and there is little trace of the old line and station now but it certainly helped to put Coniston on the map in its heyday.

Probably the most notable local resident was John Ruskin, the famous Victorian visionary, artist, art critic and writer, who lived nearby at [Brantwood](#) on the shores of Coniston Water from 1871 until his death in 1900, aged 80. He was buried at [St Andrew's Church](#) in the centre of the village. Following his death, the [Ruskin Museum](#) was established in Coniston in 1901 and is still going strong today, containing a wealth of local history.

The village itself has a few tourist shops, cafes and pubs where you can spend some time and fully appreciate the surrounding scenery. The car park is pay and display with a [Tourist Information Centre](#) and toilet facilities.

Travelling:

From the village car park, turn left and continue on the B5285 which shortly meets the A593 at a T junction in the village centre. Turn left, over the river and past a service station & shop, then immediately take Lake Road on the left which leads 0.5 miles down to a dead end at the lake. The car park is just before the lake on the left.

Distance: 12.5 miles

Location: Lake Road car park, Coniston Water

Coordinates: N 54.36460, W 3.06779

Coniston Water is a scenic and relatively quiet lake surrounded by low and mostly wooded hills. It is well worth taking a trip on the lake to better appreciate the scenery and you can do this either on the historic [Steam Yacht 'Gondola'](#) or the [Coniston Launch](#). If you fancy hiring a boat yourself, the [Coniston Boating Centre](#) is adjacent to the car park with a good selection of small boats and paddle boards. Across the lake, you can just about make out [Brantwood](#) house where John Ruskin the famous Victorian visionary, artist, art critic and writer, lived from 1871 until his death in 1900. You can visit the house and gardens via the Gondola or Launch boats which both stop at the jetty near the house.



SY Gondola & Brantwood

The lake also has famous literary connections through the popular children's adventure book 'Swallows and Amazons', written by the author Arthur Ransome and published in 1930. The book is based on a number of locations around the lake, for example, Wild Cat Island in the book is said to be based on Peel Island towards the southern end of the lake.

Perhaps the most famous moment in the lake's history came on 4th January 1967 when Donald Campbell lost his life on the water during a world record water speed attempt. Film footage shows the boat summersault and break up but it was not until 2001 that his body was discovered on the bed of the lake and laid to rest in Coniston cemetery. The battered boat was also raised and taken away for restoration, but subsequently caught up in a legal battle of ownership for many years and not on show. All that changed in March 2024 when it was returned to Coniston and is now on show in the 'Bluebird Wing' of the Ruskin Museum in Coniston village

You can learn more about 'The Campbells on Coniston' and about 'Swallows and Amazons' at the Ruskin Museum in the village and also on themed cruises around the lake aboard the Gondola or the Launch.

Also next to the car park and shore here is [The Bluebird Cafe](#) which provides refreshments with a lovely view over the water and there are several picnic tables adjacent. The car park is pay and display with toilet facilities.

Travelling:



Yew Tree Farm

Travel back up Lake Road to the T junction and turn right on the A593, passing through Coniston village towards Ambleside. Beyond the village, the road passes through the attractive Yewdale valley with craggy and wooded hills on each side. Approx 2 miles out of Coniston is Yew Tree Farm on the left, which is a picture book farm and setting, once owned by Beatrix Potter. The farmhouse was used as the double for Hill Top in the 2006 film 'Miss Potter'. The farm now offers [Herdwick sheep experiences](#) where you can get up close to these popular animals. Just beyond the farm is Glen Mary Bridge National Trust car park on the right and just beyond that on the left is Yew Tree Tarn which is man made in a lovely setting. There is a small layby to pull in and

admire the view. Continue along the A593 which soon climbs over a small summit and approx 0.7 miles beyond that take the left turn towards Elterwater. This minor road descends sharply before levelling out alongside the River Brathay. You can park on the roadside here to access the impressive Colwith Force waterfall. A short but quite rough footpath leads to the waterfall, over the stile on the left.

Continue over the River Brathay and, just beyond, take the left turn to Little Langdale. The road generally climbs through trees for approx 1 mile before reaching the hamlet of Little Langdale with the traditional looking [Three Shires Inn](#) on the right. Beyond this the road becomes quite narrow and twisty but the views are magnificent over Little Langdale valley, surrounding mountains and Little Langdale Tarn on the left. You can certainly appreciate the remote beauty of this valley. Not far beyond the tarn, cross a cattle grid and take the right fork in the road towards Blea Tarn. The road climbs quite steeply in places, again with fabulous views. After approx 0.7 miles, cross another cattle grid and Blea Tarn car park is immediately on the right.



Slater Bridge, Little Langdale



Blea Tarn

Distance: 20.3 miles

Location: Blea Tarn

Coordinates: N N 54.42939, W 3.08752

Blea Tarn is in a fabulous setting on a high plateau between the valleys of Little Langdale and Great Langdale. There is a good [footpath](#) from the car park which leads a short distance down to the tarn. There are wonderful mountain views in all directions, particularly across the tarn towards the Langdale Pikes. The footpath crosses a bridge over the outflow stream which can then be followed downstream past some pleasing cascades and falls. The main path

continues around the tarn through attractive woodland where there are benches to sit and enjoy the surroundings. National Trust pay and display car park. No facilities, the nearest are in Great Langdale.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park and continue along the narrow road which skirts around Blea Tarn plateau. The road soon crosses a cattle grid and a magnificent vista opens up over the head of Great Langdale

valley. A long line of mighty mountains includes Langdale Pikes, Esk Pike, Bowfell, Crinkle Crag and Pike o' Blisco. Meanwhile, the road begins to descend through a short, steep and twisty section which needs some care. There are very limited opportunities to stop on the hill, with a few rough spaces from where you can enjoy the fantastic open views but be careful not to obstruct passing places. At the bottom of the hill, cross another cattle grid and continue across the valley floor for approx 0.4 miles to sharp right bend which points the road down the valley. Just beyond this is the turning for Old Dungeon Ghyll car park on the left.

Distance: 22.1 miles

Location: Old Dungeon Ghyll, Great Langdale

Coordinates: N 54.44420, W 3.10281

Great Langdale is a wonderful Lake District valley with spectacular scenery all around. The enclosed valley is surrounded by some mighty Lakeland mountains such as Langdale Pikes, Bowfell, Crinkle Crag and Pike O'Blisco. The road runs along the green valley floor as far as Old Dungeon Ghyll which is a popular starting place for many mountain walks. A good way to appreciate the surroundings more is by [walking](#) the relatively level but rough track which continues up Mickleden valley for approx 2 miles from the car park. Adjacent to the car park is the [Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel](#) which provides refreshments. National Trust pay and display car park.



Upper Great Langdale

Approx 0.7 miles further down the valley is Stickle Ghyll car park where the steep path up to Stickle Tarn and Langdale Pikes begins. Refreshments are available here at the [New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel](#) and [Sticklebarn Tavern](#). National Trust pay and display car park.

Travelling:

Turn left out of Old Dungeon Ghyll and continue down Great Langdale valley with pleasing views of surrounding lush pastures and hills. Pass Stickle Ghyll car park and continue for approx 1.7 miles to enter the village of Chapel Stile. In the village is [Holy Trinity church](#) up on the left, [the village store](#), [Brambles cafe](#) and seasonal public toilets also on the left, followed by [Wainwrights Inn](#) on the right. Leaving the village, you soon pass the [Langdale Hotel Estate](#) and not far beyond you reach the attractive open expanse of Elterwater Common and a cross roads where you turn right to Elterwater village. Soon enter the village and arrive at a T junction at the village green. Continue ahead and the village car park is immediately on the left.



Elterwater Village

Distance: 25.8 miles

Location: Elterwater Village

Coordinates: N 54.43387, W 3.03789

Elterwater is a picturesque village at the entrance to the spectacular Great Langdale valley. Its old slate houses, clear fast flowing river, attractive village green and backdrop of surrounding hills is real Lake District. Although only small, the village attracts plenty of visitors being central to wonderful walking country. A good level [walk](#) follows the river downstream from the car park to Elterwater lake and beyond to Skelwith Force. Other footpaths lead up Langdale valley and surrounding hills. There are no shops in the

village, but refreshments are available at the popular [Britannia Inn](#) and adjacent [Slates cafe](#), overlooking the village green. National Trust pay and display car park with adjacent toilets. There is also some parking around nearby Elterwater Common.

Travelling:

Leave the village car park and turn right. The road continues to the right of Slates cafe before leaving the village and crossing the attractive Elterwater Common with various parking areas. In a short distance meet a T junction where you turn right. Before leaving Elterwater Common it is worth stopping to look back at the wonderful view of Great Langdale valley and Langdale Pikes.



Langdale from Elterwater Common

Continue over a cattle grid, the road meanders through some pleasant Lakeland scenery with glimpses of Elterwater lake then the River Brathay through trees on the right. Soon, pass Silverthwaite pay and display car park on the left and the road descends to the hamlet of Skelwith Bridge which has a few attractions by the River Brathay. On the right is [The Talbot Bar](#) and behind that is [Chesters By The River](#) which has a shop and cafe. Only a 5 minute walk up the river is Skelwith Force waterfall which is impressive in flood. At the T junction, turn left towards Ambleside.

Continue for approx 2 miles, following the attractive Brathay valley, to the outskirts of Ambleside and a tight bridge over the River Rothay. Once over the bridge, the road bears left and becomes one-way. Get in the right lane which soon comes to a T junction. Turn right on the A5075 for approx 0.5 miles and Waterhead car park is on the left.



Waterhead, Ambleside

Distance: 30.2 miles

Location: Waterhead car park, Ambleside

Coordinates: N 54.42116, W 2.96284

As the name suggests, Waterhead marks the head of Windermere lake and you will find quite a few attractions in this attractive village near to Ambleside town. The most obvious feature is the lake and there is plenty of shoreline access with excellent views across the water. The small promenade opposite the car park makes a pleasant stroll and there are a few benches from where you can watch the boats coming and going. [Windermere Lake Cruises](#) call at the main pier here and you can take a scenic red cruise to Bowness and Lakeside or a seasonal Green cruise to nearby Wray Castle and Brockhole.

Also near the car park is the [Wateredge Inn](#) which has a fabulous beer garden overlooking the lake. If you walk beyond the pub you soon come to Borrans Park which provides good open grassy areas and small shingle beaches overlooking the lake. Beyond the park is [Ambleside Roman Fort](#) which was probably built during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (AD 117–138), around the same time as Hadrian's Wall was built in north Cumbria. It is free entry to the fort and although not much remains of it now, you can still see the foundations of the various buildings, with information boards around the site telling you more. The Romans certainly had a magnificent view from their fort with mountain and lake scenery all around.

It is about 20 minute walk from Waterhead to Ambleside town, or a short driving detour, if you want to explore the attractions there. There are many tourist shops, outdoor specialists, cafes, restaurants and pubs, plus the fascinating [Armitt Museum](#) which includes a display of beautiful botanical drawings and watercolours from Beatrix Potter.

The Waterhead car park is pay and display with toilet facilities. Beware, there are camera's in the car park so don't stay too long without paying! There are a few small gift shops, stalls and cafes in the Waterhead area.

Travelling:

Leave the car park and turn left on the A5075 towards Windermere town. This soon meets the A591 at traffic lights where you turn right to continue along the picturesque lakeshore road. As you leave Waterhead, the peaceful and attractive [Stagshaw Gardens](#) are on the left and approx 0.6 miles beyond is the [Low Wood Hotel](#) which is well known for water sports in a spectacular setting. Just beyond this take a left turn towards Troutbeck. The narrow road twists and turns up the steep hill, passing some fabulous properties including the prestigious [Holbeck Ghyll Hotel](#). After approx 0.9 miles the road finally levels out and it is possible to stop and admire the great views down Windermere lake. The lofty lane continues through pleasant countryside for approx 0.6 miles to enter the village of Troutbeck and Townend car park is a short distance on the left.

Distance: 32.9 miles

Location: Townend

Coordinates: N 54.41128, W 2.91571

[Townend](#) is an historic Lakeland farmhouse preserved to show the lifestyle of the family who lived there for more than 300 years. The family moved out in the 1940's and the property is now managed by National Trust. The attractive 17th century farmhouse retains many original features and was home to the Browne family who were fairly ordinary farmers with some fairly quirky interests as shown by the collection of books, carvings and artefacts in the house. You can wonder around the atmospheric farmhouse and there are tours available at certain times. Outside there is a pleasant garden and an impressive barn across the road. Open Tuesday to Friday, March to October. Free entry for National Trust members, otherwise admission fee applies. Toilet facilities are available.



Townend

Travelling:

Turn left out of the car park and continue through Troutbeck village which has some wonderful Lakeland properties and impressive views over Troutbeck valley towards the mountains beyond. Soon, reach the [village shop and tearoom](#) where refreshments are available. Immediately beyond this, take a right turn on a narrow lane which descends steeply then runs alongside Trout Beck, past some free parking, to a T junction with the main A592. To the left here is [Jesus Church](#), but the drive turns right, crosses Trout Beck and continues on the A592 with views back across the valley towards Troutbeck village, then ahead towards Windermere. Approx 1.5 miles beyond the Trout Beck bridge is the entrance to Holehird Gardens on the left. The car park is up the access lane on the right



Holehird Gardens

Distance: 35.3 miles

Location: Holehird Gardens

Coordinates: N 54.39602, W 2.91472

[Holehird Gardens](#) are a spectacular attraction managed by the Lakeland Horticultural Society and maintained by volunteers. The 10 acre hillside site has a great variety of plants and features including a walled garden, rock gardens, water features and an impressive Hydrangea display. One of the best features are the superb views towards the central Lakeland mountains. The imposing Holehird House is adjacent which was built in the 1860's as a private home for

the estate. Beatrix Potter stayed at the house in 1889 and 1895. The gardens are open daily through the year, dawn to dusk, although reception is only open April to October during the day. Limited refreshments are available in the reception, toilets are nearby. A small donation is expected from visitors for upkeep of the gardens.

Travelling:

Leaving Holehird, turn left and continue on the A592 for approx 0.7 miles to a mini-roundabout where the main A591 crosses. Take the second exit to continue on the A592 towards Bowness. Shortly, Hammarbank pay and display car park is on the right with good views over the lake. Continue beyond this, down the steep hill and around a couple of bends to Rayrigg Meadow car park on the right.

Distance: 36.6 miles

Location: Rayrigg Meadow picnic site

Coordinates: N 54.37897, W 2.91924

Rayrigg Meadow is a pleasant recreational area next to Windermere lake with various attractions for visitors. Near to the car park is a good picnic and play area with adjacent grass in an open setting. The small grassy hill above the car park is known as Queen Adelaide's hill and the summit provides wonderful views across the lake and towards the mountains in the distance. Queen Adelaide apparently visited this fabulous viewpoint in 1840 and the hill was renamed in her honour from its original Rayrigg Bank. It is a short but steep footpath to the top from the car park.



Queen Adelaide's hill

Towards the lake from the play area is a well placed bench overlooking the lake and a short drop down brings you to the tree-lined lakeshore where there are shingle beaches and a couple of boat jetties with attractive views across the water. There is a footpath along the lakeshore in both directions, if you turn right you soon reach Millerground which again has a few jetties and lovely views from the shingle shore. The easy access along all this lakeshore makes it a good place for paddling and bathing with the added benefit of fine sunset views across the lake. The car park is pay and display with adjacent toilet facilities.

Travelling:

Turn right out of the car park and continue on the A592 towards Bowness. After approx 0.6 miles, pass the impressive [Windermere Jetty Museum](#) where you can learn all about the last 200 years of Windermere's boating history, with fascinating displays and many historic boats. Beyond this, enter the outskirts of Bowness and shortly on the right is Rayrigg Road car park.



Bowness-on-Windermere lakeside

Distance: 37.6 miles

Location: Bowness-on-Windermere, Rayrigg Road car park

Coordinates: N 54.36591, W 2.91993

Return to start point.



Martin Wilson

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